

Bonus Teaching: The Power of Fasting

Bonus · Matthew 5:6 · Bonus

A bonus self-read teaching on the spiritual practice and benefits of fasting.

Opening Quote

M2 Bonus Teaching (Read on Your Own): The Power of Fasting

"The absence of fasting is the measure of our contentment with the absence of Christ. If we don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because we have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because we have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Our soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great."

--John Piper

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:6

At the end of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln called the nation to fast four times in order to heal the nation and restore it back to health.

Here's what happened:

1866: Russia sold Alaska to the US for \$.02/acre

The US budget had a surplus for 28 years

The US had peace for almost 20 years

The US became a hotbed of inventions

Cowboy hat

Rotary Printing Press

Urinal

Steam Powered Motorcycle

Paper Clip

Barbed Wire

Refrigerated Car

Paper Bag

American Football

Clothes Hanger

Bee Smoker

Feather Duster

Rowing Machine

Silo

Jeans

Spork

Jockstrap

Phonograph

Iron

Induction Motor

Ballpoint Pen

Salisbury Steak

Light bulb

Telephone

Radio

Radio (Tesla)

Long distance electricity

Automobile Advancements

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for National prayer and humiliation.

And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.

And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views of the Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th. day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer. And I do hereby request all the People to abstain, on that day, from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the Lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

All this being done, in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings, that the united cry of the Nation will be heard on high, and answered with blessings, no less than the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering Country, to its former happy condition of unity and peace.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this thirtieth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty seventh.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln William H. Seward, Secretary of State

Isaiah 58

True Fasting

58 "Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins. 2 For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. 3 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. 4 Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. 5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? 8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. 9 Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

"If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, 10 and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. 11 The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. 12 Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

13 "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, 14 then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will

cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

What Is Fasting?

What is Fasting?

Not merely going without food for a long time

There is no such thing as a "Social Media" fast.

Fasting is to go without food and/or water for a period of time for a spiritual purpose.

Psalm 42:7 "Deep calls to deep." Fasting unclutters your spirit from the things of this earth in order to be amazingly sensitive to the things of God.

3 Duties of Every Christian

- Praying
- Giving
- Fasting

Jesus said, "When you fast..." Not if you should... WHEN.

Nothing will be impossible. Matthew 17:20

Fasting is Spiritual Warfare:

This kind goes out only with prayer and fasting... Matthew 17:21

Dethroning King Stomach.

The first sin came through food!

The blessing of Jacob and how Esau sold his birthright in order to fill his stomach!

Matthew 4:4

It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.--Job 23:12

Why Do We Fast?

Why do we Fast?

Protection: Ezra declared a corporate fast and prayed for a safe journey for the Israelites as they made the nine-hundred-mile trek to Jerusalem from Babylon (Ezra 8:21-23).

Healing 2 Chronicles 7:14 14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

We need a breakthrough. (Fasting will break poverty from your life.) 2 Chronicles 20 Jehoshaphat called for a fast when a vast army was coming. Read this chapter!

We need a new assignment (Every assignment has a birthplace) Jesus spent forty days and nights in the wilderness fasting and praying before He began God's work on this earth. He needed time alone to prepare for what His Father had called Him to do (Matthew 4:1-17; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-14).

Helps us maintain sensitivity to His voice and for wisdom. Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted for the elders of the churches before committing them to the Lord for His service (Acts 14:23).

To worship God. Luke 2 tells the story of an eighty-four-year-old prophetess named Anna. Verse 37 says, "She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying." Anna was devoted to God, and fasting was one expression of her love for Him.

To show grief. Nehemiah mourned, fasted, and prayed when he learned Jerusalem's walls had been broken down, leaving the Israelites vulnerable and disgraced (Nehemiah 1:1-4).

To repent. After Jonah pronounced judgment against the city of Nineveh, the king covered himself with sackcloth and sat in the dust. He then ordered the people to fast and pray. Jonah 3:10 says, "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, He relented and did not bring on them the destruction He had threatened."

To gain victory. After losing forty thousand men in battle in two days, the Israelites cried out to God for help. Judges 20:26 says all the people went up to Bethel and "sat weeping before the Lord." They also "fasted that day until evening." The next day the Lord gave them victory over the Benjamites.

Matthew 17:21

Spiritual Warfare: When the disciples couldn't cast out a demon, they asked Jesus to do it and then wondered why they couldn't cast it out. Jesus said, "However, this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting."

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What Not To Do

What NOT to do when fasting

Fast just to lose weight.

Fast just to cleanse.

To go about your usual day without doing anything differently

To continue in sin

To forget those that are in need.

Treat fasting like a vending machine from God.

Forget the Sabbath. The Sabbath and fasting are linked together in Isaiah 58.

You cannot fast to gain merit with God or to receive forgiveness of sins. Only the blood of Jesus can forgive sins.

Brag about or talk about your fast. Jesus said to do everything in private in order to gain a public reward. Don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. (Matthew 6:3)

Aimlessly fast. Don't just declare a fast for no reason. Fast for a reason. Fast with purpose. Write down your fast and commit your fast to the Lord.

How Do We Fast?

How do we Fast?

Absolute Fast

No Food or water.

