

Fasting

What is Fasting?

NOTES

Little is said about fasting today, but there are 55 references in the bible about this great tool of the Christian life. It is a discipline exercised by all men and women greatly used of God - not only in the Bible (Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel, Esther, Hannah, Anna, etc...) but also throughout church history (Wesley, Whitfield, Luther, Spurgeon, Booth, Finney, etc...) Every true revival has been preceded by prayer and fasting.

Fasting is ...

It is saying "God,..."

When - Not If Read Matt 6:16-18

Questions-

1. Who is Jesus speaking to? Is fasting only for leaders and those in full-time ministry?
2. Does it sound as though Jesus considered fasting optional for Christians?
3. What does Jesus say about How To Fast?
4. What kind of "rewards" might Jesus have been talking about?

Scriptural Examples of Fasting:

1. Types of Fasts:

The Normal Fast -

The Absolute Fast (Acts 9:9)

The Partial Fast (Daniel 10:3)

Personal Fast (Matt 6:16)

Public Fasts (Ezra 8:21 ; Jonah 3:5)

2. Lengths of Fasts:

Generally, fasts in scripture lasted ...

_____ days - David - (2 Sam 3:35)

_____ days - Esther and the Israelites (Esther 4:16)

_____ days - a Group of Men (1 Sam 31:13)

_____ days- Daniel (partial fast) (Dan 10:3)

_____ days - Moses (Ex 34:28), Elijah (1 Kings 19:8), Jesus (Matt 4:1-2)

3. Note: The Bible is full of references to fasting, but there are very few references to the "longer" fasts. It is clear that God called some to fast for great lengths, but it occurred quite infrequently. While we believe that all Christians should fast, not necessarily will all of His people be called to the longest fasts.

Biblical Reasons to Fast

1. (1 Sam 7:3-6) Fast to Humble Yourself in ...
2. (Deut 9:16-19) Fast to Repent on Behalf of ...
3. (Judges 20:25-28) Fast to Ask for God's ...
4. (Esther 4:15-16) Fast to Ask for God's ...
5. (Acts 13:1-3) Fast to Invoke God's ...
6. (Exodus 34:28-29) Fast to Set Aside Focused Time for ...
7. (Zech 8:19) Fast Regularly as a Disciplined ...
8. (2 Sam 1:11-12) Fast as a Manifestation of ...

Benefits of Fasting: In addition to those listed above:

1. Health - ...

2. Spiritual

- a. Fasting can help quiet your ...
- b. Fasting can sharpen your ...
- c. When combined with prayer and Bible study, fasting will ...

Fasting Is Not:

1. Spiritual Merit (Zech 7:4-5)

It is a tool which can...

2. Twisting (Jer 14:10-12)

It can never be a substitute for ...

3. A Show of ... (Matt 6:16)

4. Starvation: a selection from God's Chosen Fast by Authur Wallis

Behind a good deal of the opposition to fasting are the common misconceptions that we must keep eating to live, that fasting is starving, that it is dangerous if not positively injurious. These fears are based on ignorance of a few well-proven facts regarding the activity of the human body during the fasting process.

Food is of course necessary for the sustaining of life, but air, water, and sleep are much more urgently needed. The body cannot live more than a few minutes without air, or a few days without water and sleep, but in normal circumstances, it can exist quite satisfactorily for several weeks without food.

Just as the camel has been designed to carry a water cistern within its body, enabling it to traverse the burning deserts, so God has equipped the human body with its own "built in pantry".

A normally healthy and well-nourished body can exist for several weeks without being injured or incapacitated by lack of food. During a prolonged fast the body is living on surplus fat, and at the same time it is acting like an internal incinerator, burning up the wastes and

decaying tissues of the body. Only when this refining process is complete does it commence to consume its sound living cells, and that is when starvation commences.

5. Impossible: Dr. Bill Bright on Fasting : *"As fasting and prayer brings surrender of body, soul and spirit to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, it also generates a heightened sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit; it creates a fresh clean joy and a restored determination to serve God. In short, it brings personal revival. Our spiritual power does not lie in money, genius, anointed plans or dedicated work. Rather, power for spiritual conquest comes from the Holy Spirit as people seek God's face in consecrated, diligent prayer and fasting."*

How to Begin:

1. Check Your ...

2. Beware of ...

3. Start ...

4. List Your ...

Keep a journal during the fast.

5. Expect ...

(Matt 4:1-11)