

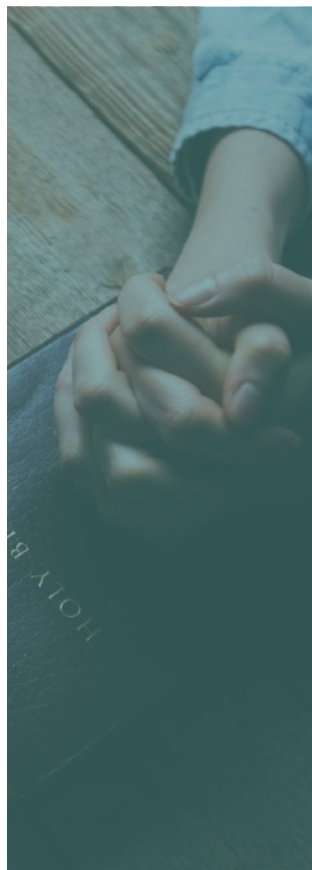
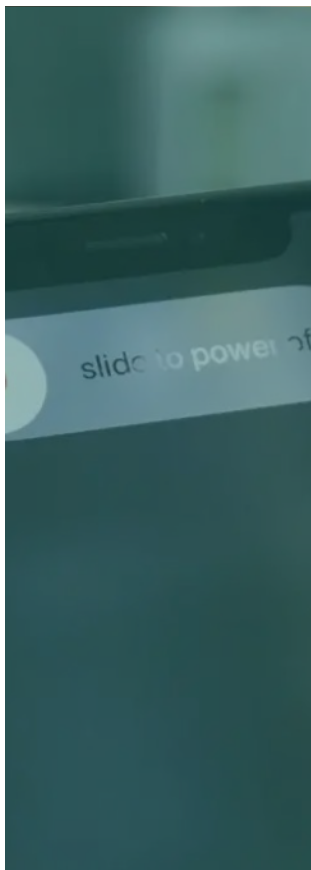
# FASTING

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A SPIRITUAL PRACTICES DEVOTIONAL

B/P



# What is fasting?

Biblical fasting is voluntarily giving up something part of our daily routine to draw closer to God.

During this time, we pray for something specific. The purpose of giving up or sacrificing what we want helps us remember to pray. It reminds us that we are serious about what we ask for in prayer. Throughout Scripture, God's people fasted and prayed when they wanted to draw near God, hear from Him, and seek answers to prayers. In the Bible, fasting was always associated with food. But today, things may be harder to give up than food, such as television or video games, texting, or shopping. Fasting and prayer is the discipline Jesus promised would bring about supernatural results.

Throughout history, God has called upon His people to embrace humility through the practice of prayer and fasting. As a spiritual family, we pray and fast to deepen our intimacy with God.

As a spiritual weapon, God has used fasting to advance His kingdom, bring about national changes, ignite revival, and secure victories in the lives of His faithful followers. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God communicates, "If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Prayer and fasting fulfill these requirements and pave the way for divine intervention.

Fasting becomes integral to a believer's life in Christ, as it entails willingly sacrificing something significant for a defined time. Biblical fasting goes beyond merely abstaining from food; it holds a spiritual objective in mind, always accompanied by prayer and worship. Fasting becomes an act of service to God (Luke 2:37) and a means of ministering to the Lord (Acts 13:2).

As we engage in fasting over the next few days, let us all be mindful that everything we do is for the glory of God.

## How do I fast?

### FOOD FASTS

**Complete fast** – this fast calls for drinking only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option, for an entire day or period of days.

**Selective fast** – this type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a particular fast is the [Daniel Fast](#), during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

**Partial fast** – this fast is sometimes called the Jewish Fast. It involves abstaining from eating any food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM, or from sunup to sundown.

**Single food fast** – this fast involves giving up coffee, chocolate, meat, or whatever you will miss if you don't have it.

