

Refrain from other pleasures. When Darius fasted, he declined to listen to musicians play (Daniel 6:18), and Paul taught the only reason for married couples to abstain from intercourse is prayer and fasting (1st Corinthians 7:5). So, those who choose to join in this fast should simultaneously turn off the TV and the radio – except to listen to psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, skip playing games on their phones, avoid the internet – but to post scriptural content, and keep from sex for the day (Exodus 19:15).

Make personal adjustments. The valiant men of Jabesh Gilead fasted in mourning for Saul and Jonathan seven days (1st Samuel 31:11-13), but David and his men fasted for only part of one day (2nd Samuel 1:12). While we encourage our members to fast this Wednesday, those who are able should decline food for the whole day, but some who are under a physician's care may need to reduce the fast to a single meal. If that is all your body is capable of, the Lord knows (2nd Corinthians 8:12), and your brethren will not judge you. In one instance, Daniel had a modified fast wherein he did not decline food altogether, but refrained from *"pleasant food"* (Daniel 10:2-3). If you are engaged in manual labor under the hot sun, it would be terribly imprudent to completely abstain from food, so if that is the case, eat plainly; drink only water, skip snacks, eat only unseasoned meat or vegetables, and bread without condiments.

Increase prayer. Fasting is hardly mentioned in Scripture without prayer accompanying the act. In at least twelve instances, the two actions are paired (Ezra 8:23; Nehemiah 1:4; Psalm 35:13; Daniel 9:3; Matthew 17:21; Mark 9:29; Luke 2:37; 5:33; Acts 10:30; 13:3; 14:23; 1st Corinthians 7:5). A day set aside to fast is a day set aside to pray frequently and at length. However much time would be ordinarily devoted to breakfast, lunch, and dinner – spend that time kneeling in supplication to the Lord. Whenever hunger pangs strike, don't reach for a snack; instead, pause and pray.

Pray that many souls will be present on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday to hear the word of the Lord proclaimed (Acts 10:24, 27). Pray that the preacher will speak the truth of the gospel boldly (Ephesians 6:20), so all who hear will understand God's will. Pray that the members of this church will be present and fully involved in assisting the work (Ephesians 4:16). Pray that the weather does not interfere with this ministry (James 5:17-18). Pray that skeptics and scoffers will not detract from the message (Acts 16:5-9). Pray that hearts will be soft and open to salvation (Acts 16:14-15).

ONE OF US

Bryan Matthew Dockens

On Father's Day, a certain U.S. Senate Majority Leader shared a picture of himself "grilling." It was obviously intended to bring the Senator down to earth, so to speak – to give him the appearance of the everyman, a common American like his constituents. In every way, however, the photo had the opposite effect. First, the patties appeared to have been oxidized beyond the average citizen's preference, that is to say the meat was a lot more brown than red while still raw. Second, there was already cheese on one of the burgers even though it was as raw as the rest. Third, it looked like all the cheese slices were stacked on that single patty. Fourth, one of the patties was on a spatula, evidently about to be flipped, despite no heat having been applied to it in the first place. It's bad enough to stage a photo-op, but so much worse to lack the wherewithal to even recognize how unreal the scene actually is. Regardless of party, the harder politicians try to appear normal and approachable, the stranger and more distant they become to ordinary folks.

Jesus isn't like that. *"The Man Christ Jesus"* is qualified to be the *"one Mediator between God and men"* (1st Timothy 2:5) because He was never faking it. He had a genuine fleshly existence. *"By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world"* (1st John 4:2-3). The Son of God not only stepped foot on earth in mortal flesh, but was *"born of a woman"* (Galatians 4:4). The apostles could testify they *"ate and drank with Him"* (Acts 10:41).

Unlike the political elites who have so little in common with those they are elected to represent, the Son of Man went far out of His way, heaven to earth, to experience humanity. *"God cannot be tempted by evil"* (James 1:13), but Jesus of Nazareth *"had to be made like his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted"* (Hebrews 2:17-18). *"We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin"* (4:15). *"He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness"* (5:2). Jesus is real. Jesus knows. He can be trusted.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY

Ladies' Study @ 6:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"Filthy talk makes us feel comfortable with filthy action, but the one who knows how to control the tongue is prepared to resist the attacks of lust."

– Titus Flavius Clemens

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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FASTING FOR SOUL-WINNING

Bryan Matthew Dockens

The Rio Grande Valley church of Christ will be conducting a three-day, five-message soul-winning effort at Fernandez Park beginning this Thursday. As we prepare for an intense effort to preach the gospel to the lost, we call on our members to join together this Wednesday in a day of prayer and fasting.

Fasting is distinct from incidental hunger and thirst (2nd Corinthians 11:23-31); it is deliberate abstinence from food. Fasting is not a relic of the Old Testament as Jesus fully expects His disciples to fast in the present (Luke 5:33-35). There are occasions when it is appropriate for a congregation to pray and fast together (Acts 14:23). An event which merits collective prayer and fasting, as seen in the New Testament church, is when preachers are sent to undertake a specific effort of proclaiming the gospel (Acts 13:1-5). Thus, it is fitting we spend the day before our park meeting depriving our bodies (Isaiah 58:3) while we focus our hearts and minds on the serious task at hand (2nd Chronicles 20:3).

Be discreet. Fasting is for God to see (Zechariah 7:4-5), not for man (Matthew 6:16-18). Therefore, it need not be mentioned to coworkers, neighbors, merchants, relatives uninvolved in the fast, or the internet. Do it for God's attention or not at all.

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