

22 Questions

**A Bible Study based on
John and Charles Wesley's Questions
for Personal and Group Discipleship
with added commentary and Scripture**

by

Russ Broomell

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Dedication

To Andy, George, Vernon, and Steve, the first four, and to all the guys who have encouraged and challenged me. To Ted and Derek who urged me on. And to my wife, Lynn, who puts up with my moods as I write. Y'all have said "here I am" when God calls, and I love all of you!

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Introduction

I felt led to start a men's Bible study at the church I attend. We hadn't had one in a while. We wanted something that people could engage with even if they had never really read the Bible - and yet we wanted something that dug into the Bible and got us discussing Scripture.

As I thought and prayed about this, I felt that I wanted something that also had some application for spiritual growth. Something more than just a reading assignment. My pastor, Ted Burke, suggested looking into Wesley's Questions (which I had never heard of at the time). There are several good books about them, but I couldn't find a study focused on biblical references to the questions. This study is a result, and I've been writing and leading Bible studies ever since.

It's not a men's study. It's for everyone. It's excellent for new Christians who want to know "what next" or for long-time Christians with the same question. It will call you to spiritual growth and show how some believers have wrapped spiritual disciplines into their lives to seek God. It may lead you into a deeper study or give you some new habits that help you grow closer to Jesus. Several people have suggested that this would be a great study to do annually or twice a year to help remind you of some best practices.

My prayer is that God will meet you in this study, and God will make sure that you get from it what you need.

What Are These Questions Anyway?

John Wesley was a fellow (teacher) at Oxford, and Charles, his younger brother, was a student. Charles let his spiritual life lag and dropped a note to John asking him for help. So John and Charles began meeting, and soon others joined in. Together, they developed methods to focus on their spiritual growth - prayer, bible study, service, communion, worship, accountability, and more.

As it grew, other students could not understand the group's appeal or enthusiasm. They made fun of them, calling them "Bible-moths," a "Holy Club," and "Methodists." The questions we're going to study came out of those first groups.

In their devotions, both in the group and as individuals, they'd use this list of questions to look at their spiritual lives methodically. The questions helped them be spiritually accountable to themselves and each other. In addition, they encouraged growth in their commitment to Christ because they were all taken from their reading of Scripture.

These small gatherings were the first seeds of the Methodist Movement today.

The Wesleys and the people in their groups did the same things repeatedly. They prayed, studied the Bible, worshiped together, served the poor, fed the hungry, and more every day, day after day. In addition, they met in small groups to focus on spiritual growth, a practice that is still an essential part of many Wesleyan traditions worldwide. Even at this early stage, the Wesleys and the early Methodists were looking for ways to be more and more like Jesus.

These questions were one of their tools.

Notes About the Study

This study is not a lecture. If there is a leader, they are simply a facilitator — the sessions of this study are all about group discussion. Here's how we run it (and I believe this will work for you as well):

1. Before the group session, everyone should work through the lesson. It's best if you write answers out for discussion.
2. For each question, think about it in your life. Then, prayerfully ask God to help you see the truth about this topic and how your life reflects it. Finally, make some notes about what comes to mind.
3. Read the Bible passages making notes about anything that God calls to mind - especially things that seem new or different to you. There is plenty of space in the book for your thoughts.
4. Reread the question given the Scripture. Make any more notes that seem appropriate.
5. The group uses Las Vegas rules (what happens in the group stays in the group). Expect confidentiality.
6. We meet weekly for 60 or 90 minutes, depending on group size. Make appropriate arrangements so that everyone has time to express their thoughts and ask questions.
7. The goal is honest discussion and spiritual growth.
8. Sometimes discussing some of these issues is uncomfortable, and that's OK. Growing pains usually accompany growth. However, if someone needs help of any kind during this study, please make sure they get it.

I love to hear from people about your experience with this study. I welcome corrections too. Feedback of any kind is very welcome. Please email me at russwritesabook@gmail.com.

The Questions

Note: Wesley wrote these questions in the 18th century, so some language is awkward. I've tried to add contemporary interpretations in some sessions, so use them if they're helpful. We'll answer these questions in the sessions on the following pages. Here's the big list.

