

VICTORY OUTREACH BARSTOW

Fasting...The Lost Spiritual Discipline

Fasting is a one of the most neglected spiritual disciplines today, yet it the most powerful. It is a genuine expression of a heart of humility, self denial and carrying of our cross. Picking up our cross consist of a deliberate choice to die to our wants, needs and desires, in order to gain spiritual results, benefits and breakthrough. Fasting is the ability to endure the hunger for food out of a deeper hunger for God, His will and His power in our life.

You will find that many, if not all, of the great spiritual movements throughout history were initiated, by nations, organizations or individuals that were consecrated in prayer and FASTING.

I. Even Jesus Fasted

Matthew 4:1-4 Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness 4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

1. Jesus Fasted When He Had To Face The Devil

2. Jesus Fasted Before He Launched His Ministry

II. He Expects His Disciples To Fast...With Pure Motive

Matthew 6:17-18 But *when you fast*, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, *will reward you*.

III. There Are Different Types of Fast

1. Normal Fast-abstaining from food

2. Absolute Fast - abstaining from food & water,

3. Partial Fast- abstaining from certain foods or certain meals (Daniel Fast)

4. Biblical Length Of Fasting

A. One day [Sunrise to sunset] (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 14:24; 2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35).

B. Three days (Esther 4:16).

C. Seven days (1 Samuel 31:13; 1 Chronicles 10:12).

D. Forty days (Exodus. 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9; 1 Kings 19:8; Matthew 4:2).

IV. There Are Benefits Of Fasting

1. Fasting Intensifies Our Prayer Before God.

Ezra 8:23 So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

2. Fasting Can Change The Course Of History For The Defense And Benefit Of God's People.

2 Chronicles 20:2-4 2 Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea. It is already in Hazazon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi). 3 Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. 4 The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.

Esther 4:15-16 15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

3. Fasting Can Breaks The Yoke Of Bondage And Brings About Liberty And Freedom.

Isaiah 58:6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

Mark 9:28- 29 After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" 29He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

4. Fasting Can Give Spiritual Insight & Discernment Of God's Will And Direction For Our Life.

Acts 13:2-3 2While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Daniel 1: 16-21 So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. ¹⁷ To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. ⁸ At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

- **Opens our spiritual ears to hear**
- **Opens our spiritual eyes to see**

5. Fasting Draws Us Closer To God. Is 58

V. Fasting Is Biblical

Judges 20:26--Israel fasted for victory in war.

1 Sam. 1:6-7--Hannah fasted for a son

1 Sam. 7:6--Israel fasted in repentance

1 Sam. 31:13--Men of Jabeshgilead fasted in mourning for Saul

2 Sam. 1:12--David and his men fasted in mourning for Saul, Jonathan, and the fallen of Israel

2 Sam. 12--David fasted for mercy upon his child

1 Kings 21:27--Ahab fasted for mercy

2 Chron. 20:3--Jehoshaphat and Israel fasted for help and protection

Ezra 8:21-23--Ezra and the people fasted for help and protection

Nehemiah 1:4--Nehemiah fasted in mourning and for help upon Jerusalem

Nehemiah 9:1,2--Israel fasting in mourning and repentance

Esther 4:16--Esther and friends fasted for victory

Esther 9:3--Fasting is mentioned as having had a role in the victory

Psalms 35:13,14--Fasting in prayer and mourning

Psalms 69: 10,11--Fasting in prayer and mourning

Isaiah 58:6-8--The fast which pleases God

Jeremiah 36:9--Israel fasted for mercy

Joel 1:14; 2:12,15--God commanded fasting and repentance

Jonah 3:5--The Ninevites fasted in repentance for mercy

Daniel 9:3--Daniel fasted for wisdom

Matthew 4:2--Jesus fasted when tempted in the wilderness

Matthew 6:17-18--Jesus promised that the Father would bless fasting

Matthew 9:14-15--Jesus said his disciples would fast

Matthew 17:21--Fasting is necessary for overcoming some demonic strongholds

Mark 9:29--Fasting is necessary for overcoming some demonic powers

Luke 2:37--Fasting was part of Anna's service to God

Acts 13:2--Fasting was part of the ministry of the workers at Antioch

Acts 13:3--Ordination was accompanied by fasting Acts 14:23--Ordination was accompanied by fasting

1 Cor. 7:5--Fasting and prayer is the only proper reason for abstinence from the marital relationship

2 Cor. 6:5--Fasting was one way Paul approved himself as a minister of Jesus Christ

2 Cor. 11:27--Paul fasted often