



VALLEY REAL LIFE

Summer on the Mount | Praying and Fasting

Last Week

How did you apply last week's lesson on being seen? Who did you share the lesson with?

Opener

What are some examples of people doing things that are for attention only?

Questions

Can you share about a time when you prayed, gave, or fasted, etc... and then experienced the presence of God? What did you learn from this example?

Have you ever caught yourself praying and noticing the prayer was solely about yourself and not God? Have you tried to pray with the focus being on God's power alone? When you did this, how did it impact you?

What does fasting mean to you? Is there something you could consider fasting, to grow closer to God? Why do you think fasting helps you experience God?

In your own words, what's the reason Jesus teaches us to pray and fast in secret?

Scripture Discovery:

Have yourself, another group member, or all group members read the following Scripture out loud

Isaiah 58:3-9a (NLT)

'We have fasted before you!' they say. 'Why aren't you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don't even notice it!' "I will tell you why!" I respond. "It's because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the LORD? "No, this is the kind of fasting I want Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. "Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the LORD will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' he will quickly reply.

- What does this passage tell us about God?
- What does this passage tell us about people?
- How do you need to apply this passage to your life?
- And who are you going to tell?

Pray