

# Fasting

## Part 2: The Foundation of Fasting

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JANUARY 10TH, 2018

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### Full Text (for reading on your own)

#### *Fasting Recap*

Fasting is a physical act, that's a spiritual tool that sensitizes you to the things of the Spirit. It is as simple as not eating yet it is spiritually powerful! Fasting trains us to walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh.

Why are we fasting? Jesus said in Matthew 6 that fasting is a "when" not an "if." He also said that when you fast, if you don't fast for the accolades of others, then He who sees in secret will reward you openly. Additionally, I felt particularly led to call a corporate fast.

Again, this is a voluntary corporate fast. Because Megan and I are fasting, it is already corporate so the pressure is off any of you.

Richard Foster says a 3-7 day fast will literally be a pivotal, life-changing moment in your life!

#### *What Foundation do we Fast From?*

Paul said in 1 Cor. 3:11 "*For **no other foundation** can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*" If fasting is anything about your works, it is not longer about His works and you do not want to be about your works, you want to be about His works! Looking at fasting through the lens of grace is a great opportunity to further solidify the ONLY foundation - the grace of the Lord Jesus without dismissing something that without grace could be a "work for righteousness" - fasting.

In The Jesus Fast, Lou Engle says this:

*All of this must be the freewill offering of the heart. If it is imposed by guilt and fear, it is more than pointless - it is damaging to the soul because it is a manifestation of law and unbelief! "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).*

*I cannot emphasize enough how this becomes the razor's edge of consecration. In decades of issuing a Nazarite challenge to the youth of America, I have learned that while most understand, the incitation is sadly misconstrued by others, which can lead to disappointment, burnout and personal defeat. I want to address this with absolute clarity: You are not striving for God - He is*

*already yours!* Your consecration cannot change or improve your standing in the love of God. For example, you are not loved more when you fast, and you cannot be loved less if you do not fast. His love is supreme and complete and has nothing to do with your level of fervor or devotion. Ultimately, any effort you make toward a Nazarite season or lifestyle is only sustainable because God's love is at work within. It is His labor, not our own.

This is a necessary emphasis when calling a voluntary fast. Let's look at another quote from Mike Bickle who is another world-class expert on commissioning believers to fast and pray:

*Nazarites who are not living with intimacy with the Lord also face the danger of self-righteousness when they rejoice in their commitment to the Lord Jesus and not in Jesus Himself. Just like the Pharisee who despised the tax collector, in Luke 18:9, we will admire our own dedication while looking down on that of others ... The heart of those who rejoice in their own strength will end up in one of two pitfalls: either arrogance of accomplishment, like the Pharisee, or self-hatred as an unworthy son. Only embracing the grace of God to us with humility can help us avoid this.*

Lou said there was never a Jesus movement until there was a Jesus fast. Here's one more comment from Lou: "please note what launched the fast of Jesus: the proclamation of His Father, 'You are My beloved Son.'"

Again we are considering "what foundation do we fast from." Let's look at Jesus' Baptism and fast in Matthew 3:17 - 4:4

*And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but **by every word** that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

About a month and a half ago, I was reading Franklin Hall's book on fasting and afterwards I knelt down to pray briefly and God spoke to my heart "I am going to show you how 'this is My beloved son in whom I am well pleased' satisfies ALL HUNGER." I didn't know quite what He meant so I started asking God "how does that satisfy all hunger?"

Then I realized what God had told me is what Jesus had experienced in His baptism and fast! After Jesus heard that He was God's beloved Son in whom He is well pleased, Jesus went to fast immediately! Then Jesus was tempted in 3 ways that appear to somehow connect with 1 John 2:15-17 "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." And, because Jesus did not

succumb to any of those temptations Jesus says before being taken to the Cross that the ruler of this world had nothing in Him! Jesus was totally pure.

Is it possible that Jesus was tempted in every way right then in the dessert? God spoke to my heart “I am going to show you how ‘this is My beloved son in whom I am well pleased’ satisfies ALL HUNGER.” Remember it is the love of God (1 John 2:15-17) that causes us to not be engaged with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. If you have the love of the world, you don’t have the love of the Father, whereas if you have the love of the Father you will not have the love of the world which is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. In other words, to whatever extent we don’t have a revelation of the love of God is the same extent to which we will have those other hungers leading our lives. So the solution to those hungers is the love of God.

Jesus had a revelation that He was beloved of God (not just loved for a moment but in a perpetual position of LOVED). He also had a revelation that He is WELL PLEASING to the Father. So Jesus went into fasting NOT to get the love of God, but BECAUSE of the love of God! The love of God was already expressed to Jesus in Matthew 3:17 and THEN He fasted. Do *not* fast to get the love of God!

When you fast, you are sensitizing yourself to what God has already done in your life. You are not trying to get something else. It is a physical act that’s a spiritual tool that sensitizes you to the reality of who you already are in Christ!

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Look again at what happens here. Not only is the revelation of the love and pleasure of God (Mt. 3:17) only one verse before the account of Jesus’ fast, but notice the first thing satan tempts Jesus with at the end of the fast: the very revelation that Jesus received in Matthew 3:17! This section of scripture is so connected.

What was the word that Jesus was living on??? What was the word that Jesus was feasting on? He was feasting on the word that He’s the beloved Son of God in whom God IS WELL PLEASSED! That’s what Jesus was feasting on! That’s why that’s the word that the enemy challenged straight away. Of course that is what the enemy came with because that’s all Jesus was thinking about for 40 days!

I have news for you ... Jesus enjoyed His fast! *"The Kingdom of Heaven is not a eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."* (Rom. 14:17) Was Jesus in the Holy Spirit when He was in the wilderness fasting? You better believe it - the Holy Spirit had just descended on Him like a dove! So, Jesus was in righteousness. Jesus was in peace. And yes, Jesus was enJOYing His fast! You can too - if you fast out a revelation of God's love for you!

If you don't fast out of a revelation of God's love for you, find another way to torture yourself ... because you will be the one walking around with a disfigured face telling people that you are "serving God!" We fast out of the basis of God's love for us. Jesus was feeding on the revelation of His Father's love for Him the entire time.

What did we just study here? The love of God! Every one of us should be meditating on the love of God as part of this fast because that's what Jesus was doing.

Jesus fasted because of the love of God, to meditate on the love of God, to solidify those things in His heart ... and once satan had no hold on Him because of the love of God that was in Him, He walked out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit!

Consider Joseph in the Old Testament ... He had a revelation of his father's special favor and pleasure towards him. He had a coat of many colors. Notice that Joseph may be the only OT saint recorded in the Bible that did not have a major moral fall. He faced wild hardship - imprisoned, falsely accused of rape, sold into slavery, left for dead ... and yet his brothers come to him for food and he blesses them? He doesn't get sideways with them in his heart? He loves them? Are you kidding me? How could you treat these treasonous brothers of yours so well? Because you know you are well pleasing to your father!

Joseph had a special revelation of his pleasure before his earthly father and we are accessing a special revelation of our Heavenly Father's pleasure. You are His beloved child in whom He is WELL PLEASED! Receive that! Some of us have read Psalm 139 your entire life and thought "I know that I am fearfully and wonderfully made but I don't know that I am fearfully and wonderfully made." I am telling you today "you are fearfully and wonderfully made." He's going to be releasing and deepening that revelation as you meditate in His love - especially through prayer and fasting.

Here's my morning declaration for the fast: "I am complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power." (Col. 2:10)

That's why I'm fasting. That's powerful.

## *Again ... you can Enjoy your Fast*

When I am about to embark on a fast that is longer than a day or two there is a part of me that can feel like “life is about to be over ... the sun’s just not shining quite as bright today!” All that it takes to fix that is vision. Proverbs 29:18 says or lack of vision people cast off restraint, but happy are those who keep the law. So happy are those who can operate towards a vision because they have a vision!

So, when I felt heavy about fasting, I spent about an hour or more for a couple days in a row reading teaching and testimonies about fasting! Sure enough - I got encouraged! If you are fasting longer than you have ever done, get a book on fasting and read the testimonies about fasting every day! It will be really difficult to get discouraged if you are reading fasting testimonies consistently..

