

# FASTING FORWARD 2024: SEEKING CHRIST'S PRESENCE

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In our spiritual journey, we often find ourselves seeking a deeper connection with Christ, yearning for His presence in our lives. One way to achieve this connection is through the discipline of fasting. However, it's important to remember that fasting is not merely an act of self-denial but an invitation for Christ's presence.

## We Fast for Christ's Presence

There's a biblical precedent for fasting in times of spiritual longing, as we see in the gospel of Mark. The disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees were known to fast, leading some to question why Jesus's disciples did not. Jesus responded, saying, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day." (Mark 2:18-20 NRSV).

## Be Present in Christ's Presence

When you fast, it's vital to be fully present in Christ's presence. This includes opening your heart and mind to Him, as suggested in Revelation 3:20: "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me." (Revelation 3:20 NRSV).

## We Want to Become More Like Jesus

As we fast and seek Christ's presence, our ultimate goal is to become more like Jesus. This means embodying the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23 ESV). Jesus was the most loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, charitable, faithful, gentle, self-controlled person that ever lived. We aim to be the same.

## Don't Let a Comparative Culture Steal Your Reward

In our era of comparison, it's crucial not to let others' perceptions influence our spiritual practices. When fasting, we should not flaunt our piety but practice humility, as Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:16-18.

# Love Like Jesus

To become like Jesus, we must also love like Jesus. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." (John 13:34 ESV). Our fasting should also reflect this love, allowing us to love people as Jesus loves them.

## Review

In summary, our journey of Fasting Forward 2024 is centered around seeking Christ's presence through fasting, aiming to become more like Jesus, and loving like Him. We must be present in Christ's presence, not allowing a comparative culture to steal our reward and enabling our fast to love people as Jesus loves them.

Let us remember that we become who is at our table and invite Jesus to our table. As we move forward in this journey, may we continually strive to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, charitable, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled.