

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Fasting

Fasting - posted by twayneb (), on: 2010/10/9 9:52

I posted this as a reply on another thread but then realized it would be a great topic to form a new thread.

Fasting is a very powerful discipline in the life of a believer. I don't know how many fast on any kind of a regular basis and what kind of benefit you see from that fasting. Fasting should be a discipline of a believer just as prayer, time in the word, giving, etc.

But many are a bit confused about why we fast. They see it as a way to convince God we are serious about our prayers. They see it as a way to get prayer answered. Some even see it as some sort of penance.

God spoke through Isaiah that the fast that God had chosen was not one in which we afflict our soul and spread sackcloth and ashes under us as though our fasting somehow causes God to see our affliction and take us seriously because of it where He would no have been predisposed to take us seriously before. (Recall the instruction of Jesus in Matt. 6 about washing your face and being joyful even in your fast because the fast is unto God, not for others to see.) So often we pray and if we don't see any answer we take it up a notch, afflict ourselves, and fast and pray as though that will somehow twist God's arm or change His mind. This is not the fast God has chosen. Obviously it is not a fast for strife, debate, or out of legalism that God has ordained.

But the fast He ordained is this.

Isa 58:6-10

(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 noonday:

It is the breaking of bondage in our own lives. We are spirit, soul, and body and only one third of us is born again. We still struggle with the flesh. Fasting breaks the power of the flesh in our lives and causes us to be more sensitive to the Holy Spirit. If we have trouble hearing God's voice, it is probably because we are walking too much in the flesh and not in the spirit. We break these yokes by fasting. Our flesh rises up and says, "I am hungry, feed me." We must rely on the Holy Spirit and say, "No, we will not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." I have gone without food for 24 hours and it did not phase me. I have decided to fast for 24 hours and within one hour I thought I was going to starve. Fasting food is definitely spiritual, believe me. To maintain a fast takes prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit.

You can fast things other than food, and it is effective. Some need to fast their smart phones, some the internet, some need to fast Coca-Cola (that has been me from time to time.) Anything that has a hold on our flesh needs to be fasted so that the bondage is broken.

Re: Fasting - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2010/10/9 9:57

Travis, your post is awesome.

I really hope this thread doesn't get swept under the rug as quickly as the last thread on fasting. This is something that NEEDS to not only be discussed, but practiced.

It's too bad that it's a topic that makes so many start squirming a bit.

Re: Fasting, on: 2010/10/9 9:58

Yes, the motive must be right in fasting or it will be just a good weight loss for many.

Re: - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2010/10/9 10:07

Quote:

-----Yes, the motive must be right in fasting or it will be just a good weight loss for many.

Haha. The weight loss isn't always a good one though. You can lose weight and muscle from some VERY unusual places.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2010/10/9 12:10

Quote:

-----It's too bad that it's a topic that makes so many start squirming a bit.

Why is this so? I know from experience that it is. I could decide to lose some weight and cut my portions, miss a meal here or there, or fast for carnal purposes for a day and it is no big deal. The moment I decide to fast so that I might crucify the flesh and walk in a greater measure of sensitivity to God through the spirit, all kinds of warfare begins to happen.

We just love our flesh too much (me included). We look out so much for our own carnal comfort. Oh that God would grace us to change that in a big way.

There is a supernatural grace for fasting.

Re: - posted by StarofGOD (), on: 2010/10/9 12:16

I find fasting fun some times. To enter into battle, makes you stronger, and the strongholds just come down.

Some days anyways, some days it's a struggle...

Re: Fasting - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2010/10/9 14:08

I thought I would post some notes that I have from a study I did on fasting in Isaiah 58, I've posted these before but I will post them again here.

Reading Isaiah 58

Improper reasons for fasting

1) Fasting just to get God's attention (v. 3a)

2) Fasting without focusing on the Lord, fasting had become a mere physical exercise with no affliction of soul or seeking after God.(v.3b)

3) Fasting without accompanying humility of heart. Fasting is not a way of impressing God, it is a way to humble ourselves before Him.(v.4)

4) Fasting for a brief external show of religion. Israel fasted merely for outward show.(v. 5)

Proper reasons for fasting

1) To bring liberation from the bonds of wickedness and to set the oppressed free. Fasting prepares our hearts to hear what God has to say about issues in our life where we need victory.(v.6)

2) To relieve us of heavy burdens, replacing our burdens of every-day life with His burdens.(v.6)(see Matt 11:28-30)

