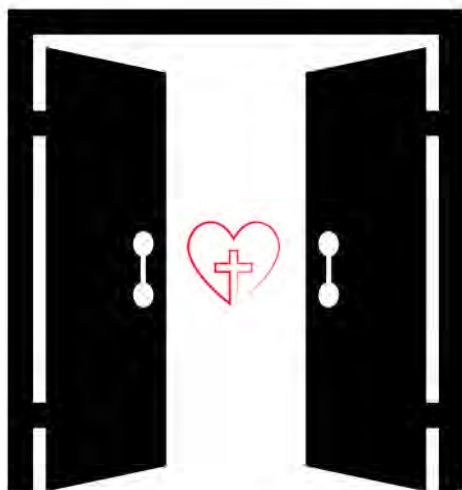




MACEDONIA CHURCH OF GROVETOWN

2024 Consecration

OUR YEAR OF DIVINE OPEN DOOR 2024





 MACEDONIA CHURCH OF GROVETOWN
304 UN Court | Grovetown, Georgia 30813 | www.mcogfamily.org  

“OUR YEAR OF
2024
DIVINE
OPEN DOORS”

REVELATION 3:8
COMPASSION • SACRIFICE • DISCIPLESHIP • LOVE

Bishop ESAIAS & LADY GRETA
MERRITT

*VISION: Restoring earthly families to a Godly glory
through education, emancipation, and empowerment.*

Due to health restrictions, some people may not be able to complete every aspect of the fast. Please consult with your doctor before entering this fast. At a minimum, go as far as your health will allow.

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Introduction

In the past seven years, our annual themes have given us clarity on the hand of God with our ministry. In 2017, God led us to a new dimension of servitude. In 2018, God led us to unlimited love. In 2019 we learned to build a multigenerational legacy in faith and in family. In 2020 God led us to clarity. In 2021 we focused on becoming one, in 2022 God activated us and last year was the year of God working through us. This year, we received a Word from Revelation 3:8 proclaiming 2024 as our year of OPEN DOORS.

Revelation 3:7-12 KJ V

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;⁸ I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name⁹ Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.¹⁰ Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.¹² Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

As we embrace the Word of the Lord concerning this consecration, we should ask the Lord to allow us to see divine opportunities in 2024 more clearly. If we ask, we should also see that no matter what we see, the hand of the Lord is present. In our New Year message, the Lord told us to do four things concerning doors in our lives.

1. **Expect** open doors
2. Be **Aware** of open doors
3. Be **Watchful** for God's hand on the door
4. Be **Thankful** for the doors

Our consecration is about understanding God's hand and aligning with Him. In this year's consecration, we should focus on asking for wisdom, healing, and spiritual insight of the total Spirit man. In that healing, we will see more clearly the hand of God and the potential of every moment. In the same manner that Elisha prayed over his servant, we should also pray over ourselves, "Lord, open our eyes that we may see." We want to see every opportunity God puts before us without fear, without limitations, and without a perspective based on the interpretation of our past. We consecrate ourselves for forty days to embody the kingdom principle of divine opportunities with Authority and dominion. Simply stated. "Let His Will be done in earth as it is in Heaven. During this consecration, watch the words you speak, because if your words speak against open doors, your destiny will be tied to your words and not God's divine opportunity. LORD, OPEN OUR EYES, THAT WE MAY SEE!!!!

¹⁷ And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.¹⁸ And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.¹⁹ And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.²⁰ And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

The number 40 has great significance in the bible. We find the ultimate testimony to its significance when studying its commonality to events in the lives of people and ultimately Jesus. The number 40 is the number of divine testing and dominion. Please note some examples of the biblical significance to the number 40.

- It rained for 40 days and 40 nights when God wanted to cleanse the world and start over.
(Gen 7:12 KJV) And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.
- Noah waited another 40 days after it rained before he opened a window in the Ark.
(Gen 8:6 KJV) And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:
- Embalming required 40 days (although this was an Egyptian custom, the Egyptians recognized the period of 40 for the preparation of going into a new life, what they called the afterlife)
(Gen 50:3 KJV) And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days
- Moses was on the mountain with God for 40 days (TWICE)
(Exo 24:18 KJV) And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.
(Exo 34:28-29 KJV) And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.
(Deu 10:10 NIV) Now I had stayed on the mountain forty days and nights, as I did the first time, and the LORD listened to me at this time. It was not His will to destroy you.
- Moses' face shone after the 40 days on the mountain.
(Exo 34:29 KJV) And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.
- It took the spies 40 days to search out the Promised Land and bring back fruit.
(Num 13:25 KJV) And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.
- The Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness, one year for each day they explored the Promised Land.
(Exo 16:35 KJV) And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.
(Num 14:33-34 NIV) Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. {34} For forty years--one year for each of the forty days you explored the land--you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have Me against you.
- Goliath came for forty days before being killed by David
(1 Sam 17:16 NLT) For forty days, twice a day, morning and evening, the Philistine giant strutted in front of the Israelite army.
- Elijah strengthened by one angelic meal went forty days to Mount Horeb where the Lord passed by and he heard the voice of God
(1 Ki 19:8 KJV) And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.
- Jonah warned the City of Nineveh they had 40 days until God would overthrow the city. The people repented in those 40 days and God spared the city.
(Jonah 3:4 and 10 KJV) And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.
And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.

- Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness
(Mat 3:17 KJV) *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*
(Mat 4:1-2 KJV) *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. {2} And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward a hungered.*
- Jesus was seen in the earth 40 days after His crucifixion
(Acts 1:3 NIV) *After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.*

We see commonly divine changes coming about after 40 days. In addition, we see divine direction after a 21-day fast. Daniel's experience came up in my Spirit (Daniel 10:2-14). In this, what was already available in the Spirit was manifested after a 21-day fast. The vision for God's people became clear to Daniel at that time.

I believe we are in a season of divine opportunities; a breakthrough is available to us, but we cannot seek a divine blessing with mortal concepts or ideology. We must seek divine opportunities through God's eyes. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us that we must trust in God wholeheartedly, and He will direct our path. To receive from God, we must look for **open doors** that will lead us to His plan and operate in His divine direction. Are you seeking answers from the Lord right now?

It is my prayer that all stay faithful to this consecration for the sake of God's righteousness. As we take up this cross, I believe God will glorify the work with meeting our request. Keep in mind that fasting alone does nothing to make us consecrated. We must also consecrate our thinking and our time. Commit yourselves to prayer and study while in this consecration. Remember to keep your mind right because without a mind connection to the consecration for God, you are just dieting.



UNDERSTANDING Prayer and Fasting



Why Pray?

According to the late Dr. Myles Monroe in his book "Understanding the power and purpose of prayer", we should pray to align ourselves with the will of God in the earth. Because of this, prayer is not optional. His will is meant to be the backbone and the center of our prayers, the heart of our intercession, the source of our confidence in supplication, the strength of our fervent and effectual prayer. Praying is not our convincing God to do our will but our doing His will through our will. Therefore, the key to effective prayer is understanding God's purpose for your life, His reason for your existence as a human being in general and as an individual.

Prayer is important during your fast. Prayer keeps you focused and in communication with God. Just in case you are like many people who wonder about how to pray, Jesus gave the disciples the model for prayer. The disciples of Jesus asked Him how to pray. He gave them an example. How does the Lord's Prayer serve as a model for prayer?

There are several elements to it:

- Recognition that God is who He says He is
- Offering respect and acknowledgment to His supremacy
- Recognition that the universe is His
- Humility from the petitioner
- Request for the supply of daily needs for sustenance
- Acknowledging that there is evil, therefore, requesting aid/deliverance when confronted with it
- Request for the forgiveness of personal sin and an attitude of forgiveness towards others
- Request for guidance

The Word tells us we should pray without ceasing, but in many cases, we pray and when we do not immediately see the results, we stop praying and assume that God is not listening. Unanswered prayer can be very troubling and painful so remember the following as you create a lifestyle of habitual prayer.

1. ***When prayer does not bring results, it is an indication that something is wrong.*** The Word of God in the Old and the New Testament will give insight to why prayers are not answered and the type of prayers in which God will respond. God answers prayers as soon as we request, but the revelation of His answer is based on divine timing. Luke 18:1
2. ***God is faithful to answer prayer.*** We teach through slang when things seem impossible that it doesn't have a prayer, but prayer is to show that nothing is impossible. Mark 11:24
3. ***God's will and Word do work when they are understood and put into practice.*** Praying the Word of God should accompany understanding.

True prayer will do the following:

- Build intimacy with God
- Bring honor to His nature and character
- Cause respect for His integrity
- Enable belief in His Word
- Cause trust in His love
- Affirm His purpose and will
- Appropriate His promise

What Does the Bible Say about Prayer?

Throughout the Bible, people sought God's assistance and guidance through prayer. Prayer was and is a form of praise and thanksgiving as well. The Psalmist, David, is noted for his lyrical praises, supplications, and intense emotional outpourings:

*"I will lift up my eyes to the mountains;
From whence shall my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
Who made Heaven and Earth,
He will not allow your foot to slip;
He who keeps you will not slumber..." (Psalm 121:1-3).*

²Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. - Ecclesiastes 5:2

Praying with God's Word

If it is accepted that the Bible is God's inspired word, then praying His word will impact His will. "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me, empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it" (*Isaiah 55:11*). Additionally, faith is a necessary element: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (*Hebrews 11:6*).

Mercy, Struggling with Faith

However, God is merciful to those who are struggling with faith issues. For example, a distraught father sought the aid of Jesus' disciples. The father's son was possessed by a demon, which harmed the boy and prevented the boy from speaking and hearing. The disciples failed to cast out the demon. The father pleaded for Jesus' help in the matter. Jesus asked the father if he believed. The father's response: "...if You can, take pity upon us and help us!" Jesus replied, "If you can have faith, all things are possible to him who believes!" The father replied, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

Jesus cast out the demon and the boy was restored to his father (*Mark 9:14-27*).

God Wants People to Pray

The Bible clearly declares that God wants people to pray to Him: Isaiah 64:7-8 says

⁷And there is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee: for Thou hast hid Thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. ⁸But now, O LORD, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand.

We should have continual prayer in our lives.

"...pray without ceasing..." / *Thessalonians 5:17*

Types of Prayer

What are the different types of prayer represented in the Bible?

Although there are many different types of prayer, the following seven are the biggest ones. Each prayer type has one or two scriptures to give examples of those prayers. Here are the 7 main types of prayer:

1. **Prayer of Worship** – Hebrews 13:15 & Revelation 4:11 One of the biggest types of prayer is a prayer of worship. Worshiping the Lord focuses on who God is. It is us recognizing God's power and majesty. These prayers can be as simple as, "God, you're so good." or as huge as in Revelation 4:11, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they existed and were created." Worship can mean anything from singing praise songs, or it can mean simply doing what Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name."
2. **Prayer of Thanksgiving** – Psalms 100:4 Praying our thankfulness to the One who gave us what we have in our lives is another way we can pray. It is closely related to a prayer of worship, although the difference is that one is recognizing who God is, and the other is giving thanks to God for what He has done. Psalms 100:4 sums both of the prayer types up by saying, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"
3. **Prayer of Faith** – James 5:13-16 When we pray in faith, it is us reaffirming that we have faith in God's will. It isn't us enforcing our will into His, but it is us conceding that His will be done. One example of this is in James 5:13-16 where it says, "13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."
4. **Prayer of Intercession** – Daniel 9:1-27 Intercession is the act of praying on behalf of another person or group of people. When we pray for the well-being of others we are interceding on their behalf. There are many examples of this kind of prayer throughout the Bible, but a clear one is [Daniel 9:1-27](#). In this passage, Daniel goes to the Lord and intercedes on behalf of his people. We can also do this in our lives.
5. **Corporate Prayer** – Acts 12:5-18 Corporate prayer is praying in a group. This can bring a sense of unity and community to you and your fellow believers. If you have been to a church service, then you have experienced this kind of prayer. An example of this type of prayer is in [Acts 12:5-18](#). In this passage, the church is praying for Peter's wellbeing.
6. **Prayer of Consecration** – Matthew 26:26-27 When we take communion, we are praying a prayer of consecration. This means we are consecrating the bread and wine (or grape juice) and asking God to make it holy. Jesus himself did this in Matthew 26:26-27, "26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' 27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you.'"
7. **Prayer of the Holy Spirit** – Romans 8:26-27 Sometimes we don't know what we want or need to pray for at any given time. In Romans 8:26-27 the Bible says, "26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

