

FEASTING OR FASTING
Matthew 9:9-15

1. Fasting is taking time ordinarily used for eating or sleeping and going on a crash study program of the Word of God, and or application. Fasting does not gain points with God. It is not dieting. One does not fast to impress God, or to persuade God so that He is impressed with your asceticism.
2. He challenged Matthew to follow Him.
 - A. Matthew 9:9, "And as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him."
 - B. Matthew was busy, "sitting at receipt of customs." He was a tax collector. He found Jesus Christ as his Saviour so "he arose and followed Him."
3. In verse 10, Jesus Christ was at a dinner party in Matthew's house.
 - A. Luke 5:27-30, "And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him. And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But the scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?"
 - B. Mark 2:14, 15, "And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him. And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples: for there were many, and they followed Him."
4. "Many publicans and sinners" - Those were those who had illusions about themselves, or the religious people, came, looked in to see who was there and "sat down." They came in because Jesus Christ was filled with the Holy Spirit and He was relaxed. The disciples were with the Lord and they also were relaxed.
5. **Outside:** Two groups observed great religious fasts.
 - A. **Pharisees:** Unsaved, religious, self-righteous.
 - B. **Disciples of John:** Saved, religious, and self-righteous.
6. **Inside:** Two groups with the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - A. Publicans: Tax collectors, unsaved Jews, except Matthew, minus self-righteousness.
 - B. Sinners: (Prostitutes) unsaved Jewish girl-friends, minus self-righteousness.
7. Two things happened that night.
 - A. Group outside criticized the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - B. Group inside had a dinner party instead of fasting.
8. **The disciples of John:** Born again legalists, self-righteous believers, put themselves in the same category as the unbelieving Pharisees.
 - A. Verse 14, "WE AND THE PHARISEES." They criticized the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples for being inside with the publicans and the sinners and not fasting.

9. Fasting is using time normally used for something else, such as eating and sleeping, for Bible study and prayer.
10. **The challenge here:**
Are you going to be inside feasting with the Lord Jesus Christ, or outside fasting with the self-righteous religious people who do this so they can receive glory?
11. In other words, fasting is often used by legalistic people for a point system. A "faster" of this nature is critical of those who do not fast, and pride themselves on how they fast, and what they obtain by fasting and criticize the Lord Jesus Christ.

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