

Practice

SESSION 04: TO STAND WITH THE POOR

Information alone does not produce transformation. To grow, let's put this teaching into practice. Take a moment to reflect on what the Spirit is inviting you into.

01 Fast for one day, focusing on standing with the poor

Our exercise for Session 04 is very similar to the previous three sessions, with one simple addition: generosity and service to the poor.

- Pick a day that works for you; we recommend Wednesdays or Fridays.
- If possible, pick a day that works for your community to fast together.
- Fast until sundown that day. Then, eat a simple meal in gratitude.
- In the time you'd normally be grocery shopping, cooking, eating, or cleaning, give yourself to prayer.
- Calculate the money you would have spent on breakfast and lunch, and share it with the poor.

- Here are a few ideas of how to do this:
 - Donate the money or food to your local food bank or your church's food pantry.
 - Donate the funds to a local nonprofit.
 - Buy groceries for someone.
 - Share your money with someone who needs help paying a medical bill or unexpected expense.
 - Find a need and meet it that day.
 - Pray and ask God to infuse your imagination and desire with his imagination and desire. Do whatever comes to the surface of your heart.
- As you fast, give, and serve, quietly ask God to set your heart free of self-love and self-preservation and transform you into a person of Christlike agape.

Note: Please modify as needed for health reasons, and also consider whether it would be supportive for you to meet with a therapist or doctor as you think about engaging in this practice. As a community, ask how you can support and include those who need to modify this practice.

When and how will you fast? Take a moment to ask the Spirit to lead you in how you share with the poor.

Reach Practice

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We all learn differently. Some of us prefer reading, others listening, and others doing. If you'd like to go deeper, choose what resonates with you and give it a try! Even if you don't try a Reach Practice, remember to journal in the Fasting Reflection section before your next session as a group.

Reading

Read chapters 16-20 of *God's Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis.

Podcast

Listen to episode 4 of the Fasting series from the Rule of Life podcast by Practicing the Way.

Exercise: Serve the poor

Our final Reach Exercise is to not only share your food money with the poor, but to also find a place to serve those in need in your city or community. To make a relational move toward the poor, treating them not as objects of pity, but as brothers and sisters.

You may want to serve with a local nonprofit or volunteer for a justice initiative with your church, or simply find someone you know with a practical need. The more relational the better.

The end goal isn't just to share with the poor, or even serve the poor, but become *family* with the poor. As you do, you will see the face of Jesus in often unexpected places.

Fasting Reflection

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As you come to the end of this Practice, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following three questions.

01 After a month, what effect do you see this Practice having on your body and soul?

02 Are you thinking of continuing this Practice? If so, in what way?

03 How could you continue almsgiving in your city or community?

Note: As you write, be as specific as possible. While bullet points are just fine, if you write it out in narrative form, your brain will be able to process your insights in a more lasting way.