

FASTING

RESOURCE

Fasting on a regular basis (living a fasted lifestyle) can have profound effects on individuals as they make room for God to move in their lives. Jesus teaches on fasting with expectancy that we will fast, and He gives us instruction on how it is to be done.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

When you fast...

Scripture records Jesus fasting for forty days, eating nothing, in Luke 4. Daniel modeled a partial fast for three weeks in Daniel 10, meaning part of his diet is restricted. We also see absolute fasts, when one abstains from eating and drinking, in Ester 4:16 and Acts 9:9. Absolute fasts should never be done without a clear word from God. Fasting can bring breakthroughs in the spiritual realm and yield more intimacy with God. Jesus teaches about fasting in the Sermon on the Mount, saying, "When you fast...", seeming to make the assumption that people will fast and giving instruction on how it is to be done (Matthew 6:16).

See also: Isaiah 58; Daniel 9:3; Acts 13:2-3, 14:23; Matthew 9:15; Luke 2:37

How can you respond?

First and foremost, Jesus encourages us to fast (Matthew 6:16-18). Pray and ask God specifically what your fasts should look like. Read through the practicals listed on the other side before beginning the fasting.

Some practicals on fasting from food:

1. Have a specific purpose for the fast.
2. Start slowly. If this is your first time to fast, start slow (fasting from specific items, fasting for one meal, fasting for one day, etc.) and move up to longer fasts over a period of time.
3. Set a definite beginning and ending time. If it is an extended fast, be accountable to someone.
4. Begin the fast with the resolve that it is going to have an effect.
5. Plan ahead. Look at your schedule and set aside specific times to meet with God through reading the Bible, praying and worship. Your usual meal times are great opportunities for set time with God during your fast.
6. Keep a journal of what you receive from the Lord through the fast.
7. Walk by faith and not by feelings. Focus on the fact that you are obeying God. If you are fasting for a longer time than before, you may experience some physical discomforts (headache, etc.). Decide ahead of time that you will let these times lead you to desperation for God.
8. Always drink lots of water and/or juice.
9. You may need to rest more than normal.
10. Break the fast with healthy food like soup, broth, bread, fruit, etc.
11. Make it a part of your regular lifestyle.

Who should not fast?

1. Those on medication which prevents it.
2. Those with specific medical conditions (hypoglycemia, pregnant women, etc.).
3. People who have hard physical jobs need to be sure and drink plenty of liquids.

(Note: Fasting is healthy for the average person! It is not harmful when done properly.)