

Fasting



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FASTING

A Study guide for Leaders in the Body of Christ

BY TIMOTHY II

FASTING:

INTRODUCTION:

“Fasting” is an important Christian ‘voluntary’ act, that we are privileged to engage in. Even though we don’t have to fast, it seems that God is pleased when we do, especially when we do it with ‘repentance and humility’.

In Timothy II’s early Christian walk, he did little or no Fasting”.

The more he grew in the Lord, the more he felt the need to “Fast”.

We have learned by “Fasting”, that we can hear more clearly from God, and seek His face.

It is a ‘private personal matter’, that can be done for answering needs, for mourning, etc., however, it is most often done in order to minister to others.

By “Fasting”, our stomachs have no rule over our minds. Physically we aren’t using energy to digest a big meal when we “Fast”.

That is why athletes and coaches don’t eat a big meal before a contest.

We have found that by “Fasting” on days that we are ministering, we are ready to hear from the Lord and are more sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

We also know that we are prepared to cast out those demons that only come out by ‘prayer & fasting’. (Mark 9:29)

For this type of ministry, we usually fast for at least that day.

We don’t feel it is important on how long we “Fast”, as long as the “Fast” gives us enough time to focus on the things of the Lord.

For those just starting out, we recommend just “Fasting” for one meal, and then progress from there. It is not a good idea to start out “Fasting” too long.

You could possibly harm yourself physically.

Most people while “Fasting” still consume liquids. It is important to always drink water, unless the Lord tells you differently.

A lot of people drink juices, to keep some sugar (carbohydrates) in them.

Be particularly careful if you are a ‘diabetic’ or have ‘hypo-glycemia’.

When the Lord is directing the “Fast”, it always goes smoothly. If it is an effort, and you get headaches or extreme hunger, maybe the Lord doesn’t want you to “Fast” at that time. Pray about it!

“Fasting” does free us up from our body, and it makes you feel in more ‘Spiritual’ control of yourself. It is a real blessing from God.

I pray that this ‘Study Guide’ will help you to better understand through the Scriptures, how to “Fast”, when to “Fast” and why to “Fast”.

Amen!

I. WHY WE SHOULD WE FAST:

Because the Lord has told us to “Fast”.

Joel 2:12

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:

Matt 9:14-15

14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, **Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?**

15 **And Jesus said unto them,** Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? **but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.**

II. HOW TO FAST:

“Fast” as though we appear not to be “Fasting”.

Matt 6:16-18

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.

17 **But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;**

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.

III. HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE FAST:

We should “Fast” as often as we feel the Lord is Leading us to “Fast”.

It usually depends on how active you are in the Ministry.

2 Cor 11:27

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, **in fastings often,** in cold and nakedness.

Luke 2:36-37

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, **but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.**

III. HOW LONG WE SHOULD FAST:

We should “Fast” as long as The Lord Leads us to “Fast”.

The Scriptures reveal the various lengths of “Fasting”, however, common sense should prevail. If you have health problems, etc., be sure you are hearing from the Lord before you attempt long “Fasts”. Remember, God is not impressed with our “Fasting”.

PART OF A DAY:

Acts 10:30-31

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,
 31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

OVERNIGHT:

Dan 6:18

18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

ONE DAY:

1 Sam 7:5-6

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

2 Sam 1:12

12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

Jer 36:6

6 Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.

SEVEN DAYS:

1 Sam 31:12-13

12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

13 And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

2 Sam 12:16

16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

2 Sam 12:18-23

18 And it came to pass **on the seventh day**, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 **Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.**

21 Then said his servants unto him, **What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child**, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 **And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept:** for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 **But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast?** can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

FOURTEEN DAYS:**Acts 27:33-36**

33 And while the day was coming on, **Paul besought them all to take meat**, saying, **This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.**

34 **Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health:** for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, **he began to eat.**

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and **they also took some meat.**

THREE WEEKS:**Dan 10:2-3**

2 In those days **I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.**

3 **I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth**, neither did I anoint myself at all, **till three whole weeks were fulfilled.**

Dan 10:8-9

8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

Dan 10:12

12 Then said he unto me, **Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard,** and I am come for thy words.

CERTAIN DAYS:**Neh 1:1-4**

1 **The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.** And it came to pass in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 **And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,**

FORTY DAYS:**Matt 4:1-4**

1 **Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit** into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

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

3 And **when the tempter came to him,** he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 **But he answered and said,** It is written, **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

APPOINTED FASTS:**Neh 9:1**

1 Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month **the children of Israel were assembled with fasting,** and with sackclothes, and earth upon them.

