



## “ FASTING ”

Fasting is mentioned often in the Bible for various reasons such as being in various troubles; praying for the lost; wanting encouragement; seeking direction or 'simply?' waiting on the Lord.

However, sometimes people fast for the wrong **reasons**; using the **wrong dispensation**; for the **wrong outcome**, but the purpose for fasting is very simple ... putting down the flesh as the apostle Paul says

*"For the **flesh** (your flesh) **lusteth against the Spirit** (God's indwelling Spirit called Holy Ghost), and **the Spirit against the flesh**: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."* ([Galatians 5:17](#))

Under the old testament the **soul** was wedded to the physical **body**, but a Christian has his soul separated for the body of flesh ([Colossian 2:11](#)). In either dispensation both the soul and the body are humbled with fasting.

### **DIFFERENT DISPENSATIONS ... Christ's disciples don't fast.**

*"Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but **thy disciples fast not?** And Jesus said unto them, **Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.**"* ([Matthew 9:14-15](#))

#### **Comment:**

Being under the kingdom of heaven dispensation this is not mandatory for Christians. Of course, as Christians are in Christ, they will want to fast to put down the flesh.

## AGREEMENT WITH THE LORD

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and **fasted** (first), **the Holy Ghost said** (second), **Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.** And **when they had fasted and prayed**, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." ([Acts 13:1-3](#))

"And when they had **ordained them elders in every church**, and **had prayed with fasting**, they **commended them to the Lord**, on whom they believed." ([Acts 14:23](#))

### Comment:

This is **not** the same as fasting and praying to see how the Lord will direct, but fasting and praying after the event of being chosen, for agreement, blessing and future success in the Lord.

## PAUL FASTED OFTEN

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in **fastings often**, in cold and nakedness."  
([2 Corinthians 11:27](#))

### Comment:

Paul practiced fasting. There is a difference between hunger and fasting, with fasting being deliberate and for a purpose for the Lord.

## EXCELLENT MEDICAL ADVICE

Gives the physical body a rest and slow down a racing mind. Furthermore, it is wonderful for spiritual reasons as it quietens down the lusts of the mind and flesh.

## HUMBLES THE SOUL against false witnesses

"**False witnesses did rise up**; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: **I humbled my soul with fasting**; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not: With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth." ([Psalm 35:11-14,15-16](#))

### Comment:

When others come against you, fasting is a good way to see what the Lord will do ... "Your will, your way and your time Lord!" Read Numbers chapter 12 with Moses and Miriam.

## CHASTENS THE SOUL WITH FASTING

"Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away. O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. When I wept, and **chastened my soul with fasting**, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards." ([Psalm 69:1-4,5-8,9-12](#))

### Comment:

My body says give me ... give me ... and my flesh cries loudly in my ears but I have to carefully listen to the voice of God. I am reminded how spiritually poor I am when my body controls me. Some of the above is also a type and shadow of Christ to come.

## KNEES GET WEAK AND FLESH FAILS [Psalm 109:24](#)

"But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust. **My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness. I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads. Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:** That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD, hast done it. Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." ([Psalm 109:21-24,25-28,29-31](#))

### Comment:

Anything that weakens the flesh can't be all bad, all the natural lusts and desires. Spiritually speaking, weakening the flesh is good!

## FASTING BRINGS RESULTS

"... there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is **lunatick**, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and **they could not cure him**. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he

departed out of him: and the child was cured from **that very hour**. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit **this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.**" ([Matthew 17:14-17,18-21](#))

### Comment:

A special dispensation was given to the disciples for this to happen. This is not necessarily given to Christians under Paul. Having said that, a Christian can fast and pray for those who are satanically affected, but the outcome may not be necessarily obtained.

### GOD'S WORDS BETTER THAN FOOD.

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; **I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.**" ([Job 23:12](#))

### Comment:

As Paul says ... with food and raiment he was content ([1 Timothy 6:8](#)) but he could not do without the words of the Lord.

### THE APPETITE IS NOT FILLED

"All the labour of a man is for his mouth, and **yet the appetite is not filled.**" ([Ecclesiastes 6:7](#))

### Comment:

Physical food feeds the flesh but fasting does the opposite.

### WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are **the enemies of the cross of Christ**: Whose end is destruction, **whose God is their belly**, and whose glory is in their shame, **who mind earthly things.**" ([Philippians 3:17-19](#))

### Comment:

Dear Reader, is the belly your God?

**FASTING LOOSENS THE BANDS OF WICKEDNESS, UNDOES HEAVY BURDENS, SETS THE OPPRESSED FREE, BREAKS EVERY YOKE.**

"Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and

exact all your labours. Behold, **ye fast for strife and debate**, and to **smite with the fist of wickedness**: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? 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?** 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?" ([Isaiah 58:3-6,7](#))

**Comment:**

Break smoking, lust, TV watching ... everything!

**REWARDS TO BE HAD FROM GOD TO THOSE WHO WILL FAST**

"Blessed are they which do **hunger and thirst after righteousness**: for they shall be filled." ([Matthew 5:6](#))

**Comment:**

Want more of God? Then hunger and thirst after his word, put down the flesh and be filled with waiting on the Lord.

**WHEN YE FAST, BE NOT, AS THE HYPOCRITES**

"Moreover **when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites**, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but **unto thy Father which is in secret**: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." ([Matthew 6:16-18](#))

**Comment:**

In other words, keep it to yourself. Let your rewards not be of this earth. Let God reward you openly in his way, his will and his time.

**ADVICE TO HUSBANDS AND WIVES**

"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to **fasting** and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (1 Corinthians 7:5)

**Comment:**

This means that a husband and wife should not deprive each other of a physical coming together, except by mutual agreement and consent. Sometimes physical union between husband and wife is not possible for a time. To help them through this time, fasting and prayer is suggested in case either of them is tempted to look outside of the marriage.

## PAUL'S OWN CHRISTIAN WALK

*"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in **fastings** often, in cold and nakedness."*

*([2 Corinthians 11:27](#))*

### Comment:

Paul took everything to the Lord for direction and answers regarding many issues.

## FOR FLESHY CHURCHES ... all churches

*"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in **fastings**;" ([2 Corinthians 6:4-5](#))*

### Comment:

The Corinthian church was having enormous problems with their sins. They were a fleshy church and needed to put the flesh down by fasting. Indeed, their flesh was stronger than God's Spirit.

*"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that **ye cannot do the things that ye would.**" ([Gal 5:17](#))*

## ARE THERE SET TIMES FAST? LENGTH?

No. Lent and church festivals and observances, while good in theory, are not in Paul's writings of Romans to Philemon. These are simply man-made events from the Roman Catholic church. They can mean nothing and can be very deceptive.

Many Roman Catholics and other unsaved people religiously fast at Lent. It means nothing and in fact, gives a false sense of security that they are following the rules and regulations of the church, hoping it gets them favour with God. This is the danger that people start to put their faith in these events and can become very self-righteous and proud. Many think that this, and other ceremonies, will get them a place in heaven when they die.

## SHOULD A CHRISTIAN FAST?

Paul does not dictate to anyone or church that they should fast, but Christians follow Paul and the benefits that come from fasting ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)). A Christian can live in self deception, but fasting can be God's way to break this sin.

## FASTING IS TO BE LEFT UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

Looking at how 'big' some people are, fasting would certainly be an option for these people, to help them focus on spiritual things rather than their worldly lust for food. Some Christians are just so fleshy, they could easily forego a meal or two for spiritual purposes.

However, when people are not getting enough to eat, wisdom is to be used, and that people are not forced by guilt, or tradition, to fast.

## PEOPLE FAST FOR SELFISH REASONS

*"Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, **When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?** Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?" ([Zechariah 7:1-4,5-7](#))*

### Comment:

People can fast for selfish reasons hoping to get the things they want by forcing God's hands.

### CONCLUSION:

- 1.** Fasting is a **voluntary** thing for **saved** people ([Acts 16:31](#)) ... to show the Lord how serious you are about things.
- 2.** Fasting is a tool for God to use **his** way and **his** reasons ... and having done all ... **patiently** and **humbly wait**.
- 3.** Having **presented** your case to God, humbly **pray** like **Christ** "**Not my will Father, but your will, your way, your time**" ([Matthew 26:42](#); [Luke 22:42](#))

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**A guide to understanding:**  
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