

Fasting 101

Pastor Tracy Lewis

Physical effects of fasting

Notes

Gen. 2:2 “And on the **seventh day** God...rested...from all his work which he had made.” **KJV**

Ex. 20:8 “Remember **the sabbath day**, to keep it holy.” **KJV**

Gen. 2:3 “And God **blessed the seventh day**, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work...” **KJV**

Gen. 8:4 “And the ark **rested** in the **seventh month**, on the **seventeenth day** of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.” **KJV**

A MUST NEEDED BREAK.

Fact #1: The body is designed to eventually eliminate all waste and toxins from the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat.

Fact #2: Over time, toxins build up in our system and overwhelm the body's ability to remove them.

Fact #3: Fasting allows the digestive system to rest and gives the body a chance to catch up. It is one of the quickest methods used to enhance the body's natural healing process.

Fact #4: Since energy is not focused on digesting food, a feeling of increased energy may be noticed, while healing action in the body is enhanced.

WHAT OCCURS IN THE BODY WHILE FASTING?

- Reduction in body toxins.
- Improved immune function
- Growth of healthy cells and elimination of unhealthy cells
- Increased tissue oxygenation.
- Release of chemicals that have been stored in fat and other tissues.
- Increased mental alertness

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FASTING?

- An increased sense of well-being.
- Clearer thinking.
- Cleansing of the liver, kidneys, and colon.
- Flushing of toxins.
- Clearer eyes
- Renewed energy.
- Healing with greater speed
- Purification of the blood
- Loss of excess weight and water
- Cleaner breath

Fasting helps, by allowing the organs to rest. Fasting slows the aging process that occurs in our cells as a result of the damaging oxidation process from preservatives in our food

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Notes

A number of symptoms as your body works to release the toxins

Fatigue, Body odor, Dry, scaly skin, headaches, Dizziness, Irritability, Anxiety, Nausea, Body Aches, The Big "D", Insomnia, Sinus and bronchial issues.

All of these symptoms are common with fasting and are not usually serious

Imagine that your body is like a fish tank that hasn't been cleaned in several years, even though you may have changed the water daily. Once you put a scrubber in the water and started cleaning the scum and build-up from the sides and bottom of the tank, toxins and debris would immediately pollute the clean water. Yet, once that chore was done, the next batch of fresh water and the tank itself would be completely clean.

Biblical examples of fasting.

People who fasted:

- David. Humbled himself through fasting. (**II Sam. 12:16, Ps. 35:13, Ps. 69:10, Ps. 109:24**)
- Elijah. 40 day fast. (**I Kings 19:8**)
- Ezra. Fasted for protection and direction. (**Ezra 8:21-23**) Fasted for Israel because of sins. (**Ezra 10:6**)
- Esther. Fasted with all the Jews in Shushan for 3 days. No food or water for the deliverance of her people. (**Esther 4:16**)
- Israel. On many occasions fasted nationally.
- Ninevah. Entire city. People animals, and king fasted with no food or water for God not to destroy them. (**Jonah 3**)
- Daniel. Fasted twice. One ten days and one 21 days of just pulse (fruits and vegetables) and water to receive revelation from God. (**Dan 9 & 10**)
Commonly known today as a Daniel fast.
- Anna. Served God with fastings day and night. (**Luke 2:36,37**)
- Jesus. 40 days then began ministry. (**Matt. 4:1-11**)
- Moses. 40 days then received commandments and built the tabernacle. (**Deut. 9**)
- Nehemiah. Fasted several days then built the walls. (**Neh. 1:4**)
- Cornelius. Fasted four days then received the revelation of the HG. (**Acts 10**)
- Church at Antioch. Fasted and prayed for direction. (**Acts 13**)
- Apostle Paul. Fasted 3 days before conversion (Acts 9:9) Fasted often (**I Cor 11:27**)

Examples of fasts. There are many Different kinds:

- A normal fast. No food is eaten but water is drunk. (*Also Juices*)
- An absolute fast. Abstain from food and water. (*Not suggested to go without water for more than three days- deadly. I do not suggest fasting w/o water at all*)

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- **Partial Fast**, a restricted diet rather than total abstinence from food. (Ex. Daniel and pulse, eating only vegetables, etc)

If I am not eating, am I automatically fasting a spiritual fast? Not necessarily. Let's evaluate what is not a fast:

- Going on a **diet**.
- **Missing a meal or two just because;**
 - you didn't have time to eat.
 - Missing a meal because you didn't have money to buy it.
 - A hunger strike to move the government or to bring attention to a cause. (But fasting is a hunger strike against hell!)
 - Just fasting for health benefits. (and there are many benefits)

Notes

Length of fasts. – The Bible does not specifically tell us how long we should fast – we should use our own judgment and follow the HG.

- There are certain times mentioned several times – **3 days, 21 days, and 40 days**.
- **Skipping a meal**. If you do it for the purpose of fasting, it is a fast.
- **One Day Fast**. Fasting any **24-hour period** (only skipping two meals). Breakfast to breakfast (brake-fast) Lunch to lunch, or dinner to dinner.
- **Old Testament fasts were from sunset to sunset**.
- **Once per week**. One day per week is a good spiritual discipline that many people follow.
- **Other longer fasts**. (2, 3, 7, 10, etc.)
 - Should be **prayerfully considered with a purpose** in mind.
 - Should be **done only after successfully fasting one-day** fasts.

What should motivate us to fast?

Inspiration.

- When the **HG prompts us**. Feel a burden or desire for a need, person, or situation.
- **Don't rely solely on this method.** Seasons of "inspiration" can grow few and far between.

Commitment.