Session 1

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?

Session 2

5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?

Session 3

9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?

Session 4

12. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?

13. Do I disobey God in anything?

14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?

Session 5

15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?

16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?

17. How do I spend my spare time?

Session 6

18. Am I proud?

19. Do I thank God that I am not like other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?

20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold resentment toward, or disregard?

21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?

Session 7

22. Is Christ real to me?

Session 1

Thought for This Session

John Wesley (and many others) taught that small groups are critical for spiritual growth. In the early Methodist practice, people curious about Christianity were invited into a group called a “Society”. A Society was the mandatory first step for converts to the faith as well.

Societies were local gatherings of Methodists that met weekly or monthly. Their meetings included music and teachings and people giving testimony to what the Holy Spirit was doing in their life or telling their stories of their faith journey.

Most of all, a Society was a group of people who you did life with - significantly growing in faith. This was a group who knew you as well as you knew them. They helped you when you needed help, and held you accountable when you needed that. They prayed for you, encouraged you, taught you, loved you. They were central to your spiritual growth, no matter how “advanced” your faith journey became. And as new members joined, you would help them to know Jesus better and better too.

That first “Holy Club” was never more than 25 people. While the Wesleys were alive, the Methodist movement mainly was missionaries and small Societies, not a church until Methodists in “the colonies” began to organize. Today the United Methodist Church numbers over 12 million members and the entire Methodist movement has over 80 million members around the world.

Wesley’s small groups had long-ranging impacts. Perhaps the desire to focus on spiritual growth contributed to that, and these questions may have helped it along as well.

What ripples might our small group see these in the future? Think about that as we dig into the questions together.

Questions for Study

Remember to jot down some notes for our discussion as you go through these questions.

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am?
In other words, am I a hypocrite?

Matthew 5:7-11

Matthew 6: 1-8

Matthew 7:1-6

2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?

Proverbs 25:14

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

2 Corinthians 10:12-13

3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence? (Modern interpretation: When I'm told something that's not public knowledge, do I pass it on to someone else, telling them to "keep it just between us"?)

Proverbs 11:13

4. Can I be trusted?

Proverbs 27:6

Titus 2:1-11

Memory Verse to Contemplate This Week

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. - Romans 12:3

Thoughts on the Memory Verse

Notes, Prayers, and Praises to Remember

Session 2

Thought for This Session

When John Wesley and his small group at Oxford spent time reading the Bible, they would often discuss what it meant. Later, he recommended that people read from both Old and New Testaments in the morning and again in the evening, every day. Of course, it wasn't the only book he read, but he was passionate about it, and he had a method to his Bible reading.

“Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights: “Lord, is it not Thy word, ‘If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God’? ” (Preface to Sermons on Several Occasions)

Daily Bible reading was just one of the spiritual disciplines the Societies encouraged each member to do. Prayer was a part of every day, as was service to others. During the week, members gathered and worshiped together, and many fasted as well. Regular discussions among the group helped people apply Scriptural principles to daily life and learn from each other as all grew to look more and more like Jesus.

Becoming a member of a Methodist Society meant accepting (and giving) a certain level of accountability. This accountability wasn't reserved for the long-time, mature Christians who wanted to “go deeper” in their faith - it was for everyone. Whether it was reading the Bible or other spiritual disciplines, these folks held themselves and each other accountable for doing what God calls us to do.

What do you think are some of the advantages for you of having this sort of well-organized, friendly Christian accountability?

Questions for Study

Making notes helps you be ready for our group meeting.

5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits? (Modern interpretation: Are fashion, friends, work, or hobbies the driving force in my life?)

Proverbs 19:4-7

Luke 12:27-34

James 4:13-17

6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?

Psalm 27:1-5

Job 9:32-35

Romans 5:3-5

7. Did the Bible live in me today?

Psalm 1:1-3

Matthew 11:28-30

8. Do I give the Bible time to speak to me every day?

Joshua 1:7-9

Psalm 143:5-6

Memory Verse to Contemplate This Week

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.”
- 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 NIV

Thoughts on the Memory Verse

Prayers, Praises, and Notes to Remember

Session 3

Thought for This Session

In 1729, the brothers began organizing meetings to discuss faith and religion. Critics dubbed them the "Holy Club" or "Methodists," a term of contempt. These methodical people who attempted to serve God every hour of the day were derided by jeering college students. This continuous religious observance was seen as excessive. Critics dismissed them as "enthusiasts," yet they persisted in methodically following Jesus.

