

# SO WHAT IS A “FAST?”

## FASTING IS MORE THAN OBSTAINING FROM FOOD: IT IS EXCHANGING DEPENDENCE ON THE NATURAL TO THE SPIRITUAL

Fasting is not just denying yourself food. It is exchanging the needs of the physical body for those of the spiritual. Long times of prayer and reading God's Word will be very essential if you are to enter into a more intimate communion with God to maintain your fast to its completion.

1. **FIRST LOVE:** Fasting and prayer can restore the loss of the "first love" for your Lord and result in a more intimate relationship with Christ.
  - a. Fasting can transform your prayer life into a richer and more personal experience.
  - b. Fasting can result in a dynamic personal revival in your own life-and make you a channel of revival to others.
2. **HUMBLING/TENDERIZING OF HEART:** Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble yourself in the sight of God (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, "I humble myself through fasting."
3. **A PART OF PROCESS OF REPENTANCE:** Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life.
4. **REVELATION/DIRECTION:** The Holy Spirit will quicken the Word of God in your heart and His truth will become more meaningful to you! The final occasion for fasting is for special revelation. Exceptional insights from God were sometimes given to the prophets and others during periods of fasting. Daniel sought God with fasting to ask God to fulfill His promise to restore Jerusalem (see Daniel 9:9,18 and compare with Jeremiah 29:10-13). He received through the angel Gabriel a wonderful unfolding of God's plan for Israel. If we have sought God in vain for the fulfillment of some promise, it could be that He is waiting for us to humble ourselves by fasting and seek Him as Daniel did. Other examples of prophetic revelation during times of fasting are found in Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9,18; and Daniel 10:1-3. God decided to speak to these men while they were in the midst of a fast. For those seeking prophetic guidance or revelation today, God may
5. **PROTECTION:** There are occasions when death or danger threaten us. We see from the Scripture that it is certainly appropriate to employ fasting as a means of receiving God's protection during these times. When Ezra was carrying a large consignment of gold and silver to the temple in Jerusalem along a route infested with bandits, he records: "*I proclaimed a fast...that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a straight way for ourselves, our children, and all our goods*" (Ezra 8:21,23,31). Other examples of fasting for protection are found in Jeremiah 36:9 and Esther 4:3.
6. **HEALING:** There are two examples in Scripture of fasting on behalf of those who are sick: 2 Samuel 12:15-23; Psalm 35:13. Both of these examples come from the life of David. In Psalm 35:13 David says, "*Yet when they were sick, I put on clothes of sadness and showed my sorrow by going without food.*" David saw fasting as a way to ask God for physical healing in the lives of other people.

## FASTING DOESN'T CHANGE GOD – JUST US! (NOT A HUNGER STRIKE)

### WHO FASTED?

- Jesus
- Apostles
- Mentioned 69 times in the Bible / 1 to 3 with Prayer
- Jesus said, “When you fast...” not, “If you fast”

### CONCERN NOT RADICAL ENOUGH (ANTIDOTE)

As you enter this time of heightened spiritual devotion, be aware that Satan will do everything he can to pull you away from your prayer and Bible reading time. When you feel the enemy trying to discourage you, immediately go to God in prayer and ask Him to strengthen your resolve in the face of difficulties and temptations.