
FASTING (don't fight it!)

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*Prayer needs fasting for its full growth. Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible.
Fasting is the other hand, the one with which we let go of the visible.*
– Andrew Murray

Fasting is abstaining from food with a spiritual purpose in mind. Jesus teaches us that fasting and prayer are a powerful combination. While fasting is not explicitly commanded by Jesus in the Gospels, it seems that it is assumed that fasting would be a part of the life of the believer: “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:16-18).

Remember, the Fast should change your routine. If you are going about your regular routine merely with a change in diet, you are not fasting, you are on a diet! Fasting must change our routine. The Fast is to refocus us on the things of God. We should expect to be different when this time of fasting is over and not just physically...

- By the time the fast is over, we should have created an atmosphere in our lives, our homes, our churches in which God is pleased to dwell.
- By the time the Fast is over, we should have created such an atmosphere in prayer that miracles become daily events in our lives.
- By the time the Fast is over, we should have prayed the yoke of bondage off of our sisters and brothers.

Yes, by the time a Fast concludes, we should have walked through the doorway of Kingdom Living! All this is accomplished through prayer and fasting. So, commit to a fast and do not grow weary nor take lightly the fast you commit to God. Divine opportunities are waiting all around for us to seize them in fasting and in prayer. God moves in powerful ways during sincere fasts (see 2 Chronicles 20:1-23).

Remember, the fast is to the Lord. The fast should cause us to redirect our focus, our attention. It should more regularly direct us to our prayer closets because fasting and

prayer go hand in hand. Prayer is our Priority! And not just during the course of this Lenten fast, but in life. We've got to make every effort to ensure we add more and more time with God in prayer and meditation each and everyday for this is where we find LOVE, JOY and PEACE! God honors it when we deny the flesh and sow to the spirit. This is consistent with what we learn in Galatians 5:16-25 and in Colossians 3:1-17. Fasting is to honor the life of our spirits. Be assured, to nurture and to refine the spirit-life has eternal significance.

Remember, fasting is to abstain from food with spiritual purposes in mind. Our purposes are many:

- we are seeking to grow even closer to God
- to see the Gifts of the Holy Spirit fully operating in the Body of Christ
- to experience the Fruit of the Holy Spirit being borne out in the lives of the people of God
- to break the power of the enemy over our lives and the lives of those around us
- to scatter the plans of the enemy
- to gain more spiritual power
- to wrestle ourselves away from unhealthy attachments
- to see the Kingdom of God grow exponentially
- to experience good physical, mental and spiritual health
- to walk in miracles
- to transform our minds
- ultimately, to live our lives in ways pleasing to God

All our purposes will be fulfilled by the Power of God through fasting and prayer! Don't waiver in unbelief. God is true to His Word! **And don't stop praying because you haven't seen the answer or because you don't feel anything.** God moves in God's time. And, be assured, whether you feel anything or not, God is listening!

The promise of God in Christ Jesus is this: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7 - but read the whole passage). This is an amazing promise, but what is "abiding"?

- Abiding is to dwell constantly in the secret place of the Most High (Psalm 91:1).
- Abiding is to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- Abiding is to have a song in your heart to God at all times (Ephesians 5:19)
- Abiding is to write the Word of God on the tablet of your heart (Proverbs 7:2-3; Psalm 119:16)
- Abiding is learning and strengthening ourselves through fasting and prayer.

The Fast is not to be an event that will pass, nor an experience that we will merely have; but, it is an entrance into a life of continual abiding in God, a pathway into the deeper things of God, a seat in the Presence of God.