

REACH OUT AND TOUCH PRISON MINISTRY

BIBLE STUDY - LESSON #10

Name: _____ I.D.# _____ Date _____

THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

DEFINITION: A SPIRITUAL FAST IS TO DENY ONESELF FOOD TO RECEIVE SOMETHING SPECIAL FROM GOD IN RETURN. ALSO, TO DRAW CLOSER TO GOD, SPEND MORE TIME IN PRAYER AND THE WORD.

The Bible describes three main forms of fasting. The Absolute Fast, the abstinence from both food and water; the Partial Fast, eating only certain kinds of foods rather than complete abstinence (example: no junk foods, meats, etc.) The Normal Fast, the total abstinence of food, but not water.

Below are examples of each Fast. Write a brief summary explaining Who fasted, How long they fasted, the Reason why they fasted, and the Results of their fast.

1) The Absolute Fast:

a) Acts 9:1-19 _____

b) Esther 4:1-17 _____

Note: This kind of Fast should be limited to 3 days only.

2) The Partial Fast:

a) Daniel Chapter 1:1-18 (Read Daniel Chapter 9 also)

3) The Normal Fast:

a) Luke 4:1-13 _____

4) Explain why Nehemiah Fasted and the results of his fast. **(Nehemiah Chapter 1)**

a) Reason: _____

b) Results: _____

5) Men and Women Fasted to carry out the will of God and to get supernatural strength and power for specific work that they **knew** God called them to do. This kind of Fast is rare and not recommended for just anyone. Name the people who Fasted in this manner:

_____ **Matthew 4:2** _____ **Exodus 34:28**
_____ **1 Kings 19:8** _____ **Daniel 10:2,3**

6) **Read 2 Chronicles.** What did Jehoshaphat do when he needed to hear from God and what were the results?

7) List the name of Others in the Bible who Fasted:

_____ **Luke 2:37** _____ **Acts 10:30**
_____ **Daniel 6:18** _____ **Acts 12:24, 13:1-3**

8) What did the people of Nineveh do when they heard the preaching of Jonah and what were the results? **Jonah 3:5-10** _____

Are there any questions or struggles that you have that you would like to share with us to pray for you? Whatever is shared with us will be kept in strict confidence.

COMPLETE ALL QUESTIONS AND RETURN IN THE ENVELOPE ATTACHED OR MAIL TO:
REACH OUT AND TOUCH PRISON MINISTRY, P.O. Box 120249, ST. ALBANS, NY 11412

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BENEFITS OF FASTING

Fasting and Prayer puts you in a position to get the victory over things that you may have been battling for years, months, or current situations you are facing. It may be to get understanding of a situation, victory or peace in answer to a problem, knowledge and wisdom to handle a situation, for God to make a way for your financial or material needs, a health situation, a family situation. If you have any need in your life that you have not been able to overcome by prayer alone, fasting and prayer bring about a release of God's presence, power, and provision in your life. Fasting does not guarantee that God will answer your prayers exactly the way you think He should, but it allows God to work on your behalf for what is best for you. It always produces results.

HOW TO FAST SUCCESSFULLY

IMPORTANT: If you are taking **medication**, you **MUST** continue to do so but eat lightly and only what is necessary at the time you take your medication.

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

1) Set Your Objective: Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

2) Make Your Commitment: Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14, 15) For Him it was a matter of **when** believers would fast, **not if** they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long you will fast: one meal during the day, one full day (no meals) a couple of days drinking liquids only, (no caffeine) eating one meal each day for a few days, (no junk foods) (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

3) Prepare Yourself Spiritually: The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Ask God to help you make a list of your sins.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3, 4).
- Make restitution (whatever you feel owe anyone, apology, as the Holy Spirit leads you).

- **Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14, 15.**
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1, 2).
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6).

4) Put Yourself on a Schedule: For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside time to be alone with the Lord. The more time you spend reading the Word and praying, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Morning.

- Begin your day in praise and worship
- Give those secret things over to God that you have been holding on to. Ask for forgiveness. Read and meditate on God's Word, (on your knees). Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you.
- Ask God to show you what His will is for your life and give you the power to do His will.

Noon

- Return to prayer and God's Word.
- Ask God to give you the strength to overcome everything that you are battling with (Name them). Don't be afraid to talk about your sin(s) to God, because He already knows.
- Spend time praying for others around you, your family, the unsaved, your community, nation, leaders, and any special needs.

Evening

- Get alone for an unhurried time of "seeking His face."
- Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus

Expect Results

It is important not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16, 17). Remember, He did it to Adam and Eve, and He is the same Devil now, as he was back then.

Fasting will help you to sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, turn away from any sins and seek God's face. If you consistently meditate on God's Word while Fasting, you will experience a closer walk with God and an awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights (understanding). Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers. A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding to many Christians.

It takes time to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honor you for your faithfulness.

KEEP THE STUDY SHEET AND RETURN ONLY THE LESSON SHEET