

FASTING: A Powerful Christian Experience

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Some TRUTHS about Fasting.

FASTING is a spiritual discipline. Spiritual Disciplines help us to develop our spiritual roots, better appreciate the value of our faith, and become stronger in our attempts to deal with the challenges of life. **Fasting is abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.** It is not a hunger strike or a health diet; it is a holy discipline that takes us deeper into the realm of the Divine.

FASTING is not a show; it's a sacrificial service to God from us, and it's entirely for our benefit. To enter into the discipline of Fasting you should follow a very practical progression: walk before you run. Never try a full fast for the first time. Do a partial fast—skipping a meal or so. Also, if you have health issues or are taking medication, be sure to check with your physician before entering into a fast. While it is true that God wants us to fast, He doesn't want us to die trying!

Some TIPS about Fasting.

1) JESUS EXPECTS US TO FAST (Matthew 6:16-18).

Fasting, Giving, and Praying are all signs of dedication & devotion to God.

a) Followers of Christ should fast (Matthew 9:14-15)

2) FASTING MUST FOCUS ON GOD (Zechariah 7:4-5)

Fasting complements worship. When fasting we should also worship. (Luke 2:37; Acts 13:2)

3) FASTING EXPOSES THOSE THINGS THAT CONTROL US (Psalm 69:10)

- Fasting brings out that which is in us, controlling us, and eating us up. If you're angry, bitter, jealous, resentful, etc., fasting will expose those emotions.
- Fasting clears our head so that we think better and focus on the things that are really important. Thus, it is important to follow a biblical model of fasting.
- If we desire to be like Christ, transformed into his image and likeness, then we should tap into the transformative power available to us through the discipline of Fasting.

4) FASTING REMINDS US THAT GOD SUSTAINS US (Matthew 4:4)

- Fasting should be more than abstaining from food; it should be feasting on the Word of God. According to Richard Foster, "*Fasting is feasting!*"

5) FASTING HELPS US *BALANCE* OUR LIVES (1 Corinthians 6:12-13).

- Paul (1 Cor. 9:27) and David (Ps. 35:13) used fasting in profitable ways.

6) FASTING and FAITHFUL ACTION WILL GET GOD'S ATTENTION (Isa. 58:3-9).

—Fasting should be complemented with faithful actions and good deeds.

Some TEXTS related to Fasting.

- Joel 2:15—blow trumpet...sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly...
- a) Zechariah 8:19—Regular Fasts were held in biblical times.
- 2 Samuel 12:15-23---David fasted and prayed that God would save his son.
- 2 Chronicles 20:2-4—Jehoshaphat & Judah fasted & prayed for God’s help against the army of Edom.
- Ezra 8:21-23—fasting so that God might provide safety on the journey, for the Israelites, their children, and their possessions.
- Esther 4:16—Jews in Susa fasted for Queen Esther for 3 days, as she prepared to go into the King’s presence, unannounced and uninvited.
- Isaiah 58:3-9—Fasting should be complemented with good deeds and faithful actions.
- Matthew 6:16-17—Don’t show on your face that you are fasting; God knows and will reward you.
- Matthew 4:1-2—Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert. Our tradition of the Lenten season uses this example of Jesus as one of its justification.

Some TYPES of Fasting.

The Bible mentions various types of Fast; I have grouped them in what I believe are the major categories:

- b) Partial Fast (Daniel 10:3). This is when you eat some foods but not others.
- c) Normal Fast (Luke 4:2). Abstaining from all foods except water for a period of time. Jesus fasted for 40 days. Today, this fast would normally be for a day or a week.
- d) Absolute Fast (Esther 4:16). This kind of fast is not popular today; your body needs water after a while. But with God (as it was with Esther), anything’s possible.
- e) Group Fast (Leviticus 23:27). This is usually a short fast, for a day or a few days, and the entire “assembly” (or church) is asked to participate.

Fasting is a powerful spiritual discipline that draws us closer to God, strengthens our walk with God, and helps us develop the discipline needed to focus on the things that really matter in life. Every follower of Jesus should engage in the discipline of fasting, as often as possible.

The spiritual discipline of Fasting is a profitable endeavor. Try it; it will add power to your life.