The club members set aside time for prayer, spiritual self-examination, Bible study, and meeting with each other. In addition, they celebrated Holy Communion regularly and fasted every Wednesday and Friday until 3 PM.

But they also went beyond personal observances. They went to the homes of sick people or those who had no food, gave meals to low-income families, visited incarcerated persons, and taught orphans how to read. They did all of this intentionally, seeking to do the things Jesus called us to do, and in the process, they hoped to grow to become more and more like Christ, as Scripture promises.

How might our lives, church, and community look different next year and the year after if we all were this intentional, starting today?

What types of opposition might arise if we choose to follow closely (and methodically) where God is leading us? How would I respond to criticism and opposition?

Questions for Study

Make notes as you feel God pointing things out to you.

9. Am I enjoying prayer?

Isaiah 56:6-8

Nehemiah 1:1-11

Philippians 1:3-6

10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?

1 Kings 4:29-34

Psalm 40:8-10

Psalm 96:1-3,8-10

Acts 8:26-40

11. Do I pray about the money I spend?

Luke 19:11-26

Acts 5:1-11

1 Timothy 6:6-10

1 Peter 4:9-11

Memory Verse to Contemplate This Week

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. - Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

Thoughts on the Memory Verse:

Notes, Praises, and Prayers to Remember

Session 4

Thought for This Session

John and Charles Wesley and their “Holy Club” believed that if the Bible said we should do something, then we should try to do it. They took the commands seriously to read Scripture daily and meditate on it. They saw the call to continual prayer and worked prayer into every corner of their day. The Bible said to share your faith and serve others, and they did that with enthusiasm. They read the call to fast and made fasting a part of every week.

We read about fasting in both the Old and New Testaments. It is something that Jesus expected his followers to do, and he taught them how to do it. Fasting is even “trendy” today. For most of his life, John Wesley fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays. From sunset the day before until 3 PM, John had nothing but water. Later in his life, he reduced his fasting to only Fridays, but it was still an essential part of his week. He taught early Methodists the practice and felt that it was so important that it was mandatory for anyone who became ordained.

The spiritual discipline of fasting is not about losing weight - it’s about gaining God. It reminds us of our dependence on God. It also reminds us of how some who live in poverty feel every day and connects us to other believers who have fasted through the millennia. Setting aside your everyday routine and denying yourself food for a time can intensify your prayer life and help you see where God is leading you. And it’s something that, sadly, most Christians never even try.

See Thoughts On Fasting at the end of this book for more information.

How would our church and our town look if we developed good habits about spiritual disciplines like prayer and fasting in our lives all the time?

Questions for Study

Make some notes. It will be great to discuss them!

12. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?

Psalm 127:1-2

Proverbs 3:21-26 and 6:9-11

Matthew 26:40-46

Luke 6:12-13

13. Do I disobey God in anything?

Isaiah 3:8-11

John 14:15

Ephesians 5:1-16

14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?

Job 27:1-6

2 Samuel 24:10

Acts 24:14-16

Memory Verse to Contemplate This Week

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. - Ephesians 5:16-17 (NIV)

Thoughts on the Memory Verse

Praises, Prayers, and Notes to Remember

Session 5

Thought for This Session

Admitting that you've done something wrong is hard. We like to tell ourselves that we're OK, so admitting wrongdoing causes us emotional pain. In addition, the image of ourselves that we portray to family and friends, in-person and online, is precious, and confessing something might ruin it.

But that's precisely why John Wesley thought that confessing our sins to one another was so valuable. Not only is it commanded in the Bible, but it also recognizes God (not us) as the center of the universe. It lets us take off our masks. It allows our brothers and sisters to come around us, know us, support us, teach, love, and challenge us. It begins the act of repentance and genuine redemption. And to John Wesley and early Methodists, confession was a central part of spiritual growth.

