



Loving God, Loving People, Serving the World!

EMPOWER YOUR PRAYERS WITH FASTING!

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of god.’” Matthew Ch, 4, v. 1-4

Fasting is not the removal of food—it is the addition of God. Depriving ourselves of our human drives allows us to “quiet the noise” of our humanness and increase our dependence upon God’s Holy Spirit. As we fast from our desires we replace every urge with prayer and a deeper seeking of knowing God. We need to take time to separate ourselves from the most basic of influence of this world--food. You’ll be surprised how consuming and distracting our thoughts can be about this basic need. Fasting challenges that and helps us break through to new levels of God.

Why Fast? There are specific reasons for fasting that are presented in Scripture.

1. Fasting *prepares* us. Fasting puts our hearts in a proper attitude for God. The pangs of hunger open us up to being fed by God in areas that would otherwise be quenched with the pleasures of food. This allows God to conform us closer to His image so that He can work out His purpose in us. Fasting provides the opportunity to get away from the negative impact the world has on our decisions and allows us to hear God without outside interference.
2. It *cleanses*. Fasting is a means of personal cleansing for the physical body, and spiritual body to rid itself of impurities. No matter how much we try to avoid the impact of living in a fallen world, the influence is obvious.
3. It *equips* us for the battle we wage against Satan. *“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness. To undo the heavy burdens; to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?”* Is. 58:6 When Satan gains a foothold in our lives, we tend to try everything but fasting. Fasting increases our focus and dependence upon God’s truth. It can break spiritual bonds.

How to Fast. The Bible mentions two basic methods, both involve abstaining from food or drink --**absolute** and **partial**. An “absolute fast” is no food, no water. Think of Moses before receiving the 10 commandments and Jesus in the desert before he began his earthly ministry. Both went without anything touching their mouths for 40 days. This is a very extreme approach and must be met with prayer and wise counsel for your health. A “partial fast” is what Daniel did in staying away from rich foods, breads and meat. It was an act of sacrificing his lifestyle to live purely and controllably in order to stay close to God.

This means you have several options for your fasting at various levels—water only, juice only, vegetables, no bread, no sweets or hi fructose corn syrup products, and no caffeine. Over longer periods of fasting you could vary your methods. You could select one style for the entire duration; or, you could start out with the extreme and then come down slowly as you methodically re-introduce other food groups; or, you could start out slowly and increase the intensity.

You can fast for one meal, for one day, for one 24 hour period (lunch to lunch), or on a regular weekly schedule (every Friday). The person who is fasting needs to drink a lot of water. One may fast one meal or two, or three, or more. Jack Hayford, a pastor on the West Coast said that when he is hungry during a prolonged fast and knows he really needs nourishment, he eats plain bread and drinks a large glass of grape juice. He explained he uses this as a time of worship with communion. When the time comes to end the fast, it should be done carefully with light food. No matter what the type or duration of fast, be certain to be led in prayer before making your choice; and, have a specific reason to fast because the bible shows us that those who fasted had a very specific thing in mind. So we too need to know what our objective is.

A few key warnings. Foremost is your personal health. If you are in poor health or have concerns about your physical ability, consult a physician. Your spiritual health is equally important. Do not attempt to manipulate God by fasting. Fasting doesn't give us a blank check from God. A pure sacrifice always draw us closer to his spiritual, emotional, and physical restoration; yet, what results show up are up to God.

Below are some suggested readings to help guide your decision and enhance your fast.

Bible References on Fasting:

The Wrong Kind of Fast: Out of religious duty or pride and self-importance. *Isaiah 58: 1-5*

The Right Kind of Fast: Breach a spiritual gap. Break evil bonds. Prepare for Ministry *Isaiah 58:6-12*

Reasons to Fast:

Facing Impossible Circumstances: *Nehemiah 12:4, I Samuel 31:13*

Repentance from Sin, Personal and Corporate: *I Samuel 7:6, Nehemiah 9:1; Jonah 3:5*

Hear from God, New Guidance: *Ezra 8:21*

Provoke God to Move on Behalf of Others: *II Chronicles 20:3; Esther 4:16*

Petition the Lord: *Hebrews 5:7; Acts 10:30*

Seek the Mind of God: *Acts 13:2; 14:23*

Prepare for Ministry: *Matthew 4:2; Acts 13:3*

Gain Spiritual Power: *Matthew 17:21; Luke 4:14*

Afflict the Soul: *Leviticus 16:29; Psalms 5:13; Proverbs 20:27; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12*

Book Recommendations:

This Glorious Journey, Dr. Charles Stanley. An excellent outline of the depths of this discipline.

Fasting, Jentzen Franklin. Inspiring teaching and testimony of how God rewards a fasting church.