<https://www.orbcfamily.org/blog/prayer/7-different-types-of-prayer-in-the-bible/>

When you pray, keep in mind the following twelve biblical principles of your prayer life. -

Power and purpose of prayer by Dr. Myles Monroe

1. **Become Silent** – Matthew 6:6 speaks of the first act of prayer. Get away from all into a place where you will not be disturbed. Getting quiet helps you to eliminate distractions. Getting quiet and putting your mind on God expresses your humility before Him as well. Isaiah 26:3 speaks of a peace that is more than enough. Meaning place of prosperity.
2. **Give adoration** – This step is the hallowing of the name of God (Luke 11:2). Adoration means worshiping God. When you adore someone, you express how precious they are to you.
3. **Make confession – Confession is made when you allow the Spirit of God to speak of your sins and** you come in agreement with them by confessing your condition, once it is exposed to you by the Holy Spirit. (Gal 5:16) In confession, gain forgiveness and purity. (1 John 1:9-10)
4. **Give thanks** – After confessions we should give thanks to God. (1 Thess 5:16-18) Thanksgiving at this point is primarily because your heart is free from the things you confessed.
5. **Make supplication** – Philippians 4:6 speaks of the fact that we should not be anxious. but should rather go to Him in prayer and make our request known to God.
6. **Specify petitions and requests** – When we come before the judge we should be prepared and not use useless words. Know specifically what you want to request and know what the Word of God says concerning your desire. (Ecclesiastes 5:2) Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore, let thy words be few.
7. **Secure the promises** – This step is a part of step six. When you are petitioning God, you are doing it based on His promise. Embrace the right to the promises of God. (2 Corinthians 1:20) Embrace that you are entitled to every promise God made to you. The answer to your needs as related to the promises of God is Yes and Amen.
8. **Plead the case** – Prayer is a legal art whereby you are talking to a just judge concerning your rights as in Luke 18:1-8. In this chapter with the unjust judge, Jesus is explaining how to get your prayers answered.
9. **Believe** – The power of our prayer is faith. Jesus speaks of the power of believing in Luke 18:22-24. Daniel 10:10-15 shows how when Daniel prayed God answered immediately. Mark 9:24 we see a man speaking to Jesus saying he believed, but asking for help in his lacking in faith. We cannot allow doubt to enter into our prayers. James 1:5-7 says our prayers should be without wavering.
10. **Give thanks** – This is the second thanksgiving and is different in reason, but the same in nature. Just like the thanksgiving in the fourth step of prayer, this step is thanksgiving to what is divinely completed in God. In this, you are thanking God for what you don't see, believing it is already done. Thanking God activates Angels (Hebrew 1:14)
11. **Live in expectation** – Live in expectation knowing that what is done in prayer is manifesting physically.
12. **Practice active belief** – In Luke 11:1 Jesus starts with prayer but completes his teachings with ask, seek, and knock. This speaks to the life we live after prayer indicating that we should not only expect

what we requested in prayer but we should operate as if its available. Searching for what God has done.

There are six hurdles to answered prayer - Dr. Myles Monroe (Power and Purpose of Prayer)

- Learning about prayer, but not practicing it – false sense of satisfaction.
- Mental assent, rather than action – agrees with God, but does not believe.
- Hearing the words, but not absorbing it – absorbing the Word is to meditate on it.
- Hoping, rather than having faith – This hope is wishful thinking hope, not biblical hope; faith is knowing.
- Praying for faith – If we are praying for faith, then we do not believe.
- Laziness/Cares of the world – Matthew 25:26 wicked service allows life concerns to keep us from the faith of work.

Major hindrances to prayer - Dr. Myles Monroe (Power and Purpose of Prayer)

1. Sin - (James 1:21-22) tells us how prevalent it is that we must acknowledge our sins and our fallen nature. This state of mankind causes many problems and misunderstandings regarding our faith, obedience, and prayer. When sin, especially willful sin is in your life, God will not hear you. (John 3:22, 1 John 2:1)

Fear - (1 John 4:18) Fear is a significant hindrance for us because it keeps us from believing. To operate in the Spirit, there has to be an absence of fear. 1 John 4:8 tells us that there is no perfection in fear. Fear will keep you in sin and keep our understanding of the nature and the work of God from our hearts (Romans 5:8-9; Matt 18:21-22; Isaiah 43:25; and 2 Tim 1:7)
2. Guilt - Guilt is related to fear of not being forgiven. When we live in a constant sense of not being forgiven, we deny the power of God in our lives. (Romans 8:1-2) Explains that there is no condemnation for those in Christ. We can have confidence in this because of Hebrew 8:12, God says He will forgive and forget our sins.
3. Feeling of inferiority - We can hinder our prayers when we feel we are not worthy to receive an answer from God. We will only have a low opinion of ourselves when we do not understand how God sees us. (Ephesians 1:4-11) Explains how God sees us. Understanding that we are chosen by God changes our interaction with God. Hebrew 4:16 tells us to come boldly before the throne of grace.
4. Doubt - (James 1:5-8) We tend to do this after going before God. It is believing that He can while not trusting that He will fulfill His word.
5. Wrong Motives - Since we know that God knows the heart we should understand that our motives are understood by God before we come before Him. James 4:3 Explains that when your supplications are based in lust, we will not get a response from God.

Why Fast?

We fast to unlock divine resources or to strengthen our relationship with God. Isaiah 58 mentions a number of resources available. To mention a few: protection, revelation, provision, revival, God's presence, deliverance, and much more.

In the Old Testament, the word "fasting" in the Hebrew meant, "to cover your mouth". In the New Testament, it means, "not to eat". Therefore, biblical fasting cannot be anything other than not eating. Fasting from television, radio, or other things cannot be considered biblical fasting. It could only be seen as abstinence. We cannot discount the significance and the spiritual benefits you get from abstaining, but we cannot mistakenly call it fasting.

What makes Fasting Useless?

Isaiah 58 also describes the characteristics of a bad fast.

- Fasting for image – it is not for looking religious. Zach 7:5
- Fasting as a merit badge – To get merit with God. Isaiah 58:3
- Fasting to feed a religious spirit – Isaiah 58:3-4
- Fasting to form an illusion of godliness – Isaiah 58:5
- Grind off all religions – Because other religions fast.