When we think about confession, we may think of the Catholic practice of confessing your sins to a priest and receiving penance. Wesley pointed out that this is not how the Bible describes repentance and confession. He felt that there were three types of Biblical confession - confessing privately to God, confessing to an individual that you hurt, and confessing to brothers and sisters in the church. Every kind of confession has its value, and all are important as we seek to be more and more like Jesus. We should practice each one regularly.

How would our church and our community look in 2 years or ten years if we took time daily to let God uncover our sins, confess them and repent?

What if we went further to seek forgiveness if we have wronged someone?

Questions for Study

Notes are good - jot down what God calls to your attention.

15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?

Exodus 3:7-14

Micah 7:1-7

2 Corinthians 4:7-11

16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?

Deuteronomy 5:6-21

Proverbs 15:1

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

Ephesians 4:26

Colossians 3:1-17

17. How do I spend my spare time?

Psalm 39:4-5

Ephesians 5:15-20

Hebrews 10:24-25

Proverbs 17:17

Memory Verse to Contemplate This Week

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:16 (NIV)

Thoughts on the Memory Verse

Notes, Prayers, and Praises to Remember

Session 6

Thought for This Session

Ridicule and persecution could not deter Wesley or his friends from living for Christ with every beat of their hearts and fiber of beings. They wanted to know Jesus, glorify Him, and thoroughly enjoy him. So they used these 22 questions to look at their lives, what they believed, and how they lived out those beliefs.

Their guiding principles were commitment, discipline, openness, accountability, and a shared faith journey.

John Wesley and the growing Methodist movement believed from the beginning that the Bible calls every believer to participate in the physical ministry of Jesus Christ. He encouraged the early Methodists to live out that call by "doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all [people]," and then included that instruction in the General Rules of the Methodist Church.

As the movement grew in the late 1700s and early 1800s, church members helped the poor learn to read as part of their Sunday School classes and care for factory workers' children (and some children who worked in factories). They helped provide medical care for those in need. They welcomed immigrants and helped them get settled and find a supportive community. Today, you can see the legacy of those actions in colleges, hospitals, and social work worldwide.

If he were here today, John Wesley would look around our town and see the need:

- people who need to be fed and clothed
- folks who need shelter or are lonely in their homes or nursing homes
- single parents who need help
- people who are new to our country or our area who need a warm welcome
- children struggling in school who need support

He'd point to these groups and many more. Then, he would grab us by the hand and head out into the community together to bring the love and grace of Jesus Christ to people in need.

What would our town look like if we embraced God's commands to love our neighbors as ourselves in a literal and radical way?

Questions for Study

Jot down some notes for our discussion as you go.

18. Am I proud?

Proverbs 18:12

Jeremiah 9:23-26

Mark 7:20-23

Philippians 2:1-11

19. Do I thank God that I am not like other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican? (Modern interpretation: Do I feel superior to others?)

Proverbs 26:12

Luke 18:9-14

Acts 11:1-3

2 Timothy 3:1-5

20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward, or disregard?

Job 5:2

Romans 12:9-21

Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75 (bonus points for reading Mark 14, Luke 22, and John 13)

21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?

Numbers 13:30-14:11

Philippians 2:12-16

Begin To Think About This for Discussion Next Week

What have I learned in this study that I want to commit to practicing daily going forward?

Memory Verse to Contemplate This Week

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him, who called us by his own glory and goodness. - 2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

Thoughts on the Memory Verse

Praises, Prayers, and Notes to Remember

Session 7

Thought for This Session

The question “is Christ real to me?” could fill a book all on its own. For Wesley and Christians through the ages, experiencing Jesus was life-changing. Asking this simple question ourselves helps us remember that life-changing reality every time we ask.

We can do kind things for people, donate to worthy causes, go to church, and still have no relation to the One who came to rescue us. We can read the Bible from cover to cover and miss the real, living, loving Jesus.

I studied many things in college. Unfortunately, I remember little of the coursework - it simply didn't change my life. We can get stuck in the same trap when we perform Christian tasks. We want to know the checklist or formula for a happy and successful life. If we can do the right things, read the right things, say the right things, check the right boxes, then we can live happily ever after. Except God doesn't work that way.

