

FASTING:

Do you find yourself in a place of needing a breakthrough?

- Personal issue or in need of an answer
- Contemplating something big... "God are you in this?"
- Need the power of God
- Time of danger or time of significance

How do you get a breakthrough? **FASTING & PRAYER!**

What is Fasting:

- It is the denial of something – usually food.
- It is saying to God "I would rather go without food (starve myself) than to go on as I am. I want to touch God.
- What you do is tell your body to sit down and shut up. "Flesh, you are not getting my attention. Rather, I am giving my attention to God."

How to fast: the rules

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full." - Matthew 6:16

God will reward you openly if you fast humbly: done in secret. Don't make a big deal about it.

* Notice that Jesus says, "when you fast" not if you fast.

Fasting touches the heart of God:

*"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." **Render your heart** and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. - Joel 2:12-13*

Returning to God with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning can open doors, remove obstacles, and change the heart of God. Too many have lost this vital way of living. Many, or probably most, have never tried fasting and thus have missed out on this incredible gift from God.

Fasting is a form or way of humbling yourself before God.

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

God gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore ... - 1 Peter 5: 5-6

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." - James 4:6

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. - Matthew 23:12 Your job is to humble yourselves. God's job is to exalt. If you don't humble yourself, but rather exalt yourself, then God will have to humble you.

I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting... - Psalm 35:13

When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly. - 1 Kings 21:27

When there is sin that needs correction – fast and humble yourself.

On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all

foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. - Nehemiah 9:1-2

When you need deliverance

If you have an addiction or a habit: FAST and PRAY!

Deliverance from demonic bondage. "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." - Matthew 17:21 Sometimes you need to persist, get serious, pray and fast.

When you need God's guidance

Ezra 8:21 21 There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions.

Daniel and his fast:

Daniel was a man who did not compromise. He consistently said no to the world and yes to God, even when it was uncomfortable and life threatening. Because of this, God used him in big ways and he was greatly favored. Daniel shows us that we must always choose the path of pleasing God, rather than pleasing man or ourselves. We must never compromise our convictions or our relationship with Christ.

The background of the "Daniel fast" is that Daniel and his three friends had been "deported" to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians had conquered Judah (2 Kings 24:13-14). Daniel and his three friends were put into the Babylonian court servant "training program." Part of the program was learning Babylonian customs, beliefs, laws, and practices. The eating habits of the Babylonians were not in complete agreement with the Mosaic Law. As a result, Daniel asked if he and his three friends could be excused from eating the meat (which was likely sacrificed to Babylonian false gods and idols).

The concept of a Daniel fast comes from Daniel chapter 1:8-20 and chapter 10:1-9

8 But Daniel **resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine**, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. **9** Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, **10** but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you." **11** Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, **12** "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13** Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." **14** So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. **15** At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. **16** So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. **17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.** **18** At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. **19** The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. **20** In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. - Daniel 1:8-20

1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. **2** At that time I, Daniel, mourned for **three weeks**. **3 I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.** **4** On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, **5** I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. **6** His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. **7** I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. **8** So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. **9** Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. - Daniel 10:1-9