3) To increase our sensitivity towards the needs of others, remember not to stay focused on self, but love one another as Jesus loves you.(v. 7)

4) To invest ourselves into our physical and spiritual families, becoming more responsive to the needs of brothers and sisters, husbands and wives.(v.7)

God's promises to those who fast

1) Insight and understanding(v.8). God will give wisdom to solve problems and behave with discretion. (see Jer 33:3)

2) Positive changes in physical well-being (v.8)

3) A deep sense of what is right (v.8 "your righteousness will go before you")

4) A sense of immediate access to God in your prayer life(v.9). We do not pray to get God's attention we pray because we have His attention. Sometimes the world and sin can disrupt our fellowship with God, Setting aside time to pray and fast can bring us face to face with whatever has crept into our lives.(see Psalm 66:18 & 1 John 1:9)

5) Release from spiritual oppression (v.10) and a return to being strengthened by the joy of the Lord.

6) Moment by moment guidance from the Lord (v.11). Prayer and fasting will heighten our awareness of God's presence and guidance.

7) Peace through difficult times (v.11)

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2010/10/9 15:07

AMEN!!

Re: - posted by SolaVeritas, on: 2010/10/10 1:38

Thank you for bringing up this subject, it is dear to my heart. Fasting is greatly underrated in the church I attend as well as in those I am acquainted with. More teaching is needed, more men and women of God getting serious about this. I'm planning to look for my journals from extended fasts in the past. Might be able to share some of the insights and experiences.

Re: - posted by Renoncer, on: 2010/10/10 4:01

It is so easy to fast for the wrong reasons. I remember fasting one time, thinking that I would somehow force God to answer me. My heart wasn't right, and God didn't honor my selfish prayers (though the motive seemed biblical).

I have learned to seek God fervently, but also to seek to be molded after His will. Thus, fasting should be first and foremost an act of submission to God's will, and His sovereignty. Only once our spirit is in line with God's Spirit do we begin to have effective and powerful prayers. Fasting fits into this framework.

For instance, although I may want to fast for my nation, I have no assurance that God will turn the nation around. Only if this is according to His plan will He answer by turning the nation around. However, even if it isn't in His plan to do so, I should be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, so that I might respond accordingly when He says, "No, but you can ask for this or that"

hat..."

Thank you for the original post. I like your thoughts on fasting. May God bless you richly.
In Christ Jesus

Re: - posted by swimmer, on: 2010/10/24 0:22

I just noticed this thread that I had missed from a couple of weeks ago. I wanted to add a couple of things, if I could. As far as the reasons why we fast, Matthew 4:1,2 says "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward he was hungry". Doesn't obedience to the Spirit then become one of the reasons to fast? I wonder if any others have felt led by the Spirit to fast? I know that when I want to fast and do, I am not very successful. When I feel led by the Spirit to fast, I am able to complete it.

Re: , on: 2010/10/24 1:06

Quote:
----- Doesn't obedience to the Spirit then become one of the reasons to fast? I wonder if any others have felt led by the Spirit to fast? I know that when

And not just fasting...Our entire walk.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Romans 8:13-14

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2010/10/24 9:05

Quote:
-----Doesn't obedience to the Spirit then become one of the reasons to fast? I wonder if any others have felt led by the Spirit to fast?

I would say absolutely! If the Holy Spirit deals with you to fast, do it. God is trying to get something to you and whatever it may be it is glory. God gives us grace to do what He tells us to do.

Re: - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2010/10/24 9:12

Keep this thread alive. This subject always goes down WAY too quickly.

God-Complex - posted by knitefall, on: 2010/10/24 9:28

I remember fasting when I thought I could challenge God. Yeah, I thought that since I've been born again that I could "take on" whatever tribulations and trials and temptations. I would totally get beat up and fail. If I tried to fast sin out, it would come on stronger. If I tried to fast for answers, it would frustrate problems. If I tried to fast for patience, huh, good luck on that one too. Until I realized it was my God-Complex (sinful flesh nature) rising up, thinking itself higher than it ought. I could do NOTHING in and of myself for sanctification. That's a big word no one uses these days! If I set myself under law, to gain something by means of my own flesh, this would frustrate God. And God will never help you keep law. You might think you have victory but it would be short lived if at all. Remember Moses' face that shown? And it faded- the glory of the old cov't law program is nothing compared to what we have IN Christ Jesus. If you have been baptized INTO the Body of Jesus (by Faith) Rom 6:3 then you are no longer responsible to Sanctify yourself. Fasting to bring about some spiritual change is indeed a misunderstanding of the Gospel and how God works. You cannot combat a spiritual problem by means of the flesh corrupted by sin. The answer is found solely in the Cross of Christ and simplistic Faith therein.

