

## KEY ABSTINENCE / FASTING

Before Jesus entered his public ministry, he fasted for 40 days. In the Bible, the number 40 often represents a time of testing. Israel was tested in the wilderness for 40 years. Jesus spent 40 days with his disciples after the resurrection and gave them many convincing proofs that he was alive. He wanted them to be absolutely sure that they believed it was he that had risen from the dead. - Acts 1:3.

Fasting was a time of preparation for Jesus before he began his ministry of teaching, preaching and healing in the world. First, he would spend a concentrated time ministering unto Father and listening to his voice in the wilderness. Fasting is a focus on feeding the inner man and denying the desires of the flesh. When Adam and Eve sinned in Eden and it involved food. Satan tempted Jesus with food in the desert if he would worship him.

In fasting, the spiritual takes priority over the material world. It is a time of listening for the voice of God and being led of the Spirit. Fasting is not meant to be a way of impressing God or going on a hunger strike until he answers our requests. Fasting helps us to focus more on God, His Word and set aside the things of the world. In that process our faith can be turbo-charged and thus we can see breakthroughs in prayer and revival etc. I have found that to be true in my own life.

Satan lures us through the things of the world and of the flesh. He wants us to be led by our 5 physical senses or by evil spiritual forces that influence our minds and spirit.

- **Sight**.....what we watch and see
- **Hearing**.....what we listen to
- **Smell**.....the alluring scents of the world
- **Words**.....by evil lies, negativity and unbelief
- **Taste**.....by physical appetites

We are bombarded by every type of tangy, zesty, spicy, sugary and sumptuous food or pleasure. One of the fruit of the Spirit is **self-control**. Fasting is a time to remind the flesh that we will not be led by it but by the Holy Spirit. **Fasting enhances our spiritual senses.** Our sight and hearing improve. Our discernment, hunger for God and faith level increase.

Fasting was meant to be a regular pattern for a Christian. Jesus proclaimed that the church was to fast after he left because he said: **"Then they will fast"** - Matthew 9:15. Jesus knew the importance and power that comes from fasting. It is a time of cleansing and refocus in our spirit and soul. There are physical benefits too, as the body burns internal rubbish while one is on a fast which gives our system a rest. I have read of accounts where people are healed from diseases, even cancer, when they fasted. Our bodies are self-healing when we given them opportunity. God wants to make us whole as he deals with every area of our life. Disease is really dis-ease. We are in full health when we are in total peace and harmony. Notice that God starts from the inside out: the spirit, the soul and then the body.

**"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

While in London as a missionary, I had a practice for quite awhile to fast on Mondays. I drew closer to God and also felt cleaner inside too. One time I went to a small gathering in the city to hear a speaker named Franklin Hall. In 1946 he wrote a book called: **Atomic Power With God With Prayer and Fasting**. The great healing revival that hit America from 1948-1957 was born from the influence of that book on the evangelists of that time. In recent years, Lou Engle of The Call, has challenged the church to times of prayer and fasting. It is based on the passage in Joel 2 where the prophet called the leaders and people to a sacred assembly (2:14). I have heard Lou give reference to the book by Franklin Hall.

Fasting is about God and his higher purposes for us as change agents in the world. Paul was in tears about those who chose to live according to the ways of the world.....

**".....many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things."**

**- Philippians 3:18-19**

**Being a disciple of Jesus is learning to be a disciplined follower Jesus. Jesus saw the value of fasting, so we should be willing to practice it too.**

#### **Various Types of Fasts**

1. **Normal fast** (water only) okay for shorter fasts of 1 to 3 days
2. **Partial fast** (with diluted juices) this provides a little more energy for longer fasts
3. **Daniel fast** (cut back on certain rich foods) - Daniel 1:8,12
4. **Fasted life** (live a life of moderation in all things) cut back on harmful habits, time wasters, sleep, TV, all negative thinking. Facebook, Internet
5. **Group fast** - a corporate fast by the church in order to change a region or nation.  
- Joel 2:12-19, 2 Chronicles 7:13-14

The early Christians used to fast every Wednesday and Friday until mid-afternoon. They put the Spirit before the flesh. They walked in a power and authority that shook the Roman world. **When Jesus completed his 40 day fast, He left the desert in the power of the Spirit, and He was ready to introduce the world to another kingdom....a heavenly one.** As some prepare for Easter, it is a time of Lent, when many believers around the world take time to reflect on the reality of Jesus' sacrificial life and death on their behalf. It is also a good time for us take go on a fast in order to pray for those who do not have a relationship with Jesus. Another benefit is our getting closer to God ourselves.

**"Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God". - 2 Corinthians 7:1**

Years ago I read a book, Never Be Sick Again by Raymond Francis which said:

**There is only one disease: MALFUNCTIONING CELLS**

**There only two causes of malfunctioning cells:**

- **TOXICITY:**       Toxins in the cells
- **DEFICIENCY:**   Lack of nutrients for the cells

If that is true in the physical realm, it is also true in the spiritual realm. We will explore that topic in the future. Fasting from food may be new to you. Start with a short period. The first couple of days are the hardest as your body will release toxins and you may get a headache etc. (If you have blood sugar issues you may want to be cautious about fasting.) I have found that once you fast regularly, you may avoid those headaches etc. as your body is getting more purified. Spend your normal eating time with God in his Word and in prayer and you will find your soul getting cleaner as you get rid of spiritual toxins and get some good spiritual nutrients into your soul.

When I went on my retreats from London out to a secluded country cottage, I often fasted for several days. After several days I got to the point that I did not want to eat as I felt so clean inside. When I did my longest fast of 7 days, a friend came out to see me at the end of my time there and we went for a long walk in which he got tired and I had much more energy. For longer fasts I found it better for me to sip on diluted fruit juices at times and it was also good to be able to take naps whenever I felt like it. The best experience I ever had was a 10 day retreat where I listened to 42 messages on faith and healing during that time. God gave me a special vision at the end of that experience, which I will share in another message.

**jesusreigns.net**