

# Fast<sup>ing</sup>

## Plus What is a Daniel Fast?

Why would anyone fast? Surely this is not necessary anymore in the 21st century! The goal of this pamphlet is to get you thinking differently about this ancient spiritual discipline.

**Summary:** We need supernatural power which comes only from walking with the Holy Spirit. The key to walking with the Holy Spirit is humility. Fasting is one of the best tools available to learn to walk humbly.

### ***We Need Supernatural Power from the Holy Spirit!***

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you Acts 1:8a*

We live in a natural world that is full of impossible situations. We are often in bondage to a sin, thought pattern, or addiction. Our relationships are often dysfunctional. We find ourselves lacking the knowledge and wisdom to move beyond our current circumstances. We need God to bring the *supematural* into our natural world. We need the power of God!

It is part of our mission to help set people free from the bondages that they are in. In order to do this we need supernatural power that only comes from walking with the Holy Spirit.

### ***Humility—Key to Walking with the Holy Spirit***

*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:10*

Humility is required to walk with the Holy Spirit.

*For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Matt. 23:12*

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 1 Pet. 5:6*

What does it mean to be humble? A definition of humble in the dictionary shows two things: 1. *not arrogant or prideful* 2. *deferential or submissive respect*.

Notice it says in *James 4:10* that we have to humble ourselves. The Holy Spirit doesn't do it for us. What good is humility if we don't do it ourselves? If we are forced to be humble then are we really humble? We cannot pray, "God make me humble."

Humility is saying that I am nothing without God and everything with Him. When we voluntarily acknowledge this and walk in it we are humble. When we don't we are arrogant and walk according to the natural. Fasting is one tool that quickly humbles us and shows us that we need something greater than ourselves.

### ***Natural Power is not Enough***

We have much movement in the Western church but *no supernatural power* because we are not humble. We often put our confidence in buildings, structure, education, and money. We perform external actions without the internal attitude of humility. Busyness does not always mean godliness. We are often arrogant and not submissive towards the Holy Spirit. But as we walk humbly with God He will give us the power we need to overcome.

Fasting is a topic that is almost never talked about in the Western church. It is thought about as only something that desperate people do. But I submit to you that the Western church is actually in a desperate state and doesn't know it. It often looks like this:

*having a form of godliness but denying its power 2 Tim. 3:5*

This perfectly describes most of the church today. Why? Because we don't have supernatural power! We think the *form* of our buildings, structure, etc is enough. But it is full of movement and actions but little power to truly transform lives into passionate, free, and holy Christians.

*I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Rev. 3:15-19*

## ***Fasting's Primary Purpose is for Self Humbling***

How do we humble ourselves in order to walk with the Holy Spirit? There are 4 major ways to humble ourselves: 1. Prayer. 2. Worship. 3. Living a Submitted Life. 4. Fasting.

The first 3 have been talked about a lot in the church – but not the 4th — fasting! Fasting is always linked in Scripture with humility.

*Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, Psa. 35:13*

We need to humble ourselves to see God move on our behalf. One tool of humbling ourselves is fasting.

Fasting was practiced regularly by God's people throughout the Scriptures. The essential nature of fasting is renouncing the natural to invoke the supernatural. The most natural thing for us to do is to eat. When we give up eating we are deliberately turning away from the natural and asking God for the supernatural.

When we fast we are acknowledging that He has to move or we are doomed. We are admitting that our natural power is not enough to make happen what needs to happen. It is a sign that we want and need the Holy Spirit to move on our behalf.

## ***Fasting Shows Who is in Control***

The goal is to be totally controlled by the Spirit of God. *Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God Rom. 8:14.* When you fast you quickly realize who is in control – your flesh or the Holy Spirit.

Fasting shows us our weaknesses and reveals our heart attitudes. As we take those weaknesses and heart attitudes to God for correction *then* this produces humility and the movement of God.

It is a very humbling thing when you can't fast food for any length of time. Many people can't go without food for more than a couple of meals. This shows that *in the end* your stomach will rule you not the Holy Spirit. It reveals who our real master is.

Our flesh has to become subject to the Holy Spirit. The final goal is not to go without food but to be totally led and sensitive to the Holy Spirit. The "I want", "I think", and the "I feel" has to be replaced by what the Holy Spirit wants, thinks, and feels. Fasting very quickly shows us if this is a reality.

The hindrance to the supernatural is our flesh.

*So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. Gal. 5:16-17*

*The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. Rom. 8:6-8*

When we are controlled by our bodily desires it is saying that the body is actually our god because we are driven by it's desires not God's. Derek Prince says, "*Your body makes a wonderful servant, but a terrible master.*" Fasting quickly shows us who is the Master. When we learn to make the Holy Spirit the master as we walk with Him we start to enter the

supernatural world!

Actions alone with out humility will not move God. This includes fasting. The earth is full of people of various faiths performing ascetic and self-mutilating things with out moving God. Humility moves God. Humility is acknowledging that God is God and we are not! It is an internal attitude that will produce external actions. As we fast let it produce the internal attitude of humility in you.

