



# FAST FORWARD

A SEASON OF SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT

Welcome to FAST FORWARD. If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some simple instructions, as well as the continuation of the questions, on page 2, and this week's Group Practice Suggestion on page 3.

February 21, 2021

FAST FORWARD WEEK 1

Luke 4:1-13

## WEEK 1

### Questions to use with your group:

- ▶ What has God been teaching you this week, whether through your prayer and fasting, or in other ways? (*We suggest opening your discussion time with this same question each week of Lent, as a way to encourage deeper sharing and growth.*)
- ▶ Now, Jesus warned the people of his time to not brag about their fasts, their public prayer life and their alms-giving. Some Pharisees and others would publicly display their piety and in doing so, it was clear they did so out of their own pride and to increase their social status rather than commune with God. Jesus strongly warned against that. Our time of sharing is to reflect personally about any gains or failures experienced in fasting and to encourage one another in community. So before we dive into the text and discuss the teaching points from the sermon, let's discuss our experience on fasting. Is anyone willing to share their experience of fasting? What did you fast from and what did you learn or gain from it?
  - ▶ Is there anything you would do differently for the next time or is there a different type of fast you are considering?
- ▶ Pastor Bryan preached from Luke 4:1-13 which is the account of the 40 day wilderness fast and the temptations Jesus faced.
  - ▶ As we read the text, identify the three temptations the devil used to tempt Jesus.
  - ▶ One appealed to Jesus' physical hunger, another appealed to the desire for power, and the last was a clever one to test God the Father. As we read and reflect on Jesus' responses, what resonates most with you and how might it inform your life when you are being tested?

## How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- If your group is new this Lent, take some time during each meeting to get to know one another.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another, and be sure to set aside time for prayer.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question. Pick two or three that you think will be fruitful for your group, and invite people to reflect on those.
- Use the weekly Group Practice Suggestions (found on page 3) if they are helpful for your group.
- You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.

## Questions, cont.

- ▶ Let's try to use our sanctified imagination with this next one: If the devil wanted to tempt you in the wilderness after 40 days, what would he have used to increase his chance of success? The point of this question is realizing our vulnerabilities and where we need to increase our trust and reliance in the Lord.
- ▶ Bryan mentioned some of the traps of talking about fasting included legalism, superstition and pride. Yet, we need teaching and encouragement to grow in our challenging spiritual disciplines. How can we make sure that our fasting is focused on worshipping and growing in Jesus and not on spectacle or superstition?
- ▶ As you consider your Lenten fasting, are there particular areas in your life that you hope the Lord moves you forward in? What do you feel comfortable sharing and how we can we pray and support each other?

# This Week's Group Practice Suggestion

- ▶ “The Christian discipline of fighting temptation is not about self-hatred, or rejecting parts of our God-given humanity. It is about celebrating God’s gift of full humanity and, like someone learning a musical instrument, discovering how to tune it and play it to its best possibility. At the heart of our resistance to temptation is love and loyalty to the God who has already called us his beloved children in Christ, and who holds out before us the calling to follow him in the path which leads to the true glory. In that glory lies the true happiness, the true fulfilment, which neither world, nor flesh, nor devil can begin to imitate.” – N.T. Wright
- ▶ Each week of our Lenten series, there will be a weekly fast to consider. In Week 1, we are invited to give up a food, a drink or a meal. It could be fasting from meals for a day or fasting from coffee or chocolate or salty snacks for the week. On Sunday, we will break the fast and consider the coming week’s invitation. Again, it’s recommended that you contextualize this with your life, not comparing to others, and most importantly, invite God to draw you closer to Him and forward in His will this Lent.

- ▶ A Prayer for this week of Lent:

Lord God Almighty, shaper and ruler of all creatures, we pray for your great mercy, that you guide us towards you, for we cannot find our way.

And guide us to your will, to the need of our soul, for we cannot do it ourselves. And make our mind steadfast in your will and aware of our soul’s need.

Strengthen us against the temptations of the devil, and remove from us all lust and every unrighteousness, and shield us against our foes, seen and unseen.

Teach us to do your will, that we may inwardly love you before all things with a pure mind. For you are our maker and our redeemer, our help, our comfort, our trust, our hope; praise and glory be to you now and forever. Amen.