7 Benefits to A Media Fast

1. Clearer Mind

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies." 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Immediately after completing the first day of our media fast we noticed that we felt more clear minded. There are a handful of reasons that could have caused us to feel this way, one of them being in front of a computer or phone screen for an extended period of time. This can cause physical issues such as headaches, dry eyes, and eye irritation.

Not being on our phones or social media we believe has also caused this clearer feeling. We have felt more focused on what is going on with ourselves and less on what everyone else is doing. Now we are not saying we are not interested in what our friends and family are doing but the constant posts and scrolling through your news feeds can really make your mind feel jumbled and often takes away from truly honoring God through the respect of honoring yourself.

2. More Time

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." Ephesians 5:15-17

Each day that we wake up we should be rejoicing to our Lord to be alive! We are here another day for a God-given purpose and that purpose isn't to go to work, then become distracted by the constant social media we have access to from our phones and computers, only to return home and " wine-down" by watching 3 hours of Netflix. When we decided to cut out most of our social media (not including phone calls, texting, and writing for our blog) we saw a lot of time freed up. Now we haven't stopped doing our usual weekly routines and jobs, even so, we have seen more time gained from this fast.

We were interested to see statistics on the average consumption of TV and phone usage, strictly non-verbal use such as texting and the use of social media. The stats were unbelievable! According to Statista.com, we found on average that daily media consumption in the U.S. for 2017 was 238 minutes of television and 197 minutes on a mobile device… that is 7 hours and 15 minutes a day total! I don't know about you but to us this average was alarming.

We are not promised tomorrow just like Paul wrote in Ephesians, but we do have today! On a daily basis, we don't come close to this average before the fast but we have been investing in this free time through more social interaction with one other and by reading books and material that redirects our focus on God, not the world.

3. Experience Life In The Moment

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2

When we stepped away from media, it has allowed us to be more in the present moment and to be utilizing our minds with intention and purpose just as God intended us to do. Media has a way of distracting you and allowing you to fall into typical "patterns of this world" leaving less room for spiritual moments and quite often resulting in wasted time.

We discussed last night how our days have felt longer but not in a bad way. We have been able to enjoy our moments with more intent allowing our days to be filled with the time God has given us and it also allows you to see God working in your present moments.

4. Better Sleep

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." – Matthew 11:28

Since the beginning of the fast, we have been continuing our couples devotional book each night, relaxing with the lights off, and we have continued to talk, but we haven't been using devices before bed. Studies have shown that the use of a screen prior to bed can cause great disruption of sleep and the longer you are on them prior to attempting to fall asleep, the longer it will take to actually fall asleep.

We have seen improvement in our quality of sleep even if we are going to bed later than normal, which we have found interesting. We have felt more rested and with no slowing down with our daily routines. The effects our phones, computers, and tablets have on our quality of living are more than we sometimes realize, I know we have!

A good night of rest is a great starting point for a new day, without quality sleep so many areas of our lives can be directly affected. So if you don't need to be on a device at least 1 hour prior to bed, we highly recommend reading or praying. It is so worth it!

5. Stronger Relationships

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." – Proverbs 27:17

We live in an age where many of our so-called "relationships" are just an illusion. We hoard ourselves a pile of "friends" that we have collected by simply clicking a button and though many of us have hundreds of social media friends, loneliness has become an epidemic all over the world. So what gives?

Though we are interacting with people through our phones hundreds of times a day, most of us have very few meaningful interactions with people on a daily basis. This has been one of the greatest benefits of our media fast thus far. Meaningful interaction. Not just between ourselves but with other people we come into contact with as well.

This fast has freed up so much time that though we are constantly on the move we are not as "busy" and rushed leaving time to relax and spend quality time in conversation. Though this benefit is tucked in the list at #5, it is one of the greatest ones on the list.

We were created for relationship with our Heavenly Father and with each other, a media fast is an awesome way to get away from faux relationships and back to the real thing!

6. A Reappreciation For What You Have

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength." – Philippians 4:12-13

When we are spending so much time on the internet browsing social media or watching YouTube, its hard not to fall into a consumer mindset. Businesses use these platforms to entice us into buying their goods and let's be honest, it works. This mindset is easily overcome through a media fast.

We know from personal experience that it can be so easy to backslide into that consumer mindset. This whole week we haven't had to fight off that urge at all. Not only is this benefit good for your spiritual walk with Christ, it can greatly benefit your wallet!

I myself have seen amazing victory over materialism through my relationship with Jesus but I know that this is still a huge need in the lives of many. When you learn to be completely content through Christ, the weight, and anxieties that tag along a life preoccupied with material things falls away. This is such a truly freeing feeling. As the spirit sweeps through and fills you with that inexpressible and glorious joy, you can't help but wonder how you ever thought something else could fill this void.

7. Stronger Focus On God

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and *perfecter of faith." – Hebrews 12:1-2*

Saving the best for last, the greatest benefit of a media fast is a stronger focus on God. Even for those of us who live kingdom minded lives, it can be so easy to get distracted from the race marked out for us. When we slip out of focus with God, we see it in our lives and so does the world, we become easily agitated, we feel busy and anxious. All of these things are not only detrimental to ourselves but to our relationships and to our testimony.

As we mature in our faith we begin to see that any focus that is not fully on Jesus is completely out of focus. We need to be in the word, growing and maturing so that we can better serve the kingdom and better enjoy this abundant life that Jesus died to give us. If you are digging into the word but still find yourself not growing spiritually, the greatest thing you can do is re-evaluate your focus. A media fast is an awesome way to do that and you will start seeing the fruit of it right away!

When we first started this media fast I had to keep reminding myself to stay off my phone. This made me realize how much media we were actually consuming on a daily basis. Now that we have reached the end of the week, I barely pick up my phone unless I receive a call or a text.

We have absolutely no regrets from doing this media fast besides the fact that we should have started doing it sooner! If you want a clearer mind, more time, to experience life in the moment, better sleep, stronger relationships, a re-appreciation for what you have, and most importantly a stronger focus on God, I urge you to try a media fast today! If you do give it a try, make sure to leave a comment on this post! Maybe your testimony will encourage someone else to give it a try too!

Taken from the Abide and Seek – Growing Together in Jesus Site
https://abideandseek.com/7-benefits-to-a-media-fast/