- Simply because the Word tells us to.
- **Fasting is a discipline.**
 - **Spiritual disciplines cannot be carried out by inspiration alone**, but must be done by a decision.
 - Many things we do as Christians we do them not because we feel like it; but it is done by a decision or purposed choice.
 - **Fasting regularly adds tremendous discipline to your life.**

Public Declaration.

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- (Ex.-**Esther 4:16**) Leadership may request the body of Christ to come together for a specific purpose in united and powerful prayer and fasting.
- This builds community and power and unity. That is what we are doing this week.
- (*You do not lose the benefit of fasting if a public fast is called and people know that you are fasting. You lose it if you dwell on it, brag about it, talk about it, etc.*)

Notes

What does fasting accomplish?

Humbles us. (Ps 35:13, 69:10, I Kings 21:27-29.)

- **Psa 35:13** *But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*
- **Psa 69:10** *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.*
- **1 Ki 21:27** *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.*
- **1 Ki 21:28** *And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,*
- **1 Ki 21:29** *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.*
- **Fasting will humble you.**
 - Crush your pride. Make you what you need to be.
 - Brings you to a place of brokenness.
 - If for no other reason, fasting is profitable because it helps us to be humble.

Will provide spiritual power.

- Some things happen only when fasting is involved.
 - **Mat 17:21** *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*
- Ninevah stopped the wrath of God through prayer and fasting.
- Esther saved her people through prayer and fasting.
- Going the extra mile by fasting gives your prayers special attention!
- Fasting brings spiritual power and helps some things to happen that normally would not happen...

Will provide spiritual direction.

- **Ezra 8:21-23** *21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. 22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. 23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.* KJV

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- **Ezra 8:21** ... a fast to humble ourselves before our God and pray for wise guidance for our journey — all our people and possessions.

THE MESSAGE

- **Ezra 8:23** So we fasted and prayed about these concerns. And he listened.

THE MESSAGE

- **Acts 13:2-3** **2** As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. **3** And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. KJV

- The church at Antioch let the HG lead them on a critical decision. Antioch was a seaport, a gateway to the east and west. Ships would dock and cargo would be sent to the eastern world by camel caravan.
- Missionary activity could have gone east or west. So they asked the HG to show them. Prayer and fasting brought the answer. (Ex. *Your life, the local church*)

Notes

Will change God's mind.

- We can move God to action or reaction by the power and sincerity of our prayer and fasting.
- **Jonah 3:5-10** **5** So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. **6** For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. **7** And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: **let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9** Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not. **10** And **God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.** KJV
- It's not that we manipulate God through our works, we are not forcing his hand. Fasting brings you and your faith to a new level. God will hear your prayers and on occasion, as evidenced in the Bible, prayer and fasting changes the mind or plan of God.

Is a form of worship.

- Fasting can become a form of worship when given to God properly.
- **Luke 2:37** And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. KJV
- When you are on prolonged fast, fasting is in and of itself a continual prayer to God. You are praying continually.

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- You must still make time to get away and pray. But a prolonged fast is as if you were praying 24 hours per day.

Will provide spiritual insight.

- **Dan 1:12, 17** Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and **let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.** 17As for these four children, **God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom:** and **Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.** KJV
 - Fasting gave them Knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom.
 - Fasting gave them understanding in all visions and dreams.
- You can pray and fast for knowledge and understanding.

Notes

Subdues and conquers fleshly desires.

- **Rom 8:5** *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* KJV
- Paul in **I Cor 15:21** stated, “*I die daily*”.
- **When focusing on spiritual things, and disciplining the body** through fasting, **we take dominion over the flesh.**
 - **Man’s original plunge** into sin (Adam & Eve) ironically **came from not being able to control the desire to eat.**
 - There is a **strong connection between eating** (especially excessive) and **man’s indulgences in sin.**
 - **Matt 24:36-39** says that in **Noah’s day, excessive eating and drinking was one of their problems.**
 - As in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the last days.
 - **Sodom and Gomorrah**, one of many problems- food. “**Fullness of bread**”. (**Ex 16:49**)
 - **Luke 21:34** *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.* KJV
 - ... condemns **surfeiting, or excessive eating.**
 - **Luke 21:34** *Be careful not to let yourselves become occupied with too much feasting and drinking and with the worries of this life, or that Day may suddenly catch you unawares.* TEV
- The strongest human desire is to eat. Food and drink.
 - When we learn to **control these, we can control other desires.**
 - When a person won’t attempt to discipline self it is indicative of areas of strongholds in their lives.
 - Folks, as evidenced by all of these points there are many reasons that **we should make fasting a part of our walk with God on a consistent or frequent basis.**

Conclusion –

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Things to consider when fasting

Notes

When determining length of fast, don't promise God, but do endeavor to do your best.

Plan to spend extra time in prayer and the Word. (*Christian books, tapes*)

Remain repentant, humble and open to God during the fast. He may deal with you about your life.

Fast for a specific purpose and with specific requests:

- Asking God to provide for a certain need.
- Asking God for guidance regarding certain needs.
- Asking God to give wisdom or understanding about something.
- Asking God to move on behalf of others.

Make a list of prayer needs, keep a journal or notes of things God shows you during an extended fast.

Fasting for discipline and to crucify your flesh is a valid purpose.

Consider using mealtime or even meal \$ for other things. Meal time, prayer or reading the Bible. Meal money, offerings or food for the homeless.

Start weaning yourself now off of things that you enjoy – coffee, tea, soda, or whatever it is you intend to fast...

Use common sense when breaking fasts. Eat fruits, soups, soft vegetables; get your system re-acclimated to food.

Fasting without a doubt **is a powerful spiritual concept waiting to be unlocked in the church.**

Make a commitment to fast until the return of the Bridegroom.

It will make a difference.