

“God’s Chosen Fast”

Matthew 5:6

This is not a hunger strike. We’re *not* in prison. God hasn’t captured us and put us behind bars and then we’ve got this thing we want to promote and say we’re just going to go on a hunger strike to get it. We’ve seen in the past where people literally died on hunger strikes because they were trying to get something to move. If the premise is us trying to get God to move, then we have it all backwards.

“Let us start reading our Bibles with the thought that God means exactly what He says.”

- A.W. Tozier: “A Man of God”

There’s a reason that we have what we have - in the form and in all the different translations that it has come to us through all the ages of time, so that we can read, learn, grow, and get to know our Abba Father. God is looking for a relationship with us. We don’t read the Book to look for loopholes, trapdoors and end-arounds. We read it because God meant what he said, but also so we that can get to know him better.

Some of us remember A.M. radios with the dial tuners. If we were just a little off frequency, there would be static interference from other stations that cluttered the sound-space. Many of us live our lives like that - a little off-frequency. Fasting can get us back *on* frequency with God - back on God’s channel - where we’re hearing clear again - where there’s Life flowing and happening again.

The power of fasting makes us hungry and thirsty for more of God. *“Fasting reduces the power of self so that the Holy Spirit can do a more intense work within us. Fasting, as it relates to prayer, is the spiritual atomic bomb that the Lord has given us against the enemy.”*

- Dr. Bill Bright

“Among great Bible saints who fasted were Moses the lawgiver, David the king, Elijah the prophet, and Daniel the seer. Nor was this biblical practice confined to men, for we find the names of Hannah in the old testament and Anna in the New Testament in the ranks of the intercessors who fasted as well as prayed.

“In the New Testament, we have the example of our Lord as well as of his apostles. Fasting clearly had its place in the life of the early churches. Some of the great saints of church history have practiced fasting and testified to its value, among them the great reformers, such as Luther, Calvin, and Knox. The custom has not been confined to any theological school. Here we find Jonathan Edwards the Calvinist joining hands with John Wesley the Arminian, and David Brainerd having fellowship with Charles Finney.” - Arthur Wallis: Book - “God’s Chosen Fast”

We’re not fasting to have more of God - we’re fasting so he can have more of us! Some of us might not have come from a church tradition that practiced fasting, but now we can find value and alignment with God’s Word in it, and it can produce amazing things in our lives. Fasting is a beautiful and biblical thing which Jesus, himself, practiced. Right on the heels of great victory, he was sent to the greatest test of his life in the darkest place.

Luke 4:1-4 NIV

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted [tested] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.’ Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

Jesus answered the devil with Scripture. When the enemy shows up in our life - our home - our job or relationship - we need to say the same thing: *“It is written...”* We need to *“bring out the Book”* and tell him what God says about it. We need to be speaking God’s Word into our lives.

Luke 4:5-8 NIV

“The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, ‘I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship [bow low to] me, it will all be yours.’ Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

We also need to *persist* in resistance and warfare. Scripture says to resist the devil he will flee from you - he has to go. Resistance means consistent and persistent. The devil doesn’t give up easily, and we need to *continue* to resist him.

Luke 4:9-15 NIV

"The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down from here. For it is written: ' "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." ' " Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him."

Some of us are not experiencing power in the Holy Spirit because 1] we are not resisting and continueing to resist; 2] because we're not speaking the Word - *"it is written"* - *"it is spoken"*; and 3] because we're not *fasting*. Stepping into 2024, do we want to be anemic, weak, insecure and lacking confidence - or rather, to have the fog lifted, brain clear, heart beating fast and empowered by the Holy Spirit to engage this new year?

What is Biblical Fasting?

It is increasing your hunger and appetite for Jesus (Matthew 5:6) by spending time replacing other appetites with "feeding" on His Word, seeking Him in prayer, and fellowshiping with him. It is a practical way to acknowledge God as your ultimate source of Life, strength and vitality. Fasting invites God to move in your life in fresh and powerful ways by bringing your mind, body and spirit into full alignment with Him.

We allow ourselves to be hungry by depriving or diminishing something that we're used to so that it creates a hunger for more and fellowshiping with him. It is a practical way to acknowledge God as our ultimate source - he is the Source - our only source.

Matthew 5:6 NIV

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Start With Your "WHY": What is your personal goal for this time? As we fast corporately for revival, take time to determine in what ways you personally want God to "revive" you spiritually through this fast. Ask God to strengthen and speak to you in specific ways during this time of dedication to Him.

Choose A Fasting Approach: There are several ways a fast can be conducted. What matters most is finding a way to replace part of your normal routine and "appetites" with time dedicated to seeking the Lord. You should fast in the way you believe God is leading you and consider any dietary or medical conditions that might impact your decision. Here are several ways to fast:

- 1] Full Fast: Liquids only for the duration of the fast. Drink water and juice.
- 2] Daniel Fast: Abstain from meat, sweets and bread. Drink water and juice.
Eat fruits and vegetables.
- 3] Partial Fast: From sun up to sun down each day commit to liquids only,
a Daniel fast or giving up at least one item of food.
- 4] Non-Food Fast: Choose something you routinely do for relaxation, entertainment or enjoyment and replace it with time spent seeking the Lord. Examples include social media, T.V., movies, video games, social events, shopping etc...

Prepare Spiritually: To get the most out of the fast, prepare your mind and spirit in the following ways.

- 1] Set aside time (15-60 min.) for each day of the fast to use this guide to seek God in prayer and through His Word.
- 2] Determine where you will spend this time. Make sure you have a quiet place where you won't be interrupted.
- 3] Plan to keep a journal of your thoughts, reflections and inspiration from each day of the fast.

Isaiah 58:6-9 NIV

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I."

Fasting introduces the anointing of God into our lives which unties the yoke of bondage. Is there anything in our life that needs to be broken? - anything that has mastery over us? -
...that we need breakthrough for?

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your Word today. Thank You that You prepare us to remove some natural things so our hearts, minds, and bodies can be filled with the super-natural things of Your Word and of Your Holy Spirit. Lord, we are listening. You have our ear. We invite You in. Holy Spirit, show us what to do - how we can learn and lean in together to this practice of fasting and prayer. We want clarity as You lift the fog of war from our minds and spirits. Help us to engage more with Your Spirit and Your Word.. Give us Your grace!

In Jesus' name. Amen