I. Background For Fasting
   A. When you pray . . . (Matt. 6:5–6)
      1. Don’t pray like the hypocrites
      2. Do pray this way: The Lord’s Prayer
   B. When you fast . . . (Matt. 6:16–17 [compare John 14:12])
      1. Do not fast like the hypocrites
      2. You are expected to fast. Not “if,” but “when” you fast

II. Purpose: Self-Humbling
   A. It removes pride—the first sin
      1. Sit in the lowest place at the table (Luke 14:11)
      2. Humble yourself (James 4:10)
      3. God resists the proud (1 Pet. 5:5–6)
   B. Pattern of David (Ps. 35:13)
      1. He humbled his soul with fasting
   C. Israel on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29–31 [Acts 27:9])
   D. Ezra and the returning exiles (Ezra 8:21–23)

III. When To Fast
   A. People under God’s judgment
      2. Jonah vs. Nineveh (Jonah 3:4–10)
   B. Averting disaster—Esther and the Jews in Persia (Esther 4:13–17)
   C. Individual fasting in New Testament
      1. One way Paul validated his ministry (2 Cor. 6:4–5)
      2. In fastings often (2 Cor. 11:23–27 [compare Acts 9:8–9])
   D. Corporate fasting in New Testament
         a. To select the two men
         b. To send the apostles out
   E. Mercy for a nation in seven steps—four things God requires (2 Chron. 7:14)
      1. Humble yourself—by fasting
      2. Pray
      3. Seek God’s face
      4. Turn from your wicked ways
      5. Then God will hear
      6. Then God will forgive
      7. Then God will heal your land
   F. Prelude to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit
      1. Responsibility of leaders: elders, priests, ministers (Joel 2:15–17)