Biblical Fasts

1. The Esther Fast- three day fast (no food or no water) for God's favor (Esther 4:6). In times of trouble or great crisis, we should not fall apart. We should rise up against the enemy.
2. The Daniel Fast – a 21-Day Fast – Consisting of only vegetables, fruit, and water. – Daniel 10:2-3, Daniel 10:10-11, 14
3. The Self-Examination Fast - the one-day fast – Leviticus 23:27. This is the type of fast indicated in Jeremiah 36:6. Before the Day of Atonement, God's people went through a one-day fast for self-examination and consecration.
4. The Fast before the battle – Judges 20. In this passage, we see God's people consulting God for a battle. God permitted them on two occasions to go into battle and they lost 40,000 soldiers in each pursuit. On the third approach, they fasted and gave burnt offerings. God then gave them the victory. We should never go into battle without fasting first.
5. Fasting to lift the judgment of God. 1 Kings 21:27-29
6. Fasting for healing – Isaiah 58 6-9. In this passage, you will find the quote, "Your healing will spring forth speedily."
7. The Domination Fast – The forty-day fast – Matthew 4. Jesus fasted 40 days before starting His ministry.

When you fast, you will raise up a foundation for many generations. In Ezra 8:21, we find this illustrated. In addition, we see in the passage the powerful reasons for a fast.

- First, we fast to seek direction from God. God will reveal the right direction to go in when we are *in transition. We should never make decisions without a fast first.*
- Secondly, we fast for our children. *In Ezra, the word says that we can raise a foundation for generations through our fasting.*
- Thirdly, we fast for substance. See Ezra 21. *We fast to petition God about our substance, our resources, and our finances. By this, we are affirming that God is the source of our supply. We bring alive the words of the Psalmist declared, “The earth is the Lord’s and fullness there of”.*

Write some of the things you need to focus on during your Passion Fast:

[illegible]

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

Philippians 4:6

Prepare for the Fast

These are a few things you need to do to prepare yourself and your household for fasting:

1. **Establish a place and a time where you can pray.** Prayer is critical while fasting; it is the time where you will experience breakthrough and have what the Lord is saying to you.
2. **Plan to drink plenty of water** during your fast.
3. **Establish a time for reading and meditating on the Word.** Read the Word and think through what you have read.
4. **Your goal is closeness with God.** Do not let the legalistic aspect of the fast crowd out the relational aspect.
5. **You must refrain from critical speaking,** spreading negative words about or to anyone. If you have friends that tempt you into this lifestyle, then you must plan to take a break from them.
6. **Limit watching and listening to the TV and Radio;** Focusing on religious and educational shows, rather than things that could possibly cloud your judgment.
7. **Establish a form of accountability** during your fast, either a prayer partner or another person in the fast.
8. **Check your mind at all times.** Remember if it means nothing to you, then it will mean nothing to God. If you do not combine your fasting with prayer and the Word, it will mean nothing more than dieting.



STRENGTHENING Your Consecration

Ten Fasting Tips For a Successful Fast

By Ron Lagerquist

The following provide some practical fasting tips that will assist you in fasting with the least number of distractions. They come from a resource of personal experience of those who fast often and have been forced to learn the hard way to find the smoothest path into the, sometimes difficult, personal terrain of fasting. During a fast, focus is critical. You will become painfully aware of how noisy, chaotic, and cluttered your world has become. This is because fasting will force you to slow down. Vacations allow us to leave our busy life for a while and escape to a quieter landscape. Fasting is quite the opposite, instead of an escape; you will come face to face with your life in a new way. It can be overwhelming, even unmanageable when all the years of useless pursuits flash before you, demanding focus and attention.

Here are ten principles that will help manage the chaos and find victory and power over your life again.

1. Tell the least number of people that you are fasting.

Fasting is an exciting event and it is easy to blab off to everyone that you are on a fast, especially when you begin to experience the incredible benefits. The problem is that you set yourself up for failure and disappointment when you make your fast public. There are two reasons for this:

First, most people will think that you are crazy. They will not understand. And if you do not have any fear of fasting, they will supply all the fear you need. Satan often uses those who are closest to us to cause the most trouble.

- *You look like you have aids!*
- *You're becoming a fanatic!*
- *You're going to become protein deficient!*
- *Times have changed, people don't fast anymore!*
- *Are you under a doctor's supervision?*

Fear, fear, fear, fear--the last thing you need on your fast is fear. Keep in mind, fear does not come from God; it comes from the devil.

Secondly, do not tell people that you are fasting as it can cause the fast to become a law to your heart. When you are tempted to break the fast, the thinking will be that, *Aunt Myrtle, Uncle Ed, Dad, Mom, and half the church knows I'm on a fast. If I quit now, I'll be humiliated in front of all of them.*

Your fast is between you and God and no one else. And when you are being tempted to break it, you don't need to be concerned with Aunt Myrtle. You are fasting because you are in *love* with Jesus. The key to a great fast is to stay fixed on Jesus, not people or circumstances. Keeping your fast between you and God will help you stay focused in times of temptation.

2. Turn off the TV.

Watching TV while on a spiritual fast will become increasingly ridiculous. In every commercial, you are being tempted with food. Most of all, it destroys your Christ-focus. It is not going to kill you to turn off the TV and radio, and stop buying the newspaper. The world will continue happily along

without your presence. Of the many times I have broken a fast, I can usually root it back to allowing myself some form of earthly distraction.

Even a short fast has many different stages. Fasting speeds up your emotional state to the point where one moment you will have a sense of closeness to God with a feeling of well-being, then the next moment the bottom falls out and you feel empty and cold.

Remember, a tug-of-war is going on in the soul between the flesh that is being inflicted and the spirit that is being strengthened.

You are the most vulnerable when you're feeling deprived. **That is the time when you must be aware of the temptation to find an escape.** Let God be your entertainment. Turn to Him when you feel deprived.

Look for your Bible, not the remote control!

3. Get alone with God.

Fasting and solitude have always gone hand in hand. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit away from the crowds into the desert (Luke 5:15).

What kind of man would King David have been if he had not spent countless lonely nights as a shepherd? The stars were his friends and playing the harp was a way of expressing his heart to God. It is in loneliness and the quietness of solitude that we learn friendship with Jesus. It does not matter how large a ministry you have; you need to get alone with God. Your ministry will survive without you--and if it doesn't, it was built on the wrong foundation, *you* not Christ!

