

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Treasure Island Diet

Questions written by Mark Collins

January 13, 2008



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Small Group Announcement - On February 10th the Rock Small Group ministry will be hosting a new kind of Small Group sign-up. We are asking every Rock Small Group to be represented that day to promote your group in a “Ministry Fair” type atmosphere. We ask that your small group be a part of helping the Rock Body find greater Biblical Community. To sign up all you have to do is go to www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/3646/. For more information call Mark @ 619-764-5146 or contact him at mark.collins@therocksandiego.org for more details.

Global Announcement - If someone in your group needs financial guidance encourage them to sign up now for Rock U’s Adopting God’s Principles for Handling Money class.* Class starts February 1st. This course takes an in-depth look at God’s purpose, plan, and principles for handling money and possessions. You’ll learn both the scriptural foundations and practical steps toward becoming financially free. You’ll learn how to live a life of contentment, including ideas on applying these principles to the marriage and family. (For married couples or those considering marriage – this course is a must!) Join us as we get financially fit in 2008! Register at www.therockuniversity.org or at the **Rock U tent on Sundays**. For more info, contact Danielle Demko at danielle.demko@therocksandiego.org or call 619.764.5123. **For all other Rock events**, please go <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MINISTRY PRAYER REQUESTS

As “small groupies,” you are the heart and soul of this ministry--who better than you to lift up the Small Group Ministry in prayer? So, it’s up to you, you can spend time in your small group praying for these things (weekly or occasionally), or you can pray during the week on your own time. And if you’d like to be added to our Pastor’s Prayer Team, just let us know. Mark Collins, the Small Group Pastor, would love your prayers! We send out a monthly email of his personal and ministry prayer requests. Just contact Andy Rodgers at andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org. May God work through your prayers mightily!

Reaching the Lost: Pray that all of our groups participate in our up coming Small Group sign up.

Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups: Pray that all of our Small Group leaders and group members ask God if He is calling them to a fast, and the courage to be obedient during this unique spiritual time.

Potential Small Group Leaders: Pray that our current leaders continue to give their ministry away and develop future leaders to reach their full potential in Jesus.

Small Group Staff: Pray that God gives us the favor and wisdom to rebuild the Small Group team. Ask Him to order our steps in every decision we make.

The Rock Body: Pray that the Rock Army grows deeper and deeper in the stewardship of their lives in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

Joel 2:12 "Yet even now, return to me with all your heart with fasting..."

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – TREASURE ISLAND DIET

Today, for most of us we're going to cover some uncharted territory when it comes to this particular form of spiritual discipline. In fact, fasting as a normal practice for Christians has been out of vogue for over 150 years. Certainly, in the twentieth and twenty-first century's church the idea is pretty alien to most of us. Sadly, we have no one to blame but ourselves for God's Word assumes that fasting would be a regular part of a Christian's life no matter what century God's children find themselves. Let's begin with a little quiz on the subject of fasting:

1. Who was the first person who fasted in the Bible?
2. What was the longest length of time of a fast recorded in God's Word?
3. Who were the three people who fasted 40 days each?
4. Can you give some occasions of why people fasted in the Bible?

Now someone in your group maybe knew that Moses was the first recorded faster in the Bible. And probably many in your group guessed 40 days because of Christ's famous fast before His temptation. Certainly, the third question was harder and only the sharpest Bible trivia buffs would know this answer: Moses on three different occasions (Deut. 9:9, 18; Ex. 34:28), Elijah (1 Kings 19:8), and Jesus (Matt. 4:2). The answer to question four will be answered later on in this lesson, but the real question for all of us still remains, and involves taking inventory of our lives: Is God calling me to make fasting a regular part of my Christian experience? If so, how can I get educated about this forgotten subject? But before I challenge you to make this life change, let's look at some Biblical principals on fasting and the circumstances when God called His people to fast.

Getting Started

1. After hearing Miles' sermon, ask your group members what their general perception on the subject of fasting?
 - a. Ask your group if there is anyone who has experienced a biblical fast? What happened?
2. Why do you think that periodic fasting has become a "lost spiritual discipline" in the modern American Church?

Digging Deeper

I don't know if you ever thought much about a Biblical perspective on food. Why did God give us food? Was it just for physical nourishment? Is it right to enjoy food? According to Scripture, food is given to us as a gift from God. The variety of food found in God's creation is not an accident. The fact that humans have a highly developed taste system suggests God gave us food for more than just nourishment.

3. Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-25; 5:18, Genesis. 1:30, Genesis 18:1-8 and Matthew 6:11; 1 Timothy 4:3-4. What are the four biblical reasons that God has given food (enjoyment, sustenance, fellowship, and worship)?
 - a. Why do you think that God would ask us to abstain from food from time to time if He gave it to us bless us?
 - b. Now, knowing the biblical reasons for the gift of food, in your own personal life how has Satan attempted to pervert God's purposes for food and attempted to make food a curse not a blessing?
4. There's a lot confusion out there when it comes to the purpose of fasting. Can your group think of some wrong reasons people fast (for help look at Acts 23:12, 14; Jeremiah 14:12; Luke 18:9-12)?
 - a. What one word is always associated with the word fasting in the Bible?
 - b. So what's the purpose of biblical fasting (to remove all barriers of communication between you and God. (Jeremiah 29:13-14; Joel 2:12)?
5. How does fasting for the right reasons demonstrate humility before God? How does God treat the humble?

Bringing it Home

When Jesus was asked why His disciples didn't fast as John the Baptist's disciples did, Jesus replied, "The friends of the bridegroom are not sad while he is with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them and they will fast (Matthew 9:4-15). We are now anxiously awaiting His return, so the question remains: When should a Christ-follower fast?"

6. The Bible gives us several examples of situations that would cause a believer to fast, can you think of some biblical examples?
 - a. How do you think your spiritual life would benefit from fasting?
 - b. If you have decided to take this spiritual step, how could the group support you in your decision?

7. End this session with prayer using the AWCIPA model. Group leaders can choose to lead the whole group or have the group break up into prayer partners. Remember to spend equal time for each letter.

- A Admire and thank God. (Psalm 8:9)
Thank God for everything that comes to mind.
- W Wait quietly before God. (Psalm 46:10)
Sit quietly and listen to God speak to you and write it down.
- C Confess your sin. (1 John 1:9, Psalm 103:12)
Confess your sins to God.
- I Intercede for others. (1 Chronicles 4:9)
Pray for other people.
- P Petition for yourself. (Psalm 51:10-12, John 14:12-14)
Ask for a pure heart.
- A Admire and thank God. (Psalm 8:9)
Thank God for everything you can think of.