Maximum of 3 days

Normal Fast.

Drink water. No food. (Below are examples)

1 Day Fast. (sunup to sundown)

3 Day Fast. (3 days no food, water only)

7 Day Fast. (7 days, no food, water only)

21 Day Fast.(21 days, no food, water and broth only)

40 Day Fast. (40 days, no food, water and broth only)

Partial Fast--Daniel Fast

21 Days.

No meat. No bread or fried foods. No sugary foods.

No packaged or processed food

Mostly fresh fruits and vegetables

Whole grains

Limit your salt and sodium intake

No ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise

Healthy salad dressings only. 3-5 ingredients.

Fresh, healthy oils like olive oil and avocado oil.

Flies have a lifespan between one and forty days. Jesus modeled a fast of 40 days. All flies die after 40 days... Satan is known as the Lord of the flies. Coincidence? I think not!

Health Benefits of Fasting

Health Benefits of Fasting:

There is no better cleanse. Like spring cleaning your body.

Slows the process of aging.

First 3 days, if you have headaches it is because there are toxins leaving your body.

Studies have proven that the average American takes in about four pounds of, chemical preservatives, flavorings, colorings, stabilizers and other additives.

Periodic fasts are necessary to flush out the poisons.

After 3 days, your focus is better. Your mind is sharper.

Before You Fast

5 Things to do before you fast and 1 to do AFTER.

Ruth was about to go to lay at her future husband's feet. When she did this, her mother-in-law told her to do the following things to make herself pleasing to her bride groom. We need to do the same when we enter into the throne room of God. We need to prepare ourselves to be seen by Him.

Ruth 3:3

Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

Cleanse Yourself: If you want to be close to the bride groom, be freshly cleansed. (wash yourself) 2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. The reason our prayers aren't answered, the reason that God doesn't bring us the breakthroughs we seek is because what God says in Isaiah 1:15-16 When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil... Take a spiritual bath. Isaiah 52:11 (KJV) Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. How do we take a spiritual bath? Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV) That He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word... When you read the Word of God, it washes you. It washes your hands, your eyes, your heart... Psalm 119:9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Psalm 24:3-6

3Who may ascend the hill of the LORD?

Who may stand in His holy place?

4He who has clean hands and a pure heart,

who does not lift up his soul to an idol

or swear deceitfully.

5He will receive blessing from the LORD

and vindication from the God of his salvation.

6Such is the generation of those who seek Him,

who seek Your face, O God of Jacob.c

The Anointing: When you are freshly cleansed, you become a candidate for the anointing. (be fragrantly anointed). My anointing is the Holy Spirit. 1 John 2:27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you. He will teach you; He will guide you. The anointing promotes you and raises you. Prepare your heart for what God has in store for you. Remember, the anointing is not just the Holy Spirit, but it is promotion. Samuel anointed David and Saul before they became king of Israel.

Put on your best clothes. (Ruth had been a widow and probably had been wearing mourning clothes. She was just coming from a horrible famine.) God inhabits the praise of His people. Isaiah 61:3 (NKJV) To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified." Isaiah 61:10 (NKJV) I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Commit. Submit your complete will to the Lord. Ruth 3:4 Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do. Jewish tradition and culture, if they uncovered their feet and laid down at their feet, it was an act of submission. When you fast, you are lying at the feet of the Father, saying, I fully submit my life to you. I am withholding nothing. My will surrenders to your will. My dream submits to your dream. My desire submits to your desire. God will open up the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing upon you that you will not have room enough to receive. (Malachi 3)

Act. Actions count; mere words do not. Act out God's will for your life. Ruth 3:5. And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do." We are not trying to demand anything from God. We are saying, "show me your will". Whether it is mountains or valleys. I will be faithfully compliant to whatever you say and I want your will. This is a matter of doing. Not saying... Ruth 3:9 And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I

am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative." Ruth 3:10 Then he said, "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter!" When we do these 5 things to prepare our hearts to enter His presence, God will bless us.

After the Fast

After the Fast.

When we fast and are waiting for the voice of God... Get to the quiet place that Jesus modeled as He went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Ruth 3:18 Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

Breakthrough Example

2 Chronicles 20 It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). 3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, 6 and said: "O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? 7 Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9 'If disaster comes upon us--sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine--we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' 10 And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir--whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them-- 11 here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."

13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord.

14 Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do

not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you."

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. 19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

"Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever."

22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there were their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the Lord; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. 27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies. 28 So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the Lord. 29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. 30 Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

The End of Jehoshaphat's Reign

31 So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 32 And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the Lord. 33 Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their fathers.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

35 After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. 36 And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. 37 But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the Lord has destroyed your works." Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

Simple Steps

Simple Steps I can Take when Fasting:

Pray about a reason for fasting. See the list on page 4-5

Start small. If you're not used to fasting, start with a sun-up to sun-down fast.

Choose the type of fast you want to do

Commit to the fast. Settle in your mind these three things:

When you start

What you're believing God for

When you finish

Cleanse yourself. Confess your sin to the Lord and repent. Turn around.

Write it down! Writing down your fast will help you sustain it while you're daydreaming about pizza.

Listen to what God has planned for you.