

Fasting

Matthew 6:16-18 16 “And **when you fast**, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (openly.)

Fasting is shutting down the desires of the flesh because you want a breakthrough more than you want food.

Fasting is less about saying “NO” to the body and more about saying “YES” to the Holy Spirit.

Decide WHY you are fasting (sorry, it can't be “To lose some of the Christmas pounds put on over the last month.” That may be one of the benefits but **fasting isn't a diet.**)

Make a Fasting Commitment: Fasting Contract

Here are some reasons people Fast – which areas stand out to you:

Decide today WHY you are fasting.

Get a journal. Write it down. You can fast for more than one reason — we have a BIG GOD!!!

What TYPE of Fast?

When the Bible talks about fasting, it's from food — not an activity. Fasting means, in part, "to cover the mouth."

1. Skip a meal, pray, read the Bible, and seek the Lord instead.
2. Skip two meals, pray, read the Bible, and seek the Lord instead.
3. Fast from a type of food your flesh strongly desires.
4. Follow a Daniel Fast Principles:

–The challenge (and eventual delight) is to get your PLEASURE from the LORD instead of food (disciplining the flesh).

Delight yourself in the Lord instead of food. Psalm 37:4 – “*Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*”

10 Different Types of Fasts in the Bible

1. **The Disciples' Fast** (Matthew 17:21) – For deliverance from sin, addiction, bondage. If we fast, we can break the power of sins and addictions that limit our freedom in Christ.
2. **The Ezra Fast** (Ezra 8:21-23) – For God's help in solving problems and for protection from Satan. Ezra said that they prayed and fasted, and God answered their request.
3. **The Samuel Fast** (1 Samuel 7:6) - For revival. The people were bound by idol worship and needed deliverance. Samuel called them to seek God and to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem. If we fast and pray for revival, God will pour Himself out on His people.

4. **The Elijah Fast** (1 Kings 19:4-8) - Mental freedom from emotional problems or habits. Through fasting, God will show us how to overcome emotional issues and destructive habits.
5. **The Widow's Fast** (1 Kings 17:9-16) – Fasting to provide for the needy. The widow went without food to meet the physical needs of someone else. Because she sacrificed her food, God made sure that she had more than enough food.
6. **Paul Fast** (Acts 9:9) - For physical healing and to get direction from God. If we fast and submit our will to God, He will reveal His will to us.
7. **The John the Baptist Fast** (Luke 1:15) - To enhance our walk with God and witness. If we fast for the influence of our testimonies to reach others for Christ, God will use us.
8. **The Esther Fast** (Esther 4:16, 5:2) – For protection from the evil one. If we fast for protection, God will deliver us from evil.
9. **The Jesus Fast** (Matthew 4:1-2) - For spiritual power and victory over temptation, the flesh and the devil.
10. **The Daniel Fast** (Daniel 1: 5-21; 10:3) – Fasting for health and to seek God's favor, purpose, and vision.

Ways to Fast

1. **Normal Fast** – No food, water only.
2. **Absolute Fast** – Absolutely no food or water (Caution: Should not be undertaken over 3 days and only then if you have a clear directive from the Lord and are in good health).
3. **Partial Fast** – This could mean fasting certain meals of the day or abstaining from certain kinds of foods (i.e.: No meat or sweets, soup only, fruit and vegetables only, etc. In Daniel 10:3, Daniel ate no pleasant bread).
4. **Juice Fast** – Fruit and vegetable juices only.
5. **Corporate Fast** – A church or group of people who feel God has called them to fast together for a certain period of time.
6. **Jewish Fasting Period** – The Jewish fast began at 6:00 P.M. and ended the next day at 6:00 P.M. (Some people follow this time period to start and end fasts.)
7. **Fasting Plus Prayer** — Remember, fasting should be combined with prayer. God called us to fast and pray. If you are fasting a particular meal of the day, use the time you usually eat to pray. The combination of prayer and fasting is a powerful way to focus on seeking God for breakthroughs and answers to prayer.
8. **Fasting and Abstinence** — Although the word “fast” is used as abstaining from food in the Bible and does not refer to giving up other things, during a fast one can practice abstinence from other pleasures as well, such as entertainment, TV, hobbies and sex, as spoken about in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.

Steps in Fasting

The first chapter of Daniel (Daniel 1:8-21) gives us great principles for fasting.

Daniel 1:8-21

⁸ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. ⁹ And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, ¹⁰ and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king."

¹¹ Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see." ¹⁴ So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. ¹⁶ So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. ²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. ²¹ And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Step 1: Be Specific

^[1]^[SEP] Daniel was not vague in his objection to the Babylonian diet. He defined the problem immediately.

1. The king's food was against dietary laws.
2. Daniel and his friends had vowed against wine.
3. The king's food had been offered to idols/demons.