4. Feast on His Word.

Just think of all those lost hours of time spent on radio, television, and newspapers. Well, during your fast make a diet adjustment. Saturate yourself in His Word. Use every available means possible--tapes, books, videos, Christian television, but most of all, the Bible.

However, be careful, you might develop a renewed mind. You may begin to think differently. Behavior patterns may begin to surface that others will think fanatical.

The Word will develop within you an irrepressible enthusiasm that, *you can do all things in Christ who is your strength*, and *you are the righteousness of God*. You might have the nerve even to think that the only difference between you and the apostle Paul is that he didn't have a cordless phone. In your spare time, you may start a new hobby, like casting out demons or healing the sick.

We are not ignorant of the power of media to change peoples' thinking. Can you imagine the power the creative Words of God will have on your thinking if you begin to fill yourself with His spiritual food?

5. Meditate.

Christians, especially in North America, have lost the art of meditation. In fact, we almost consider it a pagan practice. *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law, he meditates day and night (Psalm 1:2).*

For the most part, our thinking, especially for the undisciplined, has a mind of its own. We are victims of our own thoughts. I'm sure that you've experienced it time and again. You could be driving your car, and without any conscious decision, you begin to worry. You envision yourself in

the worst-case scenario and before you know it, you are embraced by a mood of melancholy and despair.

Through meditation, we wrestle down negative thoughts and emotions that plague us every day. Meditation is a discipline of the mind where you take charge of your thoughts, directing them towards God.

We are a society of lazy thinkers. Television has become an electronic imagination. It determines, with vivid stereo and full color imagery, how we feel and think.

Try sitting down, closing your eyes and allow your imagination to be filled with a single thought. *You have been chosen by God before the creation of this world, according to His good pleasure and will.*

Allow your mind to be filled with the implication of how that single truth affects who you are, and your importance to this world. This will be difficult because negative thoughts come easiest to the mind. They are safe.

As you travel throughout your thinking, you will begin to experience obstacles of fear and unbelief. Those thoughts will oppose themselves against the Word of God. You will find that often your first experience with meditation is like a wrestling match in the mind, instead of an experience of peace and stillness. As you begin to experience the authority you have over your own thinking, the floodgates of joy will burst within you, maybe for the first time. You will develop an awareness of how you and the Word of God are one in your thinking.

There may be fifty years of hardened residue built up that you will have to come up against as you meditate to internalize the Word. The Word of God is the single force in all of eternity that is able to enter your thinking and recreate your character, mind, and emotions, transforming them into the image of Christ.

There is nothing spiritual about opening a Bible and reading it. Christians all over North America do that in their personal devotions and remain unchanged. Meditation opens the soul to the Word that it may begin to come in and make great change.

We suggest that you take a scripture or a single nugget of truth and meditate all day. Look at your reflex-thinking, see if it conforms to that truth--and if it does not, cast it down as an evil thing that hinders you from communing with God.

6. Go for walks alone.

Clouds, a breeze in the face, flowers, trees, sun, moon, and stars are the expressions of God to you--His creation. As you fast, your five senses will become sharp and clear, allowing the loveliness of God in all that He has made to impact your soul. Whether winter or summer, go for long walks with God. Invite Him to come with you. Experience the beauty of what He has made to feel the quality and vastness of His universe. Reach outward with your soul, embracing God through what He has made.

7. Take a phone break.

Clear your schedule. Take a break from the phone. No interruptions! This is a period to minister to Christ and your own spiritual need for deeper intimacy with Him. Whatever ministry you are involved with, it can survive without you. If it falls apart without you, God's not running it.

Withdraw from people's lives for a time of intimacy with God. Jesus did it often. He would wander the desolate hills and valleys, the no-man's land of Israel. It must have been hard to leave those who were sick and emotionally shipwrecked, those searching for some meaning and purpose, but He left them repeatedly. If Christ needed to refresh His spirit, then even more so do you.

Many have found escape by submerging in ministry. They leave themselves behind by focusing on the needs of others. They draw people like a magnet with kindness and compassion. However, what seems to be selfless devotion is just a search for identity and purpose, a desperate attempt to prove value. Men and women rise to large ministries, teaching millions of people, through television and radio, yet have never quieted themselves enough to meet their own inner terror. If only they knew that in that quietness, they would find the smiling face of their God. A God who does not condemn, reject or criticize, but accepts, embraces and loves us as we are.

Dear friend, during your fast, find your peace. Pause in your soul. Deal aggressively with every thought of rejection, loneliness, and self-contempt. Tell yourself that you are fully accepted by God and that you need nothing more. Christ's blood paid for your acceptance. Are you trying to give more than that?

Enter the solitude of loneliness. In this season we should avoid engaging with throngs of people, only God. Get to a place of inner reflection to realign the heart. When you emerge from the desert, your ministry will take on a depth that will profoundly touch the lives of those whom you serve.

8. Be quiet.

Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore, stand in awe of God (Ecclesiastes 5:7).

With pride come many words. Tame the tongue. Bring it into submission. Be silent. There is humility in silence. The literal interpretation of the word fast is to *cover your mouth*. The noise of words can cover insecurity, drowning the murmurs of a restless soul. What vulnerabilities do you face when we are silent? We use words for boundaries, for protection, for meaningless distraction. Yet, it is only in silence that we can quiet the soul to experience the awe of God; an experience of majestic greatness that transcends the emptiness of words.

9. Do not enter into needless temptation.

The smells and sight of food can be difficult during a fast. As you continue along the path of fasting, all five senses will increase in sensitivity. When the next-door neighbor opens a jar of fresh peanut butter, you will know it. Every desire to draw closer to God will be obscured in peanuts. All you can imagine is the smooth, delicious flavors of peanut butter melting on freshly browned toast.

During a fast, you will be surrounded with the hostile world of food, especially in a country that has become addicted to eating. Do all you can to separate yourself from temptation--the neon signs, commercials, and the golden arches?

You will learn that you can live quite happily without food. God can supply all your needs emotionally for the trials and difficulties of the day. Caffeine, fat, and sugar are crutches that we depend on to keep us moving when we feel emptiness. God will fill all emptiness if we are simply willing to give Him a chance.

