

FASTING

1. Just what is fasting? Why is fasting important to faith and prayer?
2. To fast is to deny yourself food, and water, but, not water, for more than 3 days, but food can be denied yourself for an extended period of time.
3. Why? Hunger is one of the strongest natural desires of a healthy human.

Psalms 109:24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.

4. When King David fasted, he got weak in the knees, and lost weight. Weight loss is a side benefit of fasting. Also, the devil does not like for you to fast.

Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

5. The LORD says to turn to HIM with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and with mourning. Why does fasting condition us to come to Jesus?
6. This is what King David says about the reason to fast.

Psalms 69:10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

7. First let us look at the various kinds of fasting that is described in the Bible along with why God ordained fasting as a type of worship.

A. TOTAL FAST: No food or water; however, do not try this one unless you are healthy, no water for 3 days will cause serious dehydration. Do not fast a total fast for more than three days, is my recommendation. Example: Esther.

Esther 4:16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

8. Queen Ester saved her people by the results of this fast.

B. A ONE DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING: This is to get people back to being dedicated Children of God, restoration fast. As often as you do this, do it unto God.

C. EXTENDED FAST, several days at one time.

1. Jesus set an example, when he started his earthly ministry, he fasted 40 days.

Matthew 4:2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

D. PROPHET'S FAST: Prophet's Fast was probably started when Daniel and the three Hebrew Children would not eat the King's meat.

Daniel 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Daniel 1:12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

2. Daniel/Prophet's fast you eat only vegetables and drink water? The early translations (including KJV) use the word **pulse** instead of vegetables. That word is rightly translated as "foods grown from seed." The edible seeds of certain leguminous plants, as peas, beans, or lentils. Therefore, the Daniel Fast includes fruits, vegetables and possibly, even, whole grains, but no sugar.

3. God ordained that we fast, deny ourselves, to condition us to approach the throne of God through prayer to receive blessings by turning from transgressions and sins. Normally, not to deny ourselves is the reason we fall into sin.

Isaiah 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Isaiah 58:2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

Isaiah 58:3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

Isaiah 58:4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

1. The reason you fast is important. These people were fasting for strife and debate, to smite with the fist of wickedness. Also to be seen of men. Jesus rebuked this type of fasting as hypocrisy.

Matthew 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Matthew 6:17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

Matthew 6:18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Luke 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Luke 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his] eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

2. We have to be very careful that we do not fast to be seen of men and not the true purpose of fasting, to condition our soul to draw us closer to God.

1. Jesus criticized the hypocrites for showing off, how holy they wanted to be perceived, by their fellow man, with their fasting.

2. The right purpose is to afflict/chastise/condition our soul so God will hear our prayers.

Isaiah 58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

Isaiah 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Mark 9:29 **And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.**

3. What was Jesus talking about when He said, "this kind come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting?"

4. Let us look at this situation, as we examine faith, prayer and fasting.

Mark 9:1 And he said unto them, **Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.**

Mark 9:2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

Mark 9:3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

Mark 9:4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

Mark 9:5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

Mark 9:6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

Mark 9:7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

1. Yes, a voice came from the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son: hear him."
2. Jesus was the "Son of God," after the flesh; however, He was also the One and Only God of all creation housed for 33 1/2 years, in a house of flesh, for a specific purpose, to have blood to shed for the sins of all mankind.

Mark 9:8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

Mark 9:9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

Mark 9:14 And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

3. Jesus had just returned from the "Mount of Transfiguration," where He had taken, Peter, James and John.

Mark 9:15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

Mark 9:16 And he asked the scribes, **What question ye with them?**

Mark 9:17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

Mark 9:18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

4. This man had a very urgent need. He had a sick child with a very serious problem.

Mark 9:19 He answereth him, and saith, **O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.**

1. Jesus was not upset with the man, but, at the general lack of faith of His disciples, the scribes, (religious leaders of the day), that should have had faith in God. I believe Jesus could also rebuke, most churches of today, for lack of faith.

Mark 9:20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

2. Apparently this child was possessed with a devil. When the devil comes into contact with God, he knows his time is up to torment the person.

Mark 9:21 And he asked his father, **How long is it ago since this came unto him?** And he said, Of a child.

Mark 9:22 And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

3. The child had to receive constant attention to keep him from destroying himself, which is what the devil wants everyone to do, he will leave you alone, if you follow the broad way to the lake of fire. Satan wants YOUR soul.

Mark 9:23 Jesus said unto him, **If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.**

4. Let us look for a moment at believe, faith, what is faith?

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

5. Paul writes that faith is something hoped for; however, the evidence of having this substance is hopeless, because we can see no way of it being possible for us to have the things we have hoped for!

Job 26:7 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

6. Is anything too hard for a God, that can simply speak the earth, that we live upon, into existence, hang it on nothing, and yet, does it not still hang there in space where God placed it? Are there cables, ropes or chains, holding it up??

1. Does the ground feel solid when you step on it? Does it rock, move or shake as you walk on this earth that is hanging in space on nothing?
2. Look at what Jesus says about faith and believing in HIM.

Matthew 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, **Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.**

Mark 4:31 **It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:**

Luke 13:19 **It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.**

Luke 17:6 And the Lord said, **If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.**

3. The sycamine tree, in the above passage, is often thought to be a sycamore, it is not. A sycamine tree is native to Palestine and to the Middle East. It is a very deep rooted tree, of the mulberry family. Faith can pluck, even a deep rooted problem. Jesus can pluck it out by the roots and cast it into the sea.

Mark 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

4. Let us always understand the source of the power. Let us ask Jesus for more faith and for HIS help in removing doubts, fear and unbelief. Fasting helps us to be able to do this.

Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, **Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.**

Mark 9:26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

Mark 9:28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

Mark 9:29 And he said unto them, **This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.**

1. Christians who want real devil kicking power, prayer and fasting is the KEY!
2. Seek help from the source of the power, Jesus is this source of all power.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**

3. How can we have that miracle working faith?
4. First we need to know the source of all power.

Mark 16:14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

Mark 16:16 **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**

Mark 16:17 **And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;**

Mark 16:18 **They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, **These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.**

Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

1. What did the Disciples preach at Jerusalem, 4 days later, that endued, (meaning made alive with) power from on high? What Jesus told them to preach.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

2. Paul preached the same message that Peter, James, John and the rest of the Disciples preached. There is not another plan for the Gentiles, or a simple, believe on God, is the whole plan of salvation, it is the first step. Paul preached:

Acts 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

Acts 19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

Acts 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Acts 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

1. If you want the power, Jesus said to His Disciples, and it still applies today:

Acts 1:8 **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

2. For faith and power, receive Jesus through baptism in His Name, receive His Holy Spirit, stay in tune and in touch with HIM through Prayer and Fasting.

Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

3. The LORD says to turn to HIM with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and with mourning. Why does fasting condition us to come to Jesus?

4. This is what King David says about the reason to fast.

Psalms 69:10 When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

5. To chasten means: A. to inflict suffering upon for purposes of moral improvement; chastise. B. to restrain; C. subdue:

6. Chaste means, in addition to: A. refraining from sexual intercourse, without the sanctity of marriage, which is contrary to morality and religious teaching of the Bible; virtuous. It also means: B. free from obscenity; decent: chaste conversation. C. undefiled or stainless: chaste, white snow. D. Honest, keeping your word, paying your honest debts and on time.

Psalms 35:13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

7. So fasting humbles, cleanses and conditions our soul to better our relationship and commitment with God.

8. Fasting chastens our soul so our prayers will be heard and increases our faith so we can believe we will receive. Remember the mustard seed.