God First Series Pt.4 “The Benefits of Fasting and Prayer”

Matt. 4:4 / Gal 5:16 / Ezra 8:23

1/29/23

* Matt 4:4 - ... *People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God*
* Gal. 5:16 - *So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves.*
* Ezra 8:23 - *So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer.*

**Definition of Fasting**

Fasting refers to abstinence from some or all foods (including liquids), according to Merriam Webster’s dictionary. It is the act of denying oneself the pleasures of food for a specified period.

There are over many powerful benefits of fasting and prayer listed in Scripture! The miracles through fasting and prayer that we see in God’s Word really blow my mind.

These are just a few of the benefits of fasting Bible verses

* Jesus said we would fast (Matthew 9:14-15).
* Fasting can bring clarity and direction from God (Daniel 9:3 and then in Daniel 10:3).
* When there are hard issues, fasting brings specific answers from God and help (Nehemiah 1: 1-4).
* Fasting can cure Spiritual dryness (Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 5:6; Acts 14:23; Isaiah 58:11)
* A fast is effective when you need protection from Spiritual warfare (Matthew 17:21; Ezra 8:21-23; Ester 4:16).
* The power of fasting and prayer are great tools to break the ties of habitual sin in your life (1 Kings 21:25-27; Joel 2:12 ; Jonah 3:5-9; 2 Samuel 12:15-17).

**What is Fasting Biblically?**

A fast is simply making a choice to give up something you seek for satisfaction in order to seek God for satisfaction.

The Biblical benefits of fasting and prayer are mainly about nearness. Fasting brings you near God like nothing else. When you deny yourself something for a time and draw near to God, He really does draw near to you. Even if you start with fasting one meal fasting and prayer for breakthrough you will see change!

Fasting takes our focus and dependence from the item were fasting, to God.

Know this, the devil will come at you right away for that which you are fasting from...

* Jesus fasted 40 days and what was the 1st thing he came at Jesus with...Bread

**What Do You Give Up in a Fast/ Types of Spiritual Fasting?**

Only you will know what makes sense to fast from, but these are a few suggestions.

* **Food**

If you are in good health, fasting from a meal is a very straightforward way to begin to fast.

During the time you would have prepared and eaten the meal you spend time with God in Bible reading, prayer, and solitude.

If you are NOT in Good health, consider another form of fasting or talk with your doctor before you begin.

* **Media/Time**

TV, the internet, social media, and the like are time-consuming.

Most of us turn to entertainment from media for satisfaction. For most of us, it would be very effective to give up one or all forms for part or all of a day.

* **Spending**

This was a new way to fast that surprised me but it’s true that shopping brings satisfaction.

Can you go a day or a week without shopping? This can be a great way to focus on God.

* **Other Things**

The Bible gives examples of other things that we seek for satisfaction that can be part of a time of fasting

Oils and certain foods like in the Daniel Fast (Daniel 10:3; Daniel 9:3)

* **Sex**

1 Corinthians 7:5 - *Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should come together again so that Satan won’t be able to tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

Spiritual fasting is not about the body. Yes, there are physical benefits of fasting and prayer over time, but there is also a danger. It is easy to turn a time of fasting into a diet. Resist the urge. The healthier benefits of fasting and prayer will be seen in Spiritual satisfaction and nearness to God rather than weight loss.

**What are the Spiritual Benefits of Fasting and Prayer?**

Is there something you have been praying over for a long time? Something urgent that you need God to answer now? Fasting slows you down long enough to hear God’s voice. We saw that when we looked at the benefits of fasting and prayer in the Bible verses above. When you fast in obedience to Jesus’ Words you find:

* Clarity
* Direction from God.
* Answers
* Help from unexpected places
* Protection
* Breakthrough
* Release from habitual sin
* Redirection from God
* Fasting can cure Spiritual dryness.

**Closing:**

Let me just conclude by saying fasting can be second nature for us and not only that, by doing so you will experience a significant growth in your walk with the Lord. It has been done throughout biblical history by both men and women, young and old alike, with testimonies of God’s greatness in their lives and even today, that greatness is still being seen as men and women of prayer all around the world today are seeking the Lord through the act of prayer and fasting. I encourage us today to become a people of Prayer, taking that extra step with prayer and fasting unto the Lord. As you do so, the divine encounter you have been waiting for, you shall receive as you allow the Lord to take you higher in your prayer life.