Re: God-Complex, on: 2010/10/24 11:58

I plan to fast a 40 day spin in January. I am not fasting like I did in the past for spiritual reasons though it will end up being that way, rather I am fasting for health reasons. I've gone as much as 24 days and I could have gone more, but I had received the answer that I was looking for and the changes that came with it.

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/10/24 14:19

I remember when first being saved (2009) I planned on fasting every other day for the entire year. I was praying for the Fear of the Lord to fall in the area. I made it for about 8 months of this and then the Lord told me to stop along with family who was worried about my health.

I started out with a heart to really see change take place however it simply became a religious activity and I lost connection with my cause, now I pray the same prayer minus the fasting. I think the longest I have gone is 7 days it was interesting to say the least :).

I agree with all the former post that say the intention and heart must be correct.

Re: , on: 2010/10/24 16:42

Quote:
-----I started out with a heart to really see change take place however it simply became a religious activity and I lost connection with my cause

I am glad that you stopped. The fast that I plan to do is something that I have been planning for quite some time and though I did not for the longest time feel that the Lord was in it, that it was all me, but yesterday I felt His direction in it. Even though initially it might have looked like it came from me, but it's His desire that sparked my interest.

I love fasting, and praying is so much easier. One is determined to pray even with little sleep, and getting up in the middle of the night is an opportunity to pray more. I look forward to afflicting my soul and denying the flesh it's idiosyncrasies and putting the computer of distraction away for a month.

Someone might be thinking, why wait for the new year as if your doing some new years resolution?

Good question, the answer is, I have family. And I have to prepare them for this sabbatical. We do many things together and if I just dropped them like a rock, I'd shock them and could very well damage my relationship with them and that simply is not worth doing. It took years to be reconciled to my family with God interceding and I want to respect His work, not try to destroy it over my inconsiderate whims.

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2010/10/25 3:14

Lu 5:34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

Lu 5:35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Who are we to fast for? This fasting is not food or drink, but because He is not with us physically. He is in us in Spirit, so the Bridegroom is now not only with us but in us.

What did this man receive when he fasted twice a week. Only the humble man went down to his house justified. Our Fast is wanting to fall at His feet and put our arms around Him and feel Him as He is and we as known of Him. Joy untouchable, embracing Jesus Christ our brother and Lord and our Savior and God.

Luke 18:11-14 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Jas 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

1Pe 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Is fasting in this world in food and drink what makes us humble.

Humble yourselves and seek His face and He will lift you up.

Jesus is our fast, "come Lord Jesus".

Revelation 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

This is true fasting, "Even so, come Lord Jesus. While He is away in the body He now has and ours will be like His, this is our fast, wanting to be with the Lord so much that our spirit faints with His leaving and our longing to be with Him.

Fast and Pray, Mark 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

Mark 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

This is my prayer and fast; Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Christ truly is our Fast.

In Christ: Phillip

Re: - posted by EverestoSama, on: 2010/10/29 10:59

I've heard many reasons to fast, and why we should do it. However true those reasons are, or may be, when I fast I'm not sure what what is actually accomplished in me, accept one thing.

Fasting isn't a way to get God to move on my behalf, or kind of like a, "I'm doing my part, now it's time you do Yours" sort of thing.

The only thing that really changes is my ability to hear clearly. It's like taking the earmuffs off of my spirit. That alone has been worth it, and is not only wonderful, but absolutely crucial.

To not fast IMHO, would be the same sort of robbery from your own relationship with God as would be to not pray, or to not give when The Lord tells you. Take that how you may.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2010/10/29 19:53

EverestoSama...Amen! I think that is the very thing that fasting does in our lives.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2010/11/3 22:09

Bump: Has anyone experienced some really awesome spiritual results from fasting?

Re: - posted by swimmer, on: 2010/11/3 23:23

Yes, I have. I am not sure it would be helpful to share them, as God deals directly with each of us on a personal level, so I am sure everyone would experience something different. I would encourage everyone to really seek the Lord's will for your own fasting. Many do not think it is possible for them. I used to think that, but was educated by the Spirit otherwise. What a blessing.