

Fasting and Jesus: A Close Encounter with God

For those of us who follow Jesus, **fasting** isn't just a trend or a diet—and certainly not a way to manipulate God! It's something much deeper and more personal: a powerful spiritual discipline that helps us draw closer to Him, hear His voice, and align our hearts with His desires for us.



What Does Fasting Mean for a Believer?

Imagine fasting as a special time when we voluntarily choose to set aside food (or anything else that distracts us) to focus completely on our Heavenly Father. It's not so that God owes us something, but rather to:

- **Humble ourselves:** Acknowledge that we don't depend on food, our work, or anything in this world, but entirely on Him. It's an act of humility, saying,

“God, I need You more than anything else.”

- **Seek His face:** It’s like muting the world’s distractions so we can better hear His voice. It’s a time to pray more intensely, read His Word, and seek His direction for our lives.
- **Repent:** Sometimes, fasting is a sign that we’re grieving over our sins and want to turn back to God with all our hearts.
- **Intensify prayer:** When we fast, our prayers feel more focused, more urgent. It’s as if fasting gives our communication with God a “turbo boost.”
- **Detach from earthly things:** It reminds us that we are pilgrims on this earth and our true treasures are in heaven. It teaches us self-control and to put God first in everything.



Jesus, Our Best Example of Fasting

The most beautiful thing is that we don’t have to invent how to fast; **Jesus Himself showed us the way!**

- **His 40 days in the desert:** Before beginning His ministry, Jesus fasted for forty days and nights (Matthew 4:2). It wasn’t easy, but it was a crucial time of spiritual preparation, where He was strengthened against temptations and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit for what was to come.

- **The right attitude:** Jesus taught us that fasting is between us and God, in secret. It's not so people see us and say, "Look how spiritual this person is!" He said in Matthew 6:16-18 that when we fast, we shouldn't put on gloomy faces but make it appear as though everything is normal. What matters is the heart, not the show.
- **"Then they will fast":** Jesus knew that fasting would be a natural part of our life with Him. When asked why His disciples didn't fast, He replied that a time would come when He would no longer be physically with them, and then they would fast (Matthew 9:15). And here we are, fasting as we await His return and seek His presence in our daily lives.



Fasting Today: How Do We Do It?

In the Bible, we see that fasting isn't a one-size-fits-all formula; it can take different forms:

- **Total fast:** No food or water for a short period, like Esther. This is something we should do with great wisdom and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and if necessary, after consulting a doctor!
- **Water fast:** Only water, no solid food. This is believed to be the type of fast Jesus undertook in the desert.
- **Partial fast:** Abstaining from certain foods or adopting a simpler diet, like Daniel, who abstained from meats and "delicacies" for a time.
- **Community fast:** Sometimes, as a church or group, we unite to fast for a specific purpose, as when the early Christians prayed before sending out

missionaries (Acts 13:2).

- **Fasting from other things:** Sometimes, fasting isn't just about food. It can be from social media, television, or any activity that distracts us from God. The point is to sacrifice something to dedicate ourselves more to Him.



Why Is Fasting Still Important for Us Today?

Because it's a **gift from God** that helps us to:

- **Draw closer to Him:** It opens a door for us to feel His presence in a more intimate way.
- **Strengthen our faith:** It teaches us that we can live without depending on material things and that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).
- **Receive direction:** In moments of fasting and prayer, God often gives us the clarity we need to make decisions or understand His plan.
- **Intercede for others:** It's a powerful way to pray for our families, friends, the church, or any situation on our hearts.
- **Be set free from bondage:** It helps us release attachment to the things of this world and put God first in our lives.

So, fellow believer, fasting is a beautiful biblical practice that, when done with the right heart and humility, **transforms our relationship with God** and helps us live a life increasingly passionate for Jesus!

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