

ANATOMY OF Worship

Fasting: Principles for Spiritual Breakthrough and Power

Introduction: Understanding Fasting

Fasting is a profound spiritual discipline practiced for centuries as a way to draw closer to God, break through spiritual barriers, and receive divine guidance. Through fasting, we voluntarily abstain from food (or other comforts) for a designated period to focus on prayer, worship, and seeking God's will. Fasting is not just a religious act; it is a powerful, transformative experience that can bring real results in our spiritual journey. This short guide covers the principles of fasting, helping you understand its power and purpose, and offers practical steps for effective fasting.

Principle #1: Why We Fast

1. To Seek God's Presence

Fasting creates space for a deeper focus and relationship on and with God. In Matthew 6:16-18, (NLT) Jesus speaks about fasting as an expectation, encouraging believers to seek God's presence in humility. See biblical text below.

¹⁶ "And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get.

¹⁷ But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face.

¹⁸ Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you."

2. To Gain Spiritual Clarity and Direction

Fasting opens our hearts to hear God's voice more clearly, especially in times of important decisions. As seen in Acts 13:2-3, (NLT) the early church fasted to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit. See biblical text below.

² "One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them."

³ *So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way.*”

3. For Spiritual Warfare and Breakthrough

Fasting strengthens us spiritually, breaking down obstacles and releasing divine power. In Mark 9:29, (NLT), Jesus explains that some spiritual challenges require prayer and fasting to overcome. See biblical text below.

²⁹ *“Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.”*

4. To Develop Discipline and Self-Control

Fasting teaches us self-control by temporarily denying physical comforts to grow spiritually. It’s a reminder that our greatest sustenance comes from God, Matthew 4:4, (NLT). See the biblical text below.

⁴ *But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say,
‘People do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’”*

Principle #2: Types of Fasting

1. Complete Fast

This is a water-only fast. Sometimes known as an “absolute” fast, it’s typically done for short periods and requires medical caution.

***Please check with your doctor before starting any fast. But do know, that God, who is the Great Physician, holds the highest authority and can release complete healing and restoration even during a fast!

2. Partial Fast

In a partial fast, you avoid certain meals or types of food, like a Daniel Fast, where you consume only vegetables and water, Daniel 1:12, (NLT). See biblical text below.

¹² *“Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water,” Daniel said.*

3. Intermittent Fast

This involves fasting for part of the day (e.g., only eating between certain hours). It can be particularly helpful for beginners to build a regular fasting practice.

4. Soul Fast

A soul fast involves abstaining from things that consume our attention or distract us from God, like social media, television, or other habits.

Principle #3: Principles for Effective Fasting

1. Start with Prayer

Begin every fast by asking God to guide and sustain you. Let your purpose for fasting be clear, dedicating it to a specific intention or need.

2. Combine Fasting with Scripture and Worship

Fasting is most effective when paired with prayer, Bible study, and worship. Spending time in the Word reinforces your connection with God and aligns your thoughts with His will, Isaiah 58:6-9, (NLT). See biblical text below.

*⁶ “No, this is the kind of fasting I want:
Free those who are wrongly imprisoned;
lighten the burden of those who work for you.*

*Let the oppressed go free,
and remove the chains that bind people.*

*⁷ Share your food with the hungry,
and give shelter to the homeless.
Give clothes to those who need them,
and do not hide from relatives who need your help.*

*⁸ “Then your salvation will come like the dawn,
and your wounds will quickly heal.
Your godliness will lead you forward,
and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind.*

*⁹ Then when you call, the Lord will answer:
‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply.
“Remove the heavy yoke of oppression.
Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors!”*

3. Fast with Humility

Fasting is a personal commitment between you and God; it’s not for public recognition. Jesus taught to keep fasting private and humble, Matthew 6:16-18, (NLT). See biblical text below.

*¹⁶ “And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable
and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only
reward they will ever get.*

¹⁷ But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face.

*¹⁸ Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in
private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

4. Persevere Through Challenges

Fasting isn’t always comfortable, and temptations do arise. However, keeping focus on the spiritual purpose—knowing that God’s strength is perfected in our weakness, 2 Corinthians 12:9, (NLT)—will help you persevere. See biblical text below.

*⁹ Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So
now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work
through me.”*

5. End Your Fast with Thanksgiving

Close every fast by thanking God for the journey and reflecting on the insights or revelations received. Use this time to set intentions for applying what you've learned.

Principle #4: Benefits and Results of Fasting

1. Spiritual Renewal and Deeper Faith

Fasting rekindles our spiritual passion, renewing our commitment to God. As we fast, our faith grows, and we become more receptive to His Word and guidance.

2. Increased Spiritual Authority

Fasting equips us for spiritual battles and enhances our spiritual authority. When faced with challenges, fasting prepares us to stand firm, filled with God's strength and peace.

3. Healing and Deliverance

Many people experience emotional, spiritual, and even physical healing during fasting. Isaiah 58:8, (ESV) promises that "your healing shall spring forth speedily," showing how fasting can bring inner healing. See biblical text below.

⁸ Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard."

4. Greater Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit

Through fasting, we become more attuned to the Holy Spirit's voice, gaining clarity, and discernment in our decisions and relationships.

5. Breakthrough in Prayer

Fasting strengthens prayer, adding a layer of urgency and dedication. The Bible illustrates how fasting brought breakthroughs for individuals and communities facing impossible odds, Ezra 8:23, (NLT). See biblical text below.

²³ So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer."

Principle #5: Practical Tips for Starting a Fast

1. Set Your Purpose and Goals

Decide why you're fasting and write down your intentions. Whether for spiritual growth, breakthrough, or clarity, having a clear purpose keeps you focused.

2. Start Small and Build

If new to fasting, start with shorter fasts (like a one-day or partial fast) and gradually increase the length as you grow more comfortable.

3. **Stay Hydrated and Rested**

Always drink water during fasts unless you're doing a very short complete fast. Rest when you can, as fasting can make you feel more fatigued initially.

4. **Journal Your Experience**

Keep a journal to note what God reveals to you. This helps you reflect on how fasting impacts your spiritual life and how you grow through the process.

5. **Break the Fast Gradually**

Avoid heavy meals immediately after fasting; start with light foods and gradually reintroduce regular meals.

Conclusion: Embrace the Power of Fasting

Fasting is a gift from God—a way to disconnect from distractions and draw close to Him. The results of fasting are transformative, enabling spiritual breakthrough, inner healing, and growth in faith. As you integrate fasting into your spiritual life, trust that God will meet you, empower you, and lead you to a deeper, more vibrant faith.

This eBook offers a practical guide to fasting as a spiritual discipline that gets results. By understanding these principles and applying them, you can unlock the spiritual power of fasting and experience the growth, clarity, and breakthrough God has for you.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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