## *Don't Trust in Fasting Structure*

In my time in the Word, I have a plan AND the Lord has told me there are “no requirements.” But I do have a plan and I really go after my plan. And God says “no requirements.” But I do have a plan and I really go after my plan. I have a plan, but some days I feel like I want to do something different that day ... only read Psalms or only read Paul’s pastoral letters or only meditate on this one topic ... and God will bless that divergence from my plan - sometimes He’s the one that’s arranging it!

When I step into read the Word I am not stepping in to have communion with my Bible reading plan - I am stepping into communion with the Word! No requirements and I do have a plan. I work my plan, but I have no requirements and I am serving Him so I actually adjust things sometimes based on the lead of the Holy Spirit.

So God spoke to me and said “Peter, do not step into the fast with your primary trust being the structure that you’ve set.” When you step into the fast on any level - you step into it WITH CHRIST, you do not step into a structure. You do need to decide the length and type of your fast ahead of time, but you are going to do a fast with the Holy Spirit not a fast with your plan. I am not trying to get intimate with my fasting plan, I am trying to draw near to God.

## *Start Slowly*

Last time to make a point, I said “fasting is as simple as stopping eating.” I was making a point. Similarly, if someone said “I just don’t know how to read the Bible” I could tell them to “open it and start reading!” Then they can start to learn more about how to structure their time in the Word ... but if they just open it and start reading it will work - so you don’t need to overcomplicate it.

At the risk of over complicating it :) let me just share a few more practical details about fasting. None of these are gospel, just wise guidance:

- I would encourage you to start slowly. If you were to run a marathon you would generally need to run less than 26 miles before you tried to run 26! Fasting is a spiritual workout. I was the kind of person who would be “hangry” if I didn’t eat breakfast immediately upon waking up. When I started fasting it was a real challenge. Just be free to start slowly. When Jentzen Franklin was perhaps 17 or 18 he fasted 21 days ... but before that he had done 1 day, 3 days, and 7 days of fasting. That’s not a rule or formula - again it’s a relationship.
- Obviously this fast is voluntary and I am trusting you to have discretion about your own body. I don’t know how your body works or feels. I’ve fasted enough that I should know what feels normal during a longer fast. If you’ve not fasted a good bit, I would advise you to use discretion.
- If you are fasting longer than 3 days on liquid only, you can actually injure yourself if you don’t know some basics about fasting. Especially about breaking the fast is very important for your health. It was good Jesus did not eat bread straight away at the end of 40 day fast! There are simply some things you need to tend to while fasting. Be sure to know those basics before starting your fast. If it feels like a stretch to you and you have peace on it, it is probably a great thing to do.

### *Identifying Goals / Targets for your Fast*

Proverbs 27:7 says *“A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, But to a hungry soul every **bitter** thing is sweet.”*

Listen to some of the testimonies from the Word of God about fasting!

- Fasting caused Moses to receive revelation.
- Fasting allowed Nehemiah to successfully intercede for God’s people to be restored from captivity.
- Fasting secured strategy for victory for Israel.
- Fasting caused Hannah’s petition from her heart to be heard and child to be given to the previously barren.
- Fasting gave courage to Esther for the leadership role that she had and granted her favor before the king to see her people delivered from evil.
- Fasting gave Ezra and those with him safe travels back to Jerusalem and a testimony before the pagan king because they didn’t need a military escort.

- Fasting broke depression off of Elijah. Fasting gave him his next steps in ministry. Fasting told him to anoint Hazael as Syrian king, Jehu as Israel's king, and Elisha as the next prophet - all from fasting.
- Fasting gave Daniel an interpretation of a vision through angelic visitation.
- Fasting gave Daniel a major prophecy about the end times that we still read today.
- Fasting caused Daniel and his friends to be super-blessed in their schooling ... making them 10x better than all of their peers.
- Fasting led the city of Nineveh - a whole city - into repentance.
- Fasting caused Ahab (to personally at least) be spared calamity because he humbled himself with fasting.
- Fasting caused David to humble himself and actually intercede for those who were wronging him! Have you ever noticed how beautiful David's heart was towards Saul? Ps. 35:13 shows that David was fasting for his enemies!
- Fasting led to national repentance for Israel which drove the enemy back.
- Fasting caused Judah to consider a prophetic word.
- Fasting led Israel to reconsecrate themselves AND their land to God.
- Fasting led Jesus into His ministry.
- Fasting caused Ana, in the temple, when Jesus was there with Mary and Joseph, to recognize God when she saw Him!
- Fasting caused John the Baptist to call a whole nation to repentance and to prepare the way of the Lord.
- Fasting caused Cornelius to receive an angelic visitation, to have Peter sent to him, salvation to come to his whole house, to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and to open up the gospel to all the gentile world!