We're promised a transformation of our mind, but we don't get it by studying and checking things off the list.

If we slow down and seek the living Christ in his word and do the things he calls us to do, we will have a far different experience. In following Christ out of love, rather than out of legalism, we will get to know the real Jesus - the one who loves you so much that he gave his life for you, even though you were his enemy. That love is transformative!

And so, this last question invites that level of devotion. It calls us to open ourselves up to the real and living God. Do you feel that knocking at the door of your heart? Let's answer it together.

How would my life look different if I spent time every day simply seeking to get to know the real, living Jesus a little better through reading the Bible, prayer, worship, service, and other spiritual disciplines?

How would this impact those I love?

Questions for Study

Make notes for this question, the Scripture passages, and the discussion questions below.

22. Is Christ real to me?

Genesis 16:6-13

Luke 7:1-21

Luke 24:13-35

John 20:24-29

Acts 9:1-19

Other discussion questions

What have I learned in this study that I want to commit to practicing daily going forward?

How might a commitment to this kind of honest examination of my spiritual life sharpen my commitment to Christ?

How might this kind of spiritual accountability impact the mission of Christ through me (and through our church) in the world?

What is God telling me to do? What am I going to do about it?

Memory Verse to Contemplate This Week

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” - John 15:5 (NIV)

Thoughts on the Memory Verse

Notes, Prayers, and Praises to Remember

Other Thoughts About the Study

Thoughts on Fasting

Even though the Bible calls for fasting, studies show that people of faith who are non-Christians are twice as likely as Christians to engage in fasting. In addition, many faithful Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and other groups fast regularly. Ancient philosophers and scientists also encouraged fasting for physical and spiritual effects.

John Wesley encouraged all Christians to fast. He understood that fasting doesn't earn us favor from God and that we should not neglect it as if it were meaningless.

He wrote: "But of all the means of grace there is scarce any concerning which men have run into greater extremes, than ... religious fasting. How have some exalted this beyond all Scripture and reason; -- and others utterly disregarded it; as it were revenging themselves by undervaluing as much as the former had overvalued it! Those have spoken of it, as if it were all in all; if not the end itself, yet infallibly connected with it: These, as if it were just nothing, as if it were a fruitless labour, which had no relation at all thereto. Whereas it is certain the truth lies between them both. It is not all, nor yet is it nothing. It is not the end, but it is a precious means thereto; a means which God

himself has ordained, and in which therefore, when it is duly used, he will surely give us his blessing."

(Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (VII))

And that is the way that we as a group should try fasting - right in the middle. There is nothing magic in the fast itself. Fasting will not make God do what you want. At the same time, there is value in it, precisely because God calls us to it. In fact, in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives instructions on how to fast. He doesn't say that we should fast. He assumes we'll do it, and he tells us how. Matt. 6:16-18

This week, let's try.

What is Fasting?

At its simplest, fasting is abstaining from food. There are other types of fasts (abstaining from something that you enjoy, abstaining from pleasant food, etc.), but let's keep it simple. We'll talk about a simple fast of having no food, only water.

One medical note: a doctor did not write this book. If you have any medical concerns about fasting, see your doctor. The point of fasting is not to make yourself sick or endanger your life - it's to seek God. Talk to your

Doctor about the Christian call to fasting and see what they recommend.

And one practical note: if you're a coffee addict like I am, you'll probably want to add black coffee or tea to your fast. A caffeine headache is not a great first fasting experience. When I do an extended fast, I sometimes reduce my coffee consumption for several days before starting the fast to avoid this problem.

The Tradition of Fasting and Prayer

Wesley recommended accompanying fasting with prayer, as has been Christian and Jewish tradition for thousands of years. We see this tradition throughout the Bible (Ezra, Nehemiah, Psalms, Daniel, Luke, and Acts). My recommendation is to take a drink of water and spend a few minutes in prayer whenever you feel hungry or thirsty. Use your body's physical cues to remind you that your fasting is not about the food or lack of it. It's about focusing on the One who gives us everything we need.

