

Prepare for an

AWAKENING

Based on the book by Stovall Weems

WEEK 4 :: MARCH 30, 2011

Feast for the Soul

How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

—MATTHEW 9:15, NIV

To some people, I'm the "fasting guy." They've heard about my book *Awakening*, where I promote a twenty-one-day fast. And maybe they know about the prayer and fasting movement I help to promote at awake21.org.

People who know me only superficially may think I'm the "fasting guy" because I'm grim and can't bring myself to enjoy life. Wrong! Let me tell you something: I love to eat! Catch me on the right day, and I'm the "feasting guy."

I fast, not because I enjoy self-denial in itself, but because going without something for a while can move me closer to the Savior I love. I fast to celebrate the goodness of God and experience Him more powerfully in my life.

I think Jesus loved to eat too. He went to a lot of dinner parties. He was accused—falsely—of being a glutton and a drunkard (Matthew 11:19). He and His followers didn't fast, unlike the followers of John the Baptist (Matthew 9:14-17).

But at the Last Supper, Jesus did foretell that His followers would fast during the period of His physical absence from them. Did you know that includes you and me? We're living in the time between Jesus' ascension to heaven and His return in glory, and so we fast to draw nearer to Him in a spiritual way.

But let me tell you something else: The beautifully symbolic Passover meal Jesus shared with His disciples will have its fulfillment at the end of time in the "wedding supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9). You and I will be seated at that table, enjoying a greater feast than we've ever imagined. We'll be reunited with Jesus as bride with Bridegroom.

Until that great feast day comes, we fast to know better the Lord who lived and died and rose again for us.

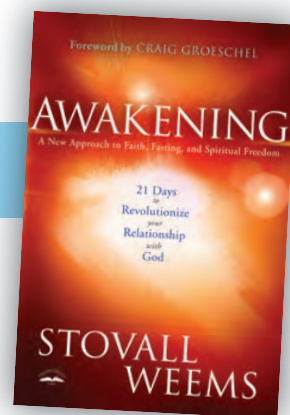
If we don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because we have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because we have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Our soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great. If we are full of what the world offers, then perhaps a fast might express, or even increase, our soul's appetite for God. Between the dangers of self-denial and self-indulgence is the path of pleasant pain called fasting. —JOHN PIPER

Bible Reading Plan: Luke 22:7-22

Prayer Focus:

Why not try a twenty-one-day fast starting April 3? Pray for God to draw you nearer to Him during your fast. Plan to break your fast as you celebrate Easter on April 24.

Based on the book, *AWAKENING: A New Approach to Faith, Fasting, and Spiritual Freedom* by Stovall Weems



About the Author

Stovall Weems is the founder and lead pastor of Celebration Church in Jacksonville, Florida, a thriving, multi-site church with locations both regionally and internationally. In addition to being a pastor, teacher, and conference speaker, Stovall leads *Awakening*, a 21-day spiritual campaign of prayer, fasting, and personal devotion that takes place each January. Stovall and his wife, Kerri, have three children. Learn more at www.awake21.org.