Take a risk. Get hungry! Explore the emptiness of your own stomach. Of course, your children need to eat. Do your best to arrange a schedule where your spouse is able to do the cooking. This

also can be an excellent situation for your children to experience a sense of responsibility in the home. You can plan meals for the next 5, 20 or 30 days or however long you decide to fast. They may not want too, but once your family sees that your decision is firm and that this is important to you, they will support you. You are displaying a powerful example of seeking God that they will never forget.

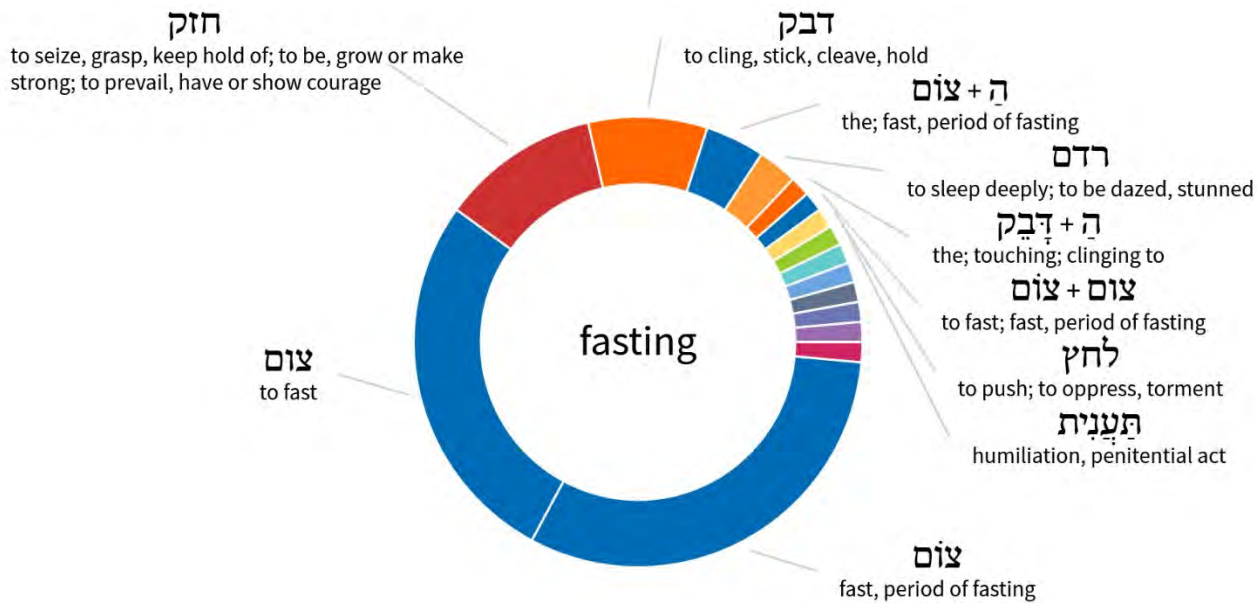
10. Sleep.

If you are going to detoxify, you ought to do it on a good night's sleep. The last thing you need during the difficult part of your fast is to be tired and overworked. It is worth investing time and energy toward a fast, as if you were investing in a vacation. We look forward to a vacation, saving money, planning as if it will become a highlight of our year. Fasting is a spiritual vacation with God, traveling to foreign parts of your character, learning more about yourself. Breaking old patterns and developing a brand-new culture that will affect the rest of your life.

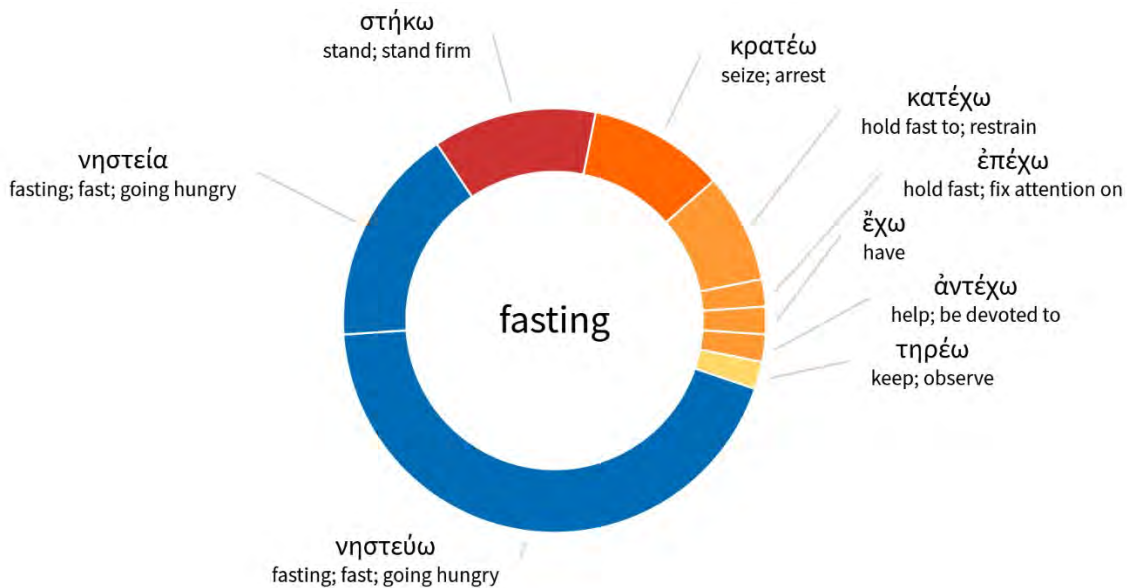
Most of us live on the edge, rarely getting the sleep that we need to function with clear-mindedness. During a fast, it is essential that you get enough sleep. Come home from work, take a shower, and allow yourself time to quietly and restfully meditate and pray.



70 References to the word *fast* in the Old Testament



48 References to the word *fast* in the New Testament



A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer, with hands clasped, against a sunset background. The text "Fasting & Prayer" is overlaid in white.

Fasting & Prayer

PRE-FASTING Bible Study

True Fasting

¹ 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? ¹

Word Study KJV

¹ Cry aloud, spare not, [lift up] thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they [take delight] in approaching to God.

³ 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 labors.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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?

⁶ *Is* not this the fast that I have chosen? to loosen the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?²

In this passage, we see a challenge to the religious practices of the people of God. We are often told the things we should do but not told the purpose behind the acts. If we do not learn the purpose behind our activities for God, we will fall into the dangers of worthless religious activities. In this passage, God is challenging worthless religious activities just as Jesus did in the New Testament.

