



Mickey Stonier / January 7, 2018

Icebreaker: Pastor Mickey recounted the story of his visit to the birth of his first grandchild. He used his experience as a father to illustrate to his daughter a level of love that cannot be explained but only experienced firsthand. Describe a time in your own life when you have been so incredibly happy that you have cried tears of joy. And who would you allow to wipe tears from your face then and now.

Encouragement: As Christians we often get discouraged when we ask for, or even fast over and still do not experience God's blessings, His miracles, or just feel like He isn't with us in times of distress. We mistakenly believe that all of these requests are unconditional gifts. Read **Genesis 4:7, Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 6:25, Deuteronomy 7:12, Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 17:20 and John 8:51** and see how many verses it takes you to find the common thread that gives these promises of God the power needed for us to receive them. Hint: It can be summed up in one common word found in all of these verses (and many more).

Scripture: This week's lesson plan defines fasting is "an act of self-denial for a specific period of time for a specific purpose". Read **Isaiah 58:1-14** and discuss some of the elements of a fast that mark the difference between a fast that is ineffective and NOT God ordained or received, and one that is effective and acceptable to our Father.

This week's lesson plan includes a list of 14 reasons to fast with accompanying verses. It notes that the "ultimate reason" for fasting is "To be more like Jesus". In **John 17** Jesus prays for his disciples as he communicates with the Father through prayer.

Prayer: When we pray to our Father we pray with expectation. Consider adding the following to your prayers to see the miraculous works of God.

1. Ask God to remove all of the obstacles in your life that prevent Him from pouring them out to you.
2. Ask God to open your eyes and ears so that you can recognize them, as He is always at work around us.
3. Ask God for the patience and perseverance to wait on His perfect timing and in His perfect ways.
4. Ask God for the courage to become involved with that which we are seeking for Him to provide.
5. Proclaim and thank God for the works He has and is doing your life.

Next Steps:

1. Establish goals: Identify a desired spiritual breakthrough. Example: Develop a daily prayer and Bible reading time.
2. Establish a time and place to meet daily with God.
3. Establish your fast parameters and determine how it will be effective, and glorify God.
4. Establish an accountability and prayer partner who knows your fast plan.

Memory Verse: Romans 8:38-39 "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Notes:
