

## Understanding Fasting

It is important that every believer have an understanding of biblical fasting. In this lesson we will discuss fasting based on the word of God.

Fasting can be defined as abstaining from food for a specific purpose. Sometimes believers are led to fast from other natural things that may be gaining dominance in their life, but fasting is usually abstaining from food.

### **Matt. 15:32 NLT**

Then Jesus called his disciples and told them, “I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. I don’t want to send them away hungry, or they will faint along the way.”

### **Acts 27:33-34 NLT**

Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. “You have been so worried that you haven’t touched food for two weeks,” he said. 34 “Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish.”

### **Daniel 1:8**

But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods.

Fasting does not move or change God, but moves the believer into a position to be more spiritually sensitive. For this to be accomplished fasting should always be mixed or combined with *Quality Praying*. (Daniel, Paul & Esther fasted and prayed)

### **Acts 13:2-3 NLT**

One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.” 3 So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way.

All Believers should fast but the word of God does not give us specific regulations concerning when and how long to fast. Fasting should be spirit lead or the believer can fast from the desire of their heart for a specific purpose.

### **Matt 6:16-18**

“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

### **Mark 2:18**

Once when John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, some people came to Jesus and asked, "Why don't your disciples fast like John's disciples and the Pharisees do?"

1. Fasting helps the believer overcome doubt and unbelief.

### **Matt. 17:14-21**

At the foot of the mountain, a large crowd was waiting for them. A man came and knelt before Jesus and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. So I brought him to your disciples, but they couldn't heal him." Jesus said, "You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him. From that moment the boy was well. Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, "Why couldn't we cast out that demon?" "You don't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I tell you the truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible.

2. Fasting indicates an earnest desire for the things of God.
  - a. Spiritual Strength
  - b. Godly Direction
  - c. Godly Wisdom

### **Acts 9:9, 17**

He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink.

3. Fasting should not be done for recognition but for spiritual benefits.
  - a. Liberate the oppressed
  - b. Share with those in need
  - c. Care for the homeless
  - d. Clothe the naked
  - e. Stop evil speaking

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### **Isaiah 58:3-14**

We have fasted before you!’ they say. ‘Why aren’t you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don’t even notice it!’ “I will tell you why!” I respond. “It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast you keep oppressing your workers. What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the Lord? “No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. “Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the Lord will answer. ‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply. “Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon. The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a builder of walls and a restorer of homes. “Keep the Sabbath day holy. Don’t pursue your own interests on that day, but enjoy the Sabbath and speak of it with delight as the Lord’s holy day. Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day, and don’t follow your own desires or talk idly. Then the Lord will be your delight. I will give you great honor and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor Jacob. I, the Lord, have spoken!”

Fasting help you gain the victory over carnal desires, helps in mastering temptations and helps with *Executing* your *Authority in faith* over demonic powers. Times of fasting and prayer are necessary and beneficial for all believers.