

The Power of Bible Fasting

Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting, **Matthew 17:21.** There are many who feel Biblical fasting is unnecessary because Jesus paid for all at Calvary. This, however, is not according to the Word of the Lord. The Bible teaches fasting for all God's people; never will you have real power with God unless you fast.

In **Matthew, the ninth chapter**, we read that John's disciples came to Jesus asking why they fasted while Jesus' disciples did not. Jesus answered, **Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.** After Jesus was taken from them, His disciples did fast.

It is recorded in Mark 9 that a father brought his son, who was possessed by a devil, to the disciples. They were not able to deliver the boy, but Jesus was. Later, the disciples wanted to know why they could not cast out the devil. They were told by Jesus that **this kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting,** **Mark 9:29.** In my services the sick are healed by the numbers, devils are cast out. How is it done? Through fasting, prayer and living in the Word.

THEY FASTED IN OLD TESTAMENT DAYS

In **Exodus, the thirty-fourth chapter**, it is recorded that Moses did not eat for forty days and nights. He was on the mount with God and lived right in His mighty presence. **Verse 30: When Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone . . .** .. Fasting truly brings one into the glory of the Lord!

Elijah, in **I Kings 19:1-8**, ran from the enemy and went a day's journey into the wilderness. Twice an angel served him food, and then he ate nothing for forty days and nights. In the power and strength of the Lord he traveled 150 miles to the mount of God. If you want to reach the mount of God, fasting will help you do it.

We read of Daniel's fast of twenty-one days in **Daniel 10:2,3: I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth . . .** Then in the **twelfth verse** we read of an angel saying this about Daniel: **. . . from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.** Daniel's prayer, backed up by the power of fasting, was answered.

In **Esther 4:16**, Esther sent word to Mordecai, asking him and all the Jews to fast three days and nights while she and her maidens did likewise. She then went in before the king and won deliverance for her people.

The people of Ninevah fasted and God spared the entire city, saving over 120,000 souls (**Jonah 3:5-10**).

CHRIST, OUR EXAMPLE

Luke 4:1,2, And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. True Biblical

fasting brings the anointing of God. In **verse 18** Jesus cries, **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me . . .** After fasting forty days, Jesus began to heal the sick, cast out devils and perform many mighty miracles. As the Son of God He did not need to fast, but as the Son of man He fasted to show us how we can have power with God over all devils.

THE EARLY CHURCH FASTED

Acts 13:2: . . . they ministered to the Lord, and fasted . . . Men of God fasted and then carried out the command of the Lord. In **Acts 9:9-17**, Paul fasted for three days after his conversion; then he not only received his sight but also was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Paul, in **II Corinthians 11:27**, **was . . . in fastings often . . .** Paul recommended periods of . . . **fasting and prayer... I Corinthians 7:5.**

WHEN TO FAST

God honors any sacrifice we make for Him and He does not set down rigid rules of contacting Him. Fast with a definite purpose. Don't fast just for the sake of fasting, but fast for the purpose of contacting God about a definite concern. The fast may be short or long: there are things we receive from God on a short fast while other prayers are answered only by a long fast. Your fast should always edify you and glorify God, for when it fails to do so it is not the kind of fast God wants. Use the wisdom God has given you.

HOW TO FAST

Matthew 6:16-18: Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Don't appear downcast when you fast or boast about how long the fast has been. Fasting is not for show but to afflict your soul so that your Father in heaven will answer your prayer.

There are many ways to fast. You can fast by drinking only water or you can fast by drinking water and just enough juice to keep up your strength so that you can do your work. You can fast one meal, two meals, a day, a week or as many days as you want, but never fast over forty days at a time. Jesus fasted forty days, the maximum amount of time you should fast. I have fasted many forty day fasts, but I have never felt I should fast over forty days.

Always drink plenty of water when you are fasting. God never asks us to do anything that will harm our bodies and people have hurt their bodies by not drinking enough water on a fast. Water flushes the poison from your system; many doctors feel that fasting is beneficial so long as you drink plenty of water.

God is concerned about the good health of your body. Spend as much time in prayer, reading the Word and meditation as possible. It is important to draw greatly on the strength of the Lord during your fast.

HOW TO BREAK A FAST

There are some who can drink juices when breaking a fast. If you cannot take juices on a weak stomach, however, then corn flakes or a cooked cereal with milk and NO sugar will be fine. Gradually you may take a little broth at short intervals with a little cooked rice added. The length of the fast determines how slowly you should get back to solid foods. After a long fast, for a number of days treat yourself as you would a baby because your stomach will have become tender and delicate. NEVER overeat when coming off even a short fast. Do not give vent to your appetite.

RESULTS FROM YOUR FAST

Fasting will put self more under subjection to God. Doubts will be dispelled and faith will take her place. Jesus, speaking of faith to remove mountains, said to the disciples, . . . **nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting, Matthew 17:20,21.**

Come to Grace Cathedral and see God's miracle power in operation through fasting and prayer.