



All summer long we're talking about being formed in our relationship with Jesus. Part of that formation involves fasting. Most of us would prefer to talk about anything but fasting. Fasting reminds us of our vulnerability. Fasting reminds us of our relationship with food. When we stand before God hungry, we suddenly know who we are. We are ones who are poor that are called to be rich in ways we don't understand in this world. We are the ones who are broken who have been mended by the grace of Jesus. We are the ones who are empty that are longing to be filled not with the perishable but with the imperishable food of God.

1. Fasting is the deliberate, temporary abstention from food for religious reasons. In normal words, fasting is an intentional ceasing of eating to grow closer to God. What do you think about most when you hear about fasting for spiritual growth?
2. **Read Matthew 6:16-18.** After His temptation in the wilderness in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches us about fasting. **Read Matthew 4:1-11.** What part of Jesus' teaching on fasting sticks out to you the most?
3. In **1 Samuel 7:6** God's people gather together and fast in the presence of the Lord. **Read 1 Samuel 7:2-6.** Here we read that there was a corporate time of prayer and fasting. When was the last time you fasted and confessed your sin?
4. In the Old Testament, fasting was a way for God's people to deny themselves to hear from the Lord. **Read Ezra 8:21-23, Nehemiah 1:1-4, and Esther 4:12-17.** What would it look like for you to fast to hear from the Lord?
5. The Bible appears to teach us that some of the Israelites had been fasting with impure motives. **Read Isaiah 58:4-10.** Thinking about what Isaiah and Jesus wrote, what are some ways that we can have impure motives in fasting?
6. During His time on earth, Jesus' disciples were scrutinized for not fasting. **Read Mark 2:18-22.** Jesus teaches us that once He has ascended into heaven it is our time to fast. What, if anything, is holding you back from fasting?
7. Neal shared three ways to make fasting real in our lives: fast to hear from the Lord, fast to draw near to the Lord, and fast for clarity on a decision. Looking at these three ideas, is there one you'd like to implement this month?
8. Close your time in prayer. Talk about who you will invite to Coastline?