Joel 1:14

14 **Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly,** gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land **into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,**

Zecl 7:5

5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, **When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month,** even those seventy years, **did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?**

Zecl 8:19

19 **Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth,** shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.

IV. THE PURPOSES OF FASTING:

TO HEAR FROM THE LORD:

One of the main purposes for “Fasting”, is to hear from the Lord. Many times Christians, especially those in Leadership, feel they have not heard from the Lord for a long period of time. This is an appropriate to “Fast”.

Dan 9:3-4

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, **to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:**

4 **And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession,** and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

Ezra 8:21

21 **Then I proclaimed a fast there,** at the river of Ahava, **that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.**

Ezra 8:23

23 **So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.**

GOD WON'T HEAR BACKSLIDERS & WANDERERS:

Unless they Repent!

Jer 14:11-12

11 Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.

12 **When they fast, I will not hear their cry;** and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

V. REPENTANCE AND FASTING:

Here is an example of a ‘Whole City’, ‘Repenting’ and “Fasting”, of food and water, including the Animals!

Jonah 3:4-9

4 **And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.**

5 **So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.**

6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh **by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:**

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, **and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.**

9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

THE RESULTS:

Jonah 3:10

10 **And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.**

VI. FASTING WITH HUMILITY:

When “Fasting”, it is important to come to the Lord with a ‘humble’ heart. Maybe, the reason we have not heard from the Lord for a period of time, is our attitude!

I King 21:25-27

25 But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

27 **And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.**

I King 21:29

29 **Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.**

Esth 4:3

3 **And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.**

Ps 35:11-14

11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.

12 They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

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.

14 I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

Ps 69:10

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

Ps 109:24

24 **My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.**

FALSE HUMILITY:

Luke 18:9-14

9 **And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves** that they were righteous, and despised others:

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

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.

12 **I fast twice in the week,** I give tithes of all that I possess.

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.

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.

VII. FASTING IN THE CHURCH:

It is important that we teach “Fasting” and to experience it in our churches.

ALL DAY:

Judg 20:26

26 Then all the children of Israel, **and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even,** and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

TO APPROVE OURSELVES:

2 Cor 6:4-5

4 But **in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God,** in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, **in fastings;**

TO ORDAIN OTHERS:

Acts 14:23

23 **And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting,** they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

TO SEND OUT:

Acts 13:2-4

2 **As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.**
 3 **And when they had fasted and prayed,** and laid their hands on them, **they sent them away.**
 4 **So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost,** departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

VIII. PRAYER AND FASTING:

Prayer and “Fasting”, go hand in hand. We need to do both.

TO CAST OUT DEMONS:

Matt 17:18-21

18 **And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him:** and the child was cured from that very hour.
 19 **Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?**
 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.
 21 **Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.**

WITHOUT SEX:

1 Cor 7:5-6

5 **Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer;** and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

6 **But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.**

CONCLUSION:

The purposes or reasons to “Fast”, are very important. If we “Fast” for the wrong reasons, it is a waste of time. God knows the thoughts and intents of our hearts. Therefore we only fool ourselves if we “Fast” for our own purposes.

WRONG REASONS TO FAST:

Isa 58:1-5

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.

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.

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.

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.

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?

RIGHT REASONS TO FAST:**Isa 58:6-7**

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?

7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

THE RESULTS OF FASTING FOR THE RIGHT REASON:**Isa 58:8-12**

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12 **And they that shall be of thee** shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

AMEN!

TIMOTHY II

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Text :

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Comments:

This text has been used as the source for all scriptures.

Some verses of scripture have been shortened or used in partial form.

This is to strengthen their importance to the subject matter; not to change their meaning nor meant to be taken out of the context in which they are written.

Text:

Webster's New American Dictionary

Produced By:

Books, Inc., Publishers - New York & Washington, D.C.

Copyright 1965, By Books, Inc.

Comments:

The Dictionary is used to help clarify our understanding of what certain words mean in today's English language.

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