John Wesley advocated fasting as one of the primary spiritual practices (or ordinances of God) for all Methodists. When he drafted "The General Rules of the Methodist Church," he wrote, "It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies that they

should continue to evidence their desire of salvation, by attending upon all the ordinances of God, such are: the public worship of God; the ministry of the Word, either read or expounded; the Supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting or abstinence."

These days in the ordination service, the bishop asks every United Methodist pastor: "Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, by both precept and example?"

And the ordinands respond: "I will so recommend."

So What is the Wesley Fast?

For a portion of John Wesley's ministry, he advocated fasting on both Wednesday and Friday each week as a regular spiritual discipline. It's reasonably well known that Wesley would not ordain anyone to the Methodist ministry who was unwilling to fast those days.

Later in his ministry, Wesley mainly fasted on Fridays. He usually began a Friday fast at sundown on Thursday. This was the traditional Jewish and early Christian practice. (Remember, the Jewish tradition starts the day at sunset.)

Wesley typically ended his fast at 3:00 p.m. on Friday and prayed regularly throughout the fast.

Guidelines for Trying Out Fasting

Remember, fasting is about God, and your motive should be to seek and honor God, not impress people with how spiritually excellent you are.

And just like Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,” so you should apply that idea to fasting. Be flexible in your timing. Listen for the Holy Spirit. Spend time in prayer. Don't get so caught up with the act of fasting that you forget why you're fasting. If you need to break your fast early for some reason, that's OK. Try again next Friday.

Only fast after talking to your doctor. And then, only if you're sure you're physically able to handle it. If the doctor says “no,” then there are other spiritual disciplines to try.

Make sure you drink plenty of water while fasting. This serves two purposes. First, we get a lot of water from our food, and since we're not eating, we need to fill that void. Second, it helps when you're feeling hungry. Thank God for the water, and drink. Sometimes I like to remember Jesus talking about fountains of living water welling up within us as I take a drink.

I also like to use the quote Jesus used when Satan tempted him - “man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Fasting can also be a time to memorize a Scripture verse or meditate on a particular Scripture during your prayer time.

As I mentioned earlier, the “default” Wesley Fast is from sundown Thursday till 3:00 PM Friday. However, some Christians go till evening or dinner time on Friday. Do whichever you feel led to do.

If You Want to Make Fasting a Lifestyle

Decide whether you're going to do a traditional fast (water only), a no-solid-food fast, a no-meat fast, or some other kind of fast/abstinence. There are no hard and fast rules here. Again, follow the Spirit where it leads. For example, you may feel that you need to fast from social media, a hobby, electronics, or something else - and that may be tougher for you than going without food.

To develop a lifestyle, plan on Friday as your regular fasting day. Remember, there's nothing "magic" about Friday. It's simply a historical day for fasting in many Christian traditions, mainly because Jesus was crucified on a Friday. If, for any reason, another day of the week makes more sense for you, then fast on that day. By getting into a habit, your mind and body will begin to prepare for the fast. Your family and friends will also start to consider your fast as they plan.

Remember, there will be times when it makes sense to skip your Friday fast or move it to another day of the week. God calls us to be in a community, so don't skip that lunch with an old friend just because they want to meet on Friday. There is value for us in fasting, so go have lunch on Friday, enjoy your lunch with your friend, and simply fast on Thursday or Saturday instead!

Finally, as with all spiritual disciplines, first, seek God's Kingdom and righteousness. Fasting without God is just going hungry. Fasting should be a way to press pause on our appetites and instead seek God. Take time during your fast to do precisely that.

Enjoy!

About the Author



Rev. Russ Broomell is a follower of Jesus and a frequent prodigal. He's spent years debating with God and doesn't recommend it. He's also seen God at work up close, in his life and the lives of others.

God's call often scares the living daylights out of Russ. And that's OK. It's more than Russ could do alone anyway.

Russ has a passion for teaching and preaching because he feels the call to equip the people of God to do the things that God calls us to do. His favorite thing is seeing someone "get" who God is leading them to become and embrace it. The transformative power of the Holy Spirit at work is a joy to behold.

He's got a weird and wonderful family that God assembled in miraculous ways. He constantly feels that he's been blessed beyond all reasonableness, but such is the love of God.