Verse 1-5

In the first five verses, God challenges the people concerning their religious practices. The question was asked, "When you fast, are you fasting for **Me**" (Verse 5a "***Is it a fast that I have chosen?***")

¹ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Is 58:1–6). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

² Zodhiates, S., & Baker, W. (2000). *The complete word study Bible: King James Version* (electronic ed.) (Is 58:1–6). Chattanooga: AMG Publishers.

What are the characteristics of your religious activities?

- Debating concerning how the fast should take place.
- You are not getting results out of your fasting and praying.
- God responding to the things you do.
- You are looking to be seen or heard for the appearance of righteousness.
- Your actions motivated by pleasure of weight loss or compliments.
- Your actions are not self-denying, but rather self-focused.
- You allow irritability to cause you to act without love.

Contrary to the things most religious practices encourage, fasting may have personal benefits, but it's more about focus - your focus on God and a personal desire to get closer to Him.

Here's the prospective we must have:

- Fasting is about worship.
- Fasting is an act of humility before God.
- Fasting is an acknowledgement of God's worth vs. self-worth.
- Fasting is about seeking God's will for your life.
- Fasting does not move God; it moves us to God when done properly.

What type of results will a fast bring?

1. It will release the bonds of wickedness (Power to come against unfair treatment).
2. It will undo heavy burdens - (Thongs of yoke) String that puts yoke on oxen.
3. Let the oppressed go free.
4. Break yokes.

NOTES:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Word Study

⁷ *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?]³

⁸ Then shall thy light [break forth] as the morning, and thine health shall [spring forth] speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall [be thy rearward.]

⁹ Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I *am*. If thou [take away] [from the midst] of thee the yoke, the [putting forth] of the finger, and speaking vanity;

¹⁰ And *if* thou [draw out] thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness *be* as the noonday:

¹¹ And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and [make fat] thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.⁴

NIV

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? ⁵

⁸ Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness ^v 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. ⁶

A fast is not about avoiding food. Most people spend a lot of time focusing on determining what they should or should not eat. This mindset distracts your true focus of humility before God.

How do you keep a Godly focus during a fast?

- **Feed the Hungry** – Benevolence during a fast is key to keeping the right focus (Matthew 5:42).
 - o Keep a Godly focus
 - Give to them that ask.
 - Do not turn away from the person that borrows.

³ Zodhiates, S., & Baker, W. (2000). *The complete word study Bible: King James Version* (electronic ed.) (Is 58:7). Chattanooga: AMG Publishers.

⁴ Zodhiates, S., & Baker, W. (2000). *The complete word study Bible: King James Version* (electronic ed.) (Is 58:8–11). Chattanooga: AMG Publishers.

⁵ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Is 58:7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁶ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Is 58:8–11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- **Cover them that are naked.**
- **House the homeless.**
- **Hide thyself not** = means do not make stranger those who are in need. They are a part of you by the nature of being an extension of you through God.
 - o Matthew 25:42-43 "The least are manifestations of God as well."
 - ⁴² For I was **hungry** and you gave me nothing to eat, I was **thirsty** and you gave Me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a **stranger** and you did not invite Me in, I needed **clothes** and you did not clothe Me, I was **sick** and in **prison** and you did not look after Me.'

Results to expect: (Reasons for fasting)

- Your Light will break forth.
 - o Light = or (Hebrew) meaning Sun
 - o Break = Baqa (Hebrew-Baw-Kah) Meaning make a breach
- Your healing will spring forth.
 - o Healing = aruka (Hebrew-ar-oo-kaw) meaning wholeness of body or mind
 - o Spring = Samah (Hebrew- tsaw-mahk) bring forth or grow
- Your righteousness will precede you.
 - o Righteousness = Sedeq (Hebrew- tseh-dek) equity
 - o Go before = Paneh (Hebrew –paw-neen) Presence
- The Glory of God will be your rear guard.
 - o Glory = Kabod (Hebrew –kaw-bode) weight, splendor, honor
 - o Re-reward = asap (Hebrew –aw-saf) To gather for any purpose
- The Lord will answer your call.
 - o God's answer will always be present when you need Him.
- God will respond to your cry.
 - o Cry = Shawa (Hebrew-shaw-vah) Automatic response to the onset of bondage
 - o God will speak.

These responses are still conditional. There are things we have to do.

- Put away the yoke, and the pointing of the finger.
 - o This yoke is the influence of politics, economics, social injustice
 - o Pointing of the finger refers to false accusations (watch gossip)

Vs 11. Says God will:

- Guide you continually
- Satisfy your soul in droughts
- Strengthen your bones

NOTES:

Word Study KJV

¹² And *they that shall be* of thee shall build the old [waste places:] thou shalt [raise up] the foundations of [many generations:] and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

¹³ If thou [turn away] thy foot [from the Sabbath,] *from* doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shalt honor Him, [not doing] thine own ways, [nor finding] thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words:

¹⁴ Then shalt thou [delight thyself] in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the [high places] of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.⁷

NIV

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.⁸

As we operate in the principles of God, we will always expect results. God has given a word and the word of God always brings results. Fasting is one of the principles of the word of God and when done properly, it will always yield a result. If you are fasting, with no results you should consider the condition of your mind while fasting.

Proper Fasting will result in:

- Rebuilding of the strong foundation of your forefathers.
- It will make you the leaders of restoration.
- You will find JOY.
- You will gain access to your spiritual inheritance.

If you are fasting the right way, there will be a real revelation from God. We are not going to receive anything without a work. The work was defined in last week’s bible study. God spoke to the children of Israel to give them a way out of a test 150 years before the problem came. The Assyrians were coming to destroy, but the people of God were called to establish God’s Kingdom.

⁷ Zodhiates, S., & Baker, W. (2000). *The complete word study Bible: King James Version* (electronic ed.) (Is 58:12–14). Chattanooga: AMG Publishers.

⁸ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Is 58:12–14). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

1. They shall build the old waste places. Rise up the foundation of many places.
 - a. God calls us to build what's wasting in the land.
 - b. To make known God's Kingdom everywhere.
 - c. Not focus on our own foundation (Church).
2. And you shall be called the repairer of the breach.
We will restore the things that are broken down (Marriages, Families, etc.).
3. The restorer of the paths.
 - a. Help people find the route to God
 - b. Guiding the family
4. Then you will find Joy in the Lord and ride the high places on the earth.
God will put you in the places to receive blessings.