*Matt. 6 lists 3 duties of the Christian: Give to the Needy, Pray, and Fast.*

*“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full....*

*“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full....*

*But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, Matt. 6:2, 5, 17.*

*Written by Craig Cooper*

# Daniel Fast

What is a Daniel Fast? The next few pages explains the biblical and practical aspects of the Daniel Fast.

## *Where does the Daniel Fast come from?*

The concept of the Daniel Fast can be found in Daniel 1. The nation of Israel was in a time of captivity in Babylon. Daniel and his three friends were chosen to learn to serve in the king's court and were given a portion of the king's choice food and wine. Daniel did not want to defile himself by eating the food. He was attempting to observe the Jewish dietary laws in order to remain true to the laws given to Moses. Many also believe that the food was a sacrifice to the idols of Babylon and may have influenced their decision to not eat the King's food.

In verse 12 Daniel asks to eat only vegetables and drink water for a period of 10 days. As a result of their obedience God blessed their health and they were healthier than all the other apprentices. Verse 17 states that God granted them “knowledge and intelligence”. In fact, they were said to be 10 times better than all the others!

## *What exactly is a Daniel Fast?*

The Daniel fast is not a fast in the biblical sense. Usually a fast in the Bible meant only consuming water for some set period. What we call the Daniel fast was actually a continuation of the observation of the Hebrew/Old Testament dietary laws.

We see that Daniel ate vegetables and drank water because this was the only food that he could be assured was correctly handled. There is no biblical command to “fast” in this manner. A person is free to observe this type of diet and it can be used as a type of fasting. As the pamphlet *Fasting* talks about, the purpose of a fast is to deny your body something that it is dependent on in order for us to become more dependent on God. The fast can be as extreme as water only or something else that the Lord leads us to fast.

We see in Romans 12 that because of Jesus' sacrifice we are no longer restricted to the dietary laws but good wisdom justifies good eating. The American culture fills our bodies with 'food' that is unhealthy and provides poor nourishment. These are the things that Daniel abstained from. Many of us if we followed this fast would do us good because we are 'addicted' to sugars, fast foods, caffeine, and other things that are harmful to our

bodies. If the Lord leads you to do a Daniel fast it will purify your body and remove your dependencies on these types of food and place your dependency back on God.

## *How do I do a Daniel Fast?*

There are many different interpretations and many lists of “Do’s and Don’ts” relating to a partial fast that is done in the manner of Daniel. The goal of any fast is to provide a voluntary spiritual commitment to God and to deny the desires of our bodies in order to draw closer to His Spirit. Romans 14 in The Message states that *“Each person is free to follow the convictions of his own conscience.”* This means that there is no set list to follow.

Seek the Lord about what things He desires for you to give up during this time. Each person’s fast will look differently but we must all endeavor to deny the pleasures of our flesh and to embrace God’s will for our lives. A good measurement is to deny anything that hinders or defiles your walk with God. The fast will cost you something. Obey what He says and trust Him to fill in the details for you.

It is very difficult to hear the voice of the Lord and be consecrated if you are feeding yourself (spiritually and physically) with things that are warring for your attention. We know that anything that does not bring glory to God is a distraction. It is vital that you draw close to the Lord during the fast. During the fast increase your time of prayer, Bible study, and worship.

This is a time that addictions must be sacrificed in order to place God in His rightful place as Lord and King. If you have addictions such as caffeine, nicotine, fast food, sugar, or anything else that controls you seek the Lord in how to give these things up in order to devote your full attention to Him.

## *Practical Things to Remember*

It is a good idea to write out what the specifics of your fast will be beforehand, and to write out your commitment. Seek the Lord and decide what He is calling you to give up and stick to it. It is easy to compromise if you have not specified what you will do. Do not become bound in rules and regulations but remember to be led by the Spirit. Remember that your fast will look differently from what others are doing, but keep in mind that your fast is to God, and not to others.

Listen to your body’s signals but do not be controlled by them. Your body will tell you when you need things such as water and nourishment. Your body will also tell you when to rest. You may desire to take a vitamin or protein supplement if you eat very small amounts. Keep in mind that you must respect your body but not be controlled by emotion or fleshly addictions. Pray for balance in this.

Be accountable! Fasting can be very difficult for some and very easy for others. Encourage each other and help others to walk if you see they are facing challenges. If you need help ask for prayer. Do not feel condemnation for struggling. Each person will respond differently to the fast and its effects.

You may experience side effects such as headaches, weakness, and fatigue from the fast, especially if you are denying a craving. As your body begins to cleanse itself from the negative effects of our everyday habits, you may become tired and lethargic, or you may become extremely energetic. Rest as necessary. Again, listen to your body’s signals and pray that God will lead you and direct you. Realize that these things are normal and that the benefits far outweigh the cost.

Be aware of specific things like medical conditions, physical labor required to work, and other special conditions. If you have special needs be wise and consider these. Alternatives are available. This is not a failure but wisdom must be applied. God will not ask you to do something that is harmful to you, but He will challenge you!

Be prepared for opposition. You are denying your flesh and temptations will come. Press through and trust that Jesus Christ is your source. You are fasting for a breakthrough. It is worth it!

God is for you and not against you. Lean on His strength, listen for His voice, and remember always that His grace is sufficient!

*Written by Jeff Rewis*