



FRESH START: Prayer & Fasting

January 10, 2024 | Pastor Kirk Walters
Mount Paran North

I. Purpose of Fasting

A. Humility

Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors.

Deuteronomy 8:3a NLT

B. Spiritual Growth

He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 8:3b NLT

II. Motivation for Fasting

A. Right Motives

1. Holy Spirit directed – Jesus led by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast and overcome temptation.

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ² For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

Matthew 4:1-2 NLT

2. Spiritual practice - Jesus confirmed that His disciples would fast after He leaves.

¹⁴ One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, "Why don't your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?" ¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

Matthew 9:14-15 NLT

B. Wrong Motives

1. Power Grab

These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

Colossians 2:23 NLT

2. Attention Grab

⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

⁷ "When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸ Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

⁹ Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us

today the food we need, ¹² and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. ¹³ And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil

one. ¹⁴ "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. 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."

Matthew 6:6-18 NLT

III. Types of Fasts

A. Absolute fast - abstaining from food or water for a specific amount of time—**Jonah 3:5-9; Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9**

B. Partial fast - abstaining from rich foods, meats and bread; only consuming vegetables, fruits and water (also known as Daniel fast)—**Daniel 1:8-15**

- C. Daylight fast - abstaining from food or water from sun-up until sun-down—observed by Jews today for remembrance of difficult events in the history of Israel.

- D. 24-hour fast - abstaining from food from sun-down one day until sun-down the next day (observed by Jews for Yom-Kippur or Day of Atonement).

- E. Supernatural fast - abstaining from food and water for extended periods of time (this fast is only God-directed).

IV. Role of Fasting in Spiritual Formation

- A. Reveals the things that control us.

When I humbled my soul with fasting...

Psalms 69:10 NRSVA

- B. Reminds us that we are sustained daily by God.

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.'"

Matthew 4:4 NLT

C. Helps us keep balance in our lives.

“Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything.”

1 Corinthians 6:12 NIV 1984

I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life.

1 Corinthians 9:22 MSG