

Really Need an Answer?

What God Has to Say About Fasting

Matthew 6:6-18

August 14, 2011

- I. What is fasting?
 - A. Abstinence from **food** and sometimes **water**
 - B. It could be **anything** you chose to abstain from as a sign of devotion to God (cf. I Cor. 7:5).
- II. Who should fast?
 - A. You and me! Jesus said, “**when**” you fast not “**if**” (Matt. 6:16).
 - B. Examples from the Bible: Moses (Ex. 34:28), Elijah (I Kgs. 9:8), Ezra (Ezra 10:6), Daniel (Dan. 10:3), Christ (Lk. 4:1-2), Anna (Lk. 2:37), Paul (Acts 9:9) and Leaders of the Antioch church (Acts 13:2).
 - C. An example from “today”: Bill Bright, founder of campus crusade for Christ (www.ccci.org – great website with 3 good articles on fasting).
- III. When/why should I fast?
 - A. For **healing** of the sick (Ps. 35:13)
 - B. When **mourning** over the sin of our **nation** (I Sam. 7:6)
 - C. When **mourning** over the sin of the **people** of **God** (Ezra 10:6)
 - D. When seeking **wisdom** and **understanding** from God (Dan. 10:3)
 - E. As an act of **worship** (Acts 13:2)
 - F. As part of **sending** people out to do God’s work (Acts 14:23)
 - G. When faced with overwhelming **danger** (II Chron. 20:3)
 - H. When seeking to lose the chains of **bondage** (Mk. 9:29KJV; Is 58:6)
- IV. How are we to fast?
 - A. Wrong approach:
 1. For **show** (v. 16a)
 2. When we make it **obvious** to others (v.17)
 3. To receive the **praise of men**
 - B. Right approach (5 questions):
 1. Do I have God’s endorsement for this fast or just to impress others? (Is. 58:3)
 2. Am I doing this with right motives? (Matt. 6:1)
 3. Am I determined above all else to minister to the Lord? (Acts 13:2)
 4. Am I fasting with a positive outward demeanor? (Is. 58:1ff)
 5. Are my spiritual objectives clear?
 - C. Some exemptions: diabetics, pregnant women, those with special physical or medication needs should not fast. Consult your doctor first.
- V. How do I start?
 - A. Start **slow**.
 - B. Eliminate caffeine, sugar and fat from your diet for at least a day before you start your fast.
- VI. What are the benefits?
 - A. Physically: **weight loss** up to 2 pounds per day at the start.
 - B. **Spiritual** invigoration: answered prayer, guidance, direction, and a rekindled passion for God.
 - C. Intensified spiritual **warfare** (Lk. 4)
 - D. The **peace** that comes from knowing you have been heard
 - E. Answered **prayer**



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