So, my question to you is "why are you fasting?" *"A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, But to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."* Fasting is bitter. Lou Engle was with leaders who were eating while he was fasting and the other leaders tried to shield the steaks from his vision. He said something like "no, you are fine. I hate fasting ... but I love it's results!" He has a proper relationship with it. You are not trying to become intimate with fasting. You are drawing near to the Lord to be intimate with Him.

Fasting can do what no other thing can do. There are things that your time in the Word can do that prayer cannot do. There are things that prayer can do that your time in the Word by itself cannot do. And there are things that fasting can do that neither of the other two can do totally by themselves. Fasting is a super-charger on your spiritual car. So my question for you is “what are you hungry for?” What are the breakthroughs that you are hungry for in this season? Ask the Holy Spirit. What keeps coming up in prayer? What are you hungry for?

### *Encouragement from Brad*

It is so common for us as believers to enter a place of spiritual pride / self-righteousness when we fast. That’s a real slippery slope and we end up in judgement of others. If we go there, we are missing the entire point.

If you find yourself going there, here’s a word picture that will help. Imagine our Father made a spiritual buffet for us and invited all the children in the room to come up to the buffet to be served by Him. When you get there, He starts putting food on your plate.

Here’s the question: what does His putting food on your plate have to do with His love for you? Does His love for you increase because you came up to get some of that food? Does His love decrease because you did not come up to get some of that food? He wants to give you some food and if you are hungry, come on up. If you are not, you don’t! It has NOTHING to do with His relationship with you. God is offering it all the time. If you want to have some food, come on up!

When we fast, it is nothing more than presenting the Father with our spiritual plate for Him to put spiritual gifts on there. We are not earning anything from Him in the sense of His love. It is just providing Him a plate and saying “Father I would like some more spiritual breakthroughs.” When we fast we get spiritual breakthroughs because fasting pulls up spiritual gifts that maybe are not yet as strong as they could be. When we go to the Father in fasting, we are not receiving physical food - we are receiving spiritual food. That’s what it is.

Fasting is a simple exchange between us and the Father. He’s simply saying “if you want, bring your spiritual plate and I will put some things on it for you ... you’ll love it; it’s delicious.”

Brad has gone through seasons where he fasts a lot and seasons where he doesn’t fast at all - and then back into seasons where he fasts a lot. He would do some extended fasts that would be really hard. Brad was about to enter one fast and was a little fearful about how hard it was going to be and the Lord spoke to him and really surprised him. God said “ask Me for supernatural sustenance.”

Brad thought “well that’s kind of cheating.” God then gently reminded Brad “where did I say in my Word that you have to suffer?” The Word does say that we discipline our bodies but there is nothing that says that we have to suffer while fasting.

In fact, in Isaiah 58, where the people are acting like they are suffering God said “is that the fast that you think I chose - that I’m asking you to do?” Then God describes the fast that He’s chosen where you can enjoy the process.

When you have a vision for what this fast is about - why you are doing it - it makes it so much easier! Brad just pictures that empty plate and it is getting filled up during the time that he’s fasting and it helps him through it!

### *Conclusion*

May we experience supernatural breakthroughs greater than ever before in this fast!

I will end this: Matthew 6:31-33 says we should not seek what we should eat, drink, and wear like the Gentiles do ... but instead we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto us. Do you see how fasting prioritizes our life - it is like a microcosm of Matthew 6:31-33. We seek first the Kingdom.

What that means in fasting is that although we have prayer objectives that give us the vision for our fast, the primary vision is to seek Him. The plate Brad mentioned is filled up when you are standing across from Him at the buffet line.

May we see Your face, know Your love, and have tremendous breakthrough in this fast in Jesus’ Name!