**Fast from eating out** – refrain from eating out during your fast period.

## **MEDIA FAST**

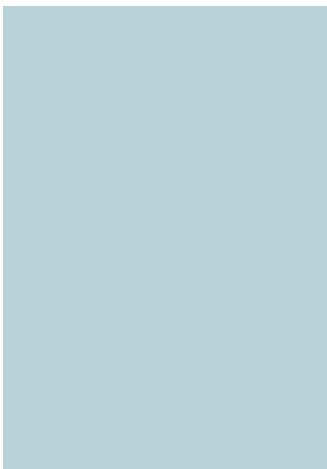
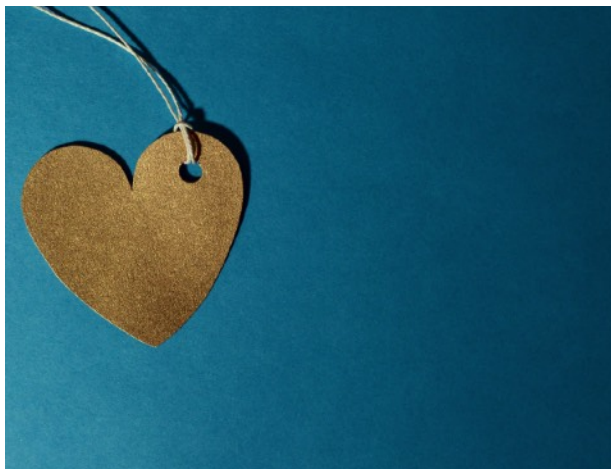
This fast is for those with health issues that prevent them from fasting food, or who wish to refocus certain areas of their life that are out of balance. Some ideas:

- Give up TV or video games
- Give up texting or turn off the cell phone
- Abstain from social media
- Fast from internet shopping or all recreational shopping and only purchase essentials

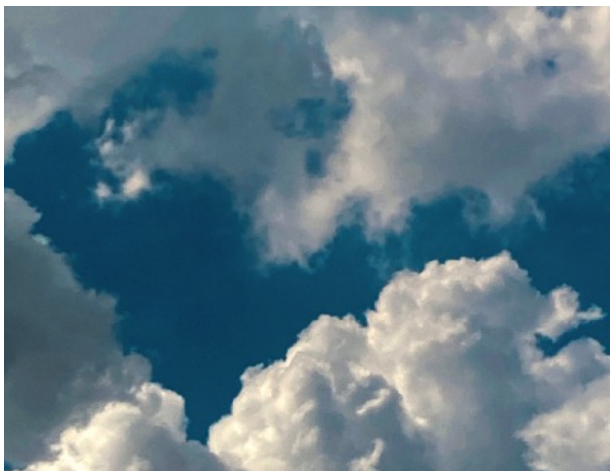
## **CAUTION TO FASTING**

While fasting has benefits, some should not fast without professional supervision. For example:

- Persons who are physically too thin or emaciated.
- Persons who are prone to anorexia, bulimia, or other eating disorders.
- Those who suffer weakness or anemia.
- Persons with tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood diseases, or heart disease.
- Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, or other important organs.
- Individuals who take insulin for diabetes or suffer from other blood sugar problems such as hyperglycemia.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing.
- People taking prescription drugs should consult their attending physician before starting a fast.



“YET EVEN NOW,” DECLARES THE  
→ **LORD,** ←  
“RETURN TO ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART,  
WITH FASTING, WITH WEeping, AND WITH MOURNING...”  
JOEL 2:12

A stylized mountain range with white peaks and blue slopes, positioned at the bottom of the central text block. The entire text and mountain illustration is enclosed within a dashed-line border.



# Day 7: Fasting as a Spiritual Discipline

**READ: Matthew 4:1–11** “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ” Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “ ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “ ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ” Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’ ” Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.”

**THINK:** When we fast, it can often bring about clarity to what desires, doubts, or weaknesses are in our lives that we might not be aware of. Fasting isn’t mainly about the absence of food but about cultivating a greater sense of what we genuinely worship or might be controlled by. Psalm 139:23-24 offers us this prayer to pray: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”*

