

FASTING - PART I

Fasting Principles

Scriptural Basis

Isaiah 58:6-12

6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:

11 And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

What is the purpose of the Fast?

1. **Loose the bands of wickedness** - *the bands which we have tied and by which others are bound.*

2. **Undo the heavy burdens** - In Hebrew “undo” means “to tear off.” Fasting does more than merely get rid of the burdens God never wanted us to carry—it violently **TEARS THEM OFF!** Many of us have carried burdens for years that we were never meant to carry. What are some of these burdens? Guilt? Remorse? Regret? False responsibility?
3. **Let the oppressed go free** - The Hebrew word picture for oppression reminds us of a damaged, cracked vessel. Oppression wears on a person, causing internal “fractures.” Fasting helps “mend” the vessel so you can be the awesome “vessel of honor” God has called you to be. Fasting accelerates the mending process.
4. **Break every yoke** - A yoke is a bondage or a bad habit that you cannot seem to break and leave behind you for good. When you fast, bad habits **ARE** broken. They absolutely are! Addictions to various foods or drinks are broken when you fast. In addition to substances (food, alcohol, drugs), any and every yoke (addiction or dependency) can be broken. These include:
 0. **Behaviors** (self-pity, critical spirit, self-condemnation, gossip)
 1. **Emotions** (anger, rage, lust, excitement, neediness, jealousy, envy, suspicion)
 2. **Activities** (entertainment, games, TV shows, Facebook, golf, gambling) — and there are many more.
Humans can be addicted to almost anything. We want to be yoked to the Lord.
 1. Deal thy bread to the hungry
 2. Provide shelter to the poor
 3. Provide clothing to the naked
 4. Hide not thyself from thine own flesh

What are the results?

1. Light break forth as the morning - prosperity, joy
2. Health shall spring forth speedily - restoration from all past calamities
3. Righteousness shall go before thee - he will make a way in peace and prosperity

4. Glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward - *he has your back, separating you from your pursuers*
5. You shall call and the Lord will answer
6. The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong

Fasting

- Not a public proclamation,
- Involves penitence over sin and consequent humility, disconnecting from sin and oppression of others, feeding the hungry and acting humanely toward those in need.
 - Show penitence
 - Review your last year and determine the sin for which you are penitent (feeling or showing sorrow and regret for having done wrong; repentant)
 - Humble yourself
 - Remember who's in charge—and praise Him! - It's hard to keep things in perspective if we don't remember who is Lord!
 - **Psalm 139:7-12** - *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*
 - **Jeremiah 32:17** - *Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:*
 - **Pray for a humble heart** - Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the ways in which pride gets in the way of your relationships.
 - **1 Peter 5:6** - *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

- **James 4:6** - *But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*
 - **Pay more attention to your own faults than to the flaws of others** - Confess your failings versus calling out others flaws.
 - **Matthew 7:1** - *Judge not, that you be not judged.*
 - **1 John 1:9** - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
 - **Don't hide behind your dignity—it's pride's favorite hiding place** - Your real value lies in God's eyes, not in the eyes of the world.
 - **1 Peter 5:5** - *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*
 - **Proverbs 11:2** - *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.*
 - **Serve others** - The fastest way to humility is the way Christ chose.
 - **Mark 10:44-45** - *And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*
 - **1 Peter 4:10** - *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:*
- Disconnect from sin
 - Walk away. Stop. Don't Continue. Resist. - **Romans 6:1-2; James 4:7**
 - Admit, Name & Confess - **1 Kings 8:38; Haggai 1:5, 7**
 - Ask forgiveness, strength & deliverance - **1 John 1:9; Isaiah 41:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10**
 - Want to overcome it - **Joshua 24:15; Galatians 5:16**
 - Believe you have dominion over it - **James 4:7; Romans 6:14**
 - Praise Him for deliverance - **Psalms 50:14-15; Psalms 22:3**
- Oppression of others
 - What is oppression? To be heavily weighed down in mind or body. It could mean maltreatment, harshness, cruelty. Someone who is oppressed is overwhelmed or crushed.

- Who are the oppressed? A person (people) under someone else's control or rule and are taken advantage of and treated in a harsh or cruel way.
- Feeding the Hungry
 - Not just physical bread, though that is first
 - Must always minister to most pressing need first
 - **1 Corinthians 15:46** - Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.
- Acting Humanely
 - in a way that shows compassion or benevolence; by inflicting the minimum of pain.
 - **Ephesians 4:32** - Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
 - **Luke 6:31** - And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.
 - **Proverbs 24:17** - Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles.

The Logistics

- Anoint your head with Blessed Oil, then wash your face
 - Matthew 6: 17 - But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.
- Don't announce that you are fasting to others (outside of your spouse).
- Do not chew gum or eat mints - it will make you hungrier (use breath spray or drops, if absolutely necessary or just go brush your teeth and gargle).
- Do not work out as usual
- Avoid large crowds and public places during your fast
- Avoid temptation
- Listen to music that edifies the spirit

- Avoid confrontation