



UPHILL HABITS

new direction for a new year

FASTING RESOURCE

The Five W's of Fasting

WHO SHOULD FAST?

1. All Christians in general.
2. People seeking something from God specifically.

WHAT IS A FAST?

- The practice of abstaining from food or some other "creature comfort", either completely or partially, for a specified period. It is an ancient practice found in most religions of the world.
- The discipline of fasting is available to strengthen you spiritually and to help you overcome barriers that might keep you from living the victorious Christian life.
- If you take up the discipline of fasting, expect resistance, interference and opposition. Remember that you are attempting to advance in your spiritual journey and to gain ground for the Kingdom. That necessitates taking ground away from the enemy - and no great movement of the Holy Spirit goes unchallenged by enemy.

Four Kinds of Fasting

1. The **complete** fast is going without food for a definite period.
 - a. The **complete** fast is going without food or water and should be short.
 - i. Moses' 40-day fast would kill anyone without supernatural intervention. Be sure to test the spirit that tries to talk you into a 40-day fast without water, because normally it is a physical impossibility.
2. The **selective** fast includes omitting one meal a day, or omitting certain foods for a certain period.
3. A **partial** fast involves avoiding certain food periodically.
4. A **soul** fast.
 - a. It can be fasting something other than food to remind you of the thing that needs tempered or removed from your life or situation. For example: facebook, media, sleeping in, tv, etc.

Abuses of Fasting

1. Some separated the formal practice from internal **devotion** to God and repentance from sin, which it was supposed to represent (Isaiah 58:5; Joel 2:13).
2. Fasting was sometimes practiced to cover other **sinful** motives and/or practices (1 Kings 21:9-13; Isaiah 58:41).
3. Others fasted for **economic** rather than spiritual or ministry reasons (Isaiah 58:7).
4. Some Pharisees fasted for **appearances** rather than as a genuine act of worship to God (Matt. 6:16).
5. Fasting, probably for ascetic reasons, was demanded by some **false** teachers in the Early Church (1 Tim. 4:3).
6. Today, we have to avoid the temptation to fast in order to lose **weight**.
7. Don't fast to get God to do what **you** want Him to do.

WHEN DO YOU FAST?

1. When **God** puts it on your heart to do so.
2. For the duration of **time** that gives you peace and feels right.

WHY DO YOU FAST?

1. Fasting helps us overcome **temptation**.
 - a. **Denial** produces **discipline**.
 - b. Hebrews 12:11 "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." (NIV)
2. Fasting brings **breakthrough**.
 - a. Daniel 1 and 10:12-14
3. Fasting weakens the **flesh** and strengthens your **spirit**.
4. Fasting assists in bringing forth the will of God in a specific situation.

5. Fasting brings clarity and understanding.
6. Fasting reduces and removes what we are **NOT** so we can become who we are **DESTINED** to be!

HOW DO YOU FAST?

Seven Basic Steps to Effective Fasting and Prayer

Step 1: Set your **objective**

Step 2: Make your **commitment**

- Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15) – For Jesus, it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it.
- Before you fast, decide the following up front:
 - How long will you fast - one meal, one day, one week, several weeks, forty days (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts)
 - The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, or water and juices; what kinds of juices will you drink and how often)
 - What physical or social activities you will restrict
 - How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word
- Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

Step 3: Prepare yourself **spiritually**

- The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin can hinder your prayers. **Step 4:** Prepare yourself **physically**

Step 5: Put yourself on a **schedule**

- Morning / Noon / Evening

Step 6: End your fast **gradually**

Step 7: Expect **results**