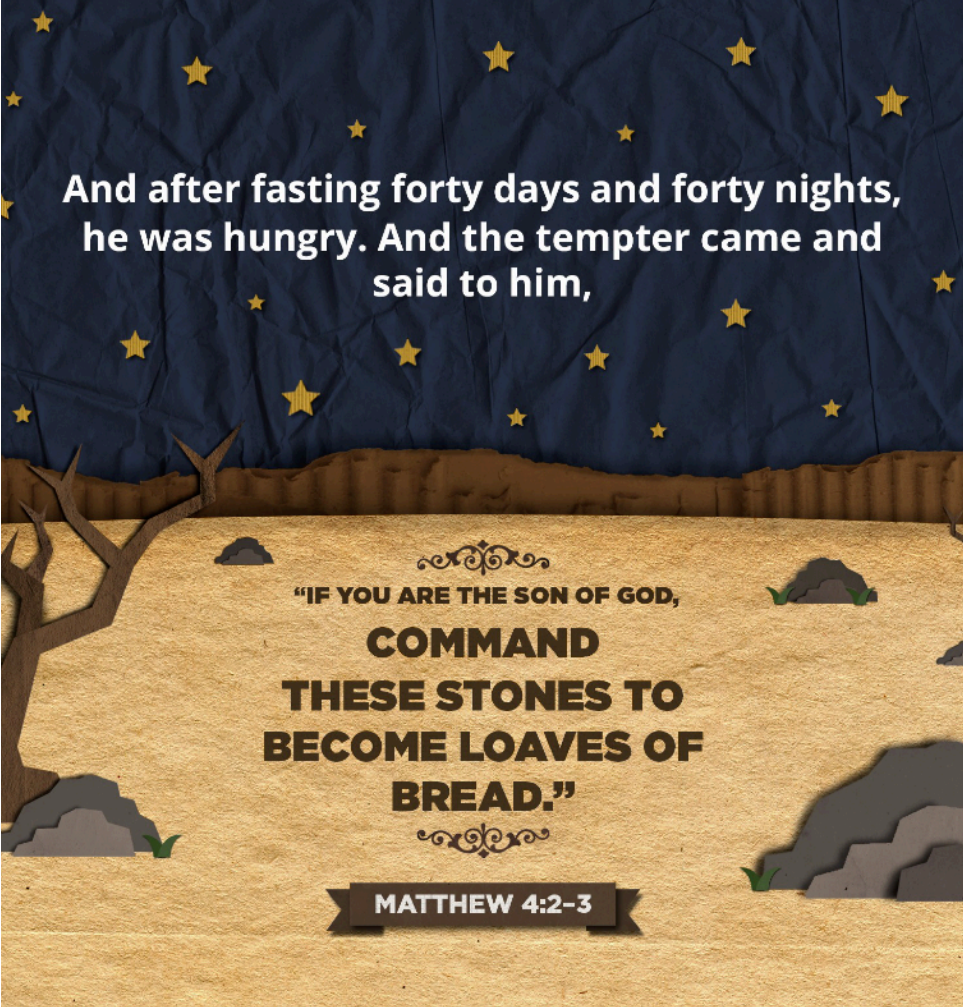
**DO:** The temptations in the passage have been categorized in many ways, but look at the chart below and imagine that you’ve been without food for many days. Which temptation would be the strongest for you? Ask the Lord for victory in that area.

	TURN STONES TO BREAD (V. 3-4)	JUMP FROM TEMPLE (V. 5-7)	WORSHIP SATAN (V. 8-10)
DOUBTS	Will God provide?	Will God protect?	Will God ‘win’?
WEAKNESSES	Hunger, impatience, need to prove self	Pride, insecurity, need to test God	Craving quick power and easy solutions
DESIRES	Desire to be relevant	Desire to be spectacular	Desire to be powerful

*Spiritual Disciplines Companion, p. 242*

*“More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.”*

Richard J. Foster



And after fasting forty days and forty nights,  
he was hungry. And the tempter came and  
said to him,

“IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD,  
**COMMAND  
THESE STONES TO  
BECOME LOAVES OF  
BREAD.”**

**MATTHEW 4:2-3**

# Day 8: Fasting for Humility and Repentance

**READ: Joel 2:12-13** ““Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.”

**THINK:** Joel 2:12 is a verse from one of the Minor Prophets in the Old Testament. In this passage, the prophet Joel calls the people of Judah to repentance and return to the Lord with all their hearts. Fasting, weeping, and mourning signifies deep sincerity and remorse for their actions. The context of this verse is a call to repentance amidst a time of crisis and impending judgment.

The book of Joel contains prophecies about a locust plague that devastated the land of Judah. The prophet saw this plague as a sign of God's judgment, and he called on the people to recognize their sins and seek the Lord's forgiveness. The subsequent verses in Joel 2:13-14 show the compassionate nature of God, who is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love. The Lord is willing to forgive those who genuinely turn to Him in repentance.

**DO:** Reflect on areas where you need God's forgiveness and cleansing. Take time to repent and seek His mercy. As you fast, allow the Holy Spirit to reveal any hidden sins or areas of pride that God wants you to surrender to Him. Journal your prayers of confession and ask God to grant you a humble and contrite heart.