Step 2: Fast as a Spiritual Commitment

^[1]^[SEP] *The Daniel Fast* involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel proposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" ([Daniel 1:8](#)).

Step 3: Reflect Inner Desire by Outer Discipline^[1]^[SEP] Many people have an inner desire for better health but can't discipline themselves to avoid junk food and other foods that are not good for their health. The physical health you seek from God may be more than an answer to prayer. Your physical health can be linked to any of the following factors:

1. Your food choices.
2. The level of your spiritual commitment is reflected in constant prayer during the fast.
3. Your time commitment. If you commit to fast for a certain amount of time, keep it. For example, if you commit to fast for 10 days, don't stop on Day 9.
4. Your testimony commitment. Your fast is a statement of faith to God that you want Him to heal your body, and faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast.

Step 4: Pray to Perceive Sin's Role in Your Spiritual, Mental, Emotional and Physical Health^[SEP]

Notice James 5:13-18:

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months, it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

Sin is sometimes related to the cause of sickness:

- Lack of Health/Healing may be the result of Spiritual Rebellion.
- Lack of Health/Healing may be due to the sin of wrong intake. (Drugs, Pornography, etc.)
- Repentance is linked to health, according to James. James 4:13-18
- Sick people must desire to be well.

The Greek has several words for "sick". James uses "Kanino," which includes disease and means weak or weary.

Attitude is also a key to the success of Fasting. James said, "Are there any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing Psalms."

Step 5: Fast as a Statement of Faith to Others^[SEP] Daniel was making a statement of faith when he asked for only vegetables to eat and water to drink, then dared the overseer to compare the appearance of the four sons of Israel with the young men who ate the king's food.

Step 6: Learn the Effects of the Food You Eat^[SEP] Why are some foods good for us, and other foods not? What does a particular food do to your body? If we really knew, there would likely be some things we would never eat again.

Step 7: Yield All Results to God^[SEP] Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants" (Dan. 1:13).

Food Guidelines for a Daniel Fast.

Daniel 1:12 – "Please test your servants for ten days and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink."

Daniel 10:3 — "I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

Benefits:

1. **Health & Healing** (Isaiah 58:8) - Expect healing and miracles (for yourself and/or loved ones).
2. **Overcoming/Breaking Poverty** (see: Joel 1:13; Joel 2:15-32)
3. **Bondages/Addictions Broken** (including sexual addictions – Judges 19 and 20); can also be substance, alcohol, and food addictions. GOD IS ABLE!!!
4. **Generational Curses Broken** (Isaiah 58:12) – family curses of poverty, divorce, sickness, alcoholism, suicide, idolatry, and other demonic attachments broken off you and your children.
5. **Demonic Powers Broken** – Jesus said, “This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:29).
6. **Revelation and Wisdom** – God will reveal things to come – Acts 13:14 when Paul and Barnabas “ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said...”
7. **Breakthrough** – Do you need a breakthrough in your life — Do you want this year to be better than last year? Is the Lord calling you to a work – or a new walk in Him? Are you being called to a new level of leadership or ministry? You need a Breakthrough, and **HE IS “The God of the Breakthrough!”** (2 Sam. 5:20, 1 Chronicles 14:11)

Practical Symptoms When You Fast

Approach fasting by faith but not unwise.

The cleansing and detoxifying effects of fasting can generate several toxicity symptoms:

- Hunger is usually present for 2-3 days then departs, leaving many people with a surprising feeling of deep abdominal peace. Some may feel hungry for longer, although this is usually associated with fear associated with the cessation of eating and the changing of a long-established habit (or even addiction). This fear and hunger will generally pass as you continue the fasting process.
- A headache is not uncommon for the first couple of days.
- Fatigue or irritability may sometimes arise, as well as dizziness or lightheadedness.
- Our sensitivity is usually increased positively and negatively – to sounds, smells, and tastes.
- In most fasts, the tongue will develop a thick white or yellow fur coating, which can be scraped or brushed off.
- Effects of lower blood pressure are often experienced, as well as dizziness in rising rapidly from lying or sitting to standing.
- Bad breath and displeasing tastes in the mouth may occur.
- Foul-smelling urine is possible.
- Skin odors or eruptions may appear depending on the state of toxicity.
- Digestive upset, mucous stools, flatulence, nausea, and vomiting may occur.
- Insomnia and bad dreams in some people as the body releases toxins during the night.

Most of these symptoms, if they appear, are usually transient.

The general energy levels during fasts, after the first couple of days, are usually good, although there may be ups and downs. Every 2-3 days, as the body goes deeper into dumping waste, the energy may wax and wane, and resistance and symptoms may arise. These stages or periods are referred to as healing crises. For some people, these experiences can be very mild or nonexistent, whereas, for others, they can be pretty intense.