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*“Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one’s flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, and kindles the true light of chastity.”*

- Saint Augustine



# Day 9: Fasting for Spiritual Warfare

**READ:** **Mark 9:28–29** “And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.””

**THINK:** The disciples must have been thoroughly bewildered by the situation. They had successfully cast out demons on previous occasions (6:7, 13), so why did this particular demon seem resistant? Jesus addressed the issue by pointing out their lack of faith. It is possible that the disciples attempted to expel the demon, relying solely on their abilities rather than trusting in God’s power. Consequently, their hearts and minds were not aligned with God, resulting in their words holding no authority.

Their question exposed their mistake as they focused on themselves (“we”) rather than Christ. In response, Jesus clarified that this challenge could only be overcome through prayer, emphasizing that the disciples had not relied on God’s power through prayer. Fasting and prayer are essential in spiritual warfare as they focus our attention on God, increase our reliance upon Him, and deepen our faith and trust that only in Jesus’ authority can we see spiritual breakthroughs.

**DO:** Identify specific spiritual battles or strongholds in your life or the lives of others. Are there any Scriptures you can recall that are related to those struggles? As you fast, pray fervently, declaring God’s authority and victory over those areas. Write down prayers of deliverance and spiritual breakthrough, asking God to bring freedom and victory in your life and the lives of those you intercede for.

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**Strongholds:**

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**Scriptures:**

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**Prayers:**

# Day 10: Fasting and Seeking God's Will

**READ: Judges 20:26–28** “Then all the people of Israel, the whole army, went up and came to Bethel and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And the people of Israel inquired of the Lord (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, ministered before it in those days), saying, “Shall we go out once more to battle against our brothers, the people of Benjamin, or shall we cease?” And the Lord said, “Go up, for tomorrow I will give them into your hand.””

**Acts 13:2** “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.””

**THINK:** In the Bible, fasting often accompanies inquiring of the Lord for significant decisions. In both the Old and New Testaments, we see the people of God seeking His will before battle or for who to send on a missionary journey. Jesus said His sheep know His voice (John 10:27), and fasting seeks to quiet our voices so we can hear the Lord's more clearly.

**DO:** Consider a specific decision or direction you are seeking from God. Spend time in prayer, seeking His guidance and wisdom. As you fast, surrender your will and desires to God, inviting His perfect will to be done in your life. Write down your prayers for discernment and clarity, and trust that God will lead and guide you as you seek Him with all your heart.

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*“Fasting helps express, deepens, confirms the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God.”*

- Andrew Murray

# Fasts in the Bible...

1. Moses' 40-day fast as he prayed concerning Israel's sin	Deut. 9:9, 18, 25–29; 10:10
2. David's fast as he lamented over Saul's death	2 Sam. 1:12
3. David's fast as he lamented over Abner's death	2 Sam. 3:35
4. David's fast as he lamented over his child's sickness	2 Sam. 12:16
5. Elijah's 40-day fast after he fled from Jezebel	1 Kings 19:7–18
6. Ahab's fast as he humbled himself before God	1 Kings 21:27–29
7. Darius's fast as he worried over Daniel's fate	Dan. 6:18–24
8. Daniel's fast as he read Jeremiah's prophecy and prayed for Judah's sins	Dan. 9:1–19
9. Daniel's fast as he prayed over a mysterious vision God had given him	Dan. 10:3–13
10. Esther's fast as she sorrowed over Haman's wicked plot to destroy her people	Esther 4:13–16
11. Ezra's fast as he wept over the sins of the returning remnant	Ezra 10:6–17
12. Nehemiah's fast as he wept over the broken-down walls of Jerusalem	Neh. 1:4–2:10
13. The Ninevites' fast after they heard the preaching of Jonah	Jon. 3
14. Anna's fast as she awaited the Messiah	Luke 2:37
15. Jesus' 40-day fast before the temptation	Matt. 4:1–11
16. John's disciples' fast	Matt. 9:14–15
17. The elders' fast in Antioch, prior to the sending out of Paul and Barnabas	Acts 13:1–5
18. Cornelius's fast as he sought out God's plan of salvation	Acts 10:30
19. Paul's three-day fast after his experience on the Damascus Road	Acts 9:9
20. Paul's 14-day fast while on a sinking ship	Acts 27:33–34