NOTES:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Fasting is not an end in itself; it is a means by which we can worship the Lord and submit ourselves in humility to Him. We don't make God love us any more than He already does if we fast, or if we fast longer. Fasting invites God into the problem. Then, in the strength of God, victory is possible.

– Elmer L. Towns

Introduction

If you are seeking a closer walk with God, consider fasting. Throughout Scripture, fasting refers to abstaining from food, or food and drink, for spiritual purposes. Fasting is more than a diet adjustment; it involves spiritual intensity and intercession. Fasting should always be accompanied with prayer, meditation, and Bible study.

We should never be motivated by the mistaken idea that our fasting will move God to do what we want. Even if we wanted to, we could never manipulate God. *The purpose of our fasting is to move us closer to God and to seek His will in our lives.*

One of the greatest spiritual benefits of fasting is becoming more aware of our own inadequacies and God's adequacy; becoming more aware of our own failings and His self-sufficiency. The purpose of all disciplines, including fasting, is to change us so that we may become more Christ-like. Fasting helps us to listen to what God wants us to be and do.

The list of biblical personages who fasted reads like a *Who's Who* of Scripture. For example: Moses the lawgiver, David the king, Elijah the prophet, Esther the queen, Daniel the advisor to kings, Anna the prophetess, Paul the apostle, and Jesus Christ the incarnate Son.

A word of caution: Before anyone attempts to go on a fast, please consult your physician if you have health problems such as diabetes, kidney disorders, or other serious conditions. The normal spiritual fast is going without food for a period of time during which you ingest only liquids (water and/or juice). The duration can be one day or several days. Some Christians fast on juice or water up to a week. The absolute fast is abstaining from both food and water. The duration shouldn't exceed one or two days unless you have discussed absolute fasting ahead of time with your doctor.

1st key passage: [Matthew 6:16-18](#)

Does Jesus command fasting, or does He only comment on how to fast properly? What should we do and how should we look when fasting? Why?

One key to fasting is motivation. What are the differences in motivation between truly seeking God and fasting to gain power or admiration?

2nd key passage: [Matthew 9:14-15](#)

Did Jesus expect His disciples to fast after He was gone?

It is said that fasting brings us closer to God. Could this be one of the reasons Jesus said His disciples would fast after He would no longer be with them? What are other reasons?

3rd key passage: [Isaiah 58:3-10](#)

In this passage, Isaiah tells us that the Jews were fasting, but God was not answering their requests. Why not? What kind of fast does God want?

When people turn from mistreating others, to helping them with their needs, does that in itself count as fasting? Are we to obey when we fast, obey before we fast, or obey instead of fasting?

Is fasting a way to get God to answer our prayers? Will fasting solve our problems? Will it lead to more effective evangelism? Does it solve humanitarian problems? What does God promise to do if His people fast in the right way? Will we gain power over sin?

Some may wish to share how God has answered their prayers when they were fasting for His intervention.

Fasting reminds us that we are sustained “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” ([Matthew 4:4](#)). Food does not sustain us; God sustains us.

– Richard J. Foster

When we fast and pour our heart out to God, it's been said that He gives us His "eyes" to see the situation or the problem as it really exists. How is this beneficial to us?

During the fast, why is it helpful to read various portions of Scripture that may apply to our situation and then meditate on them?

Challenge for growth

The next time you feel the need to fast for any spiritual reason, please consider these benefits that fasting produces: 1) spiritual examination and introspection; 2) spiritual confession; 3) spiritual intercession. In what way does fasting help us pray for others?

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Fasting

"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord God, and made my confession ..." Daniel 9:34

I. Is there a place for fasting in New Testament times?

A. Fasting was not required of the disciples of Jesus.

Matthew 9:14 (Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33) "Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Thy disciples fast not?"

B. But Jesus spoke of a day when there would be a place for fasting.

Matthew 6:16-18 (Not "if," but "when ye fast ...") "Moreover, when ye fast, but thou, when thou fastest..."

Matthew 9:14-15 (Luke 5:34-35) "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."

II. What guidelines are set forth in scripture concerning fasting?

A. It is to be done in a manner of humility and secrecy.

Matthew 6:16-18 "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 fast, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret ..."

Luke 18:9-14 "And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray . . .

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are . . . I fast twice in the week, I give tithes . . . And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to this house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

B. Fasting is closely related to prayer and reading of the Word.

I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18, etc. "And her adversary . . . provoked her; therefore she wept,

and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? ...Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him . . ."

Nehemiah 1:4 ". . . when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven."

Nehemiah 9:1-3 ". . . the children of Israel were assembled with fasting . . . and stood and confessed their sins . . . and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God."

Daniel 9:3, 20 "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting . . . and while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication . . ."

Joel 2:12 ". . . turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning."

Jonah 3:8, etc. "For word came unto the king ... and he caused it to be proclaimed and published ... saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God ... Who can tell if God will ... turn away from His fierce anger ... And God saw ..."

Luke 2:37 "And she was a widow of about 44 years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."

Acts 9:9, 11 "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."

Acts 10:30 "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing."

Acts 13:2 "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said . . ."

Acts 14:23 "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord . . ."

I Corinthians 7:5 ". . . that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer . . ."

C. A fast may be either absolute or partial.

1. Examples of absolute (complete) fasts:

Deuteronomy 9:9, 18 ". . . 40 nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water."

Ezra 10:6 "Ezra. . . did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned . . ."

Esther 4:16 "Go, gather together all the Jews . . . and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day . . ."

Acts 9:9 ". . . and neither did eat nor drink"

Acts 27:33 ". . . This is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing."

2. Examples of partial fasts (abstinence from certain foods only):

I Kings chapter 17

Daniel 10:3 "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

D. There is a place for both the corporate (group) and the individual (personal) fast.

1. Examples of corporate fasts:

I Samuel 7:5-6 "And Samuel said, Gather all Israel ... and they gathered ... and fasted ..."

II Chronicles 20:34

Ezra 8:21-23 "Then I proclaimed a fast ... So we fasted and besought our God ..."

Nehemiah 9:1-3 " ... the children of Israel were assembled with fasting ..."

Joel 2:15-16 "... sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people ..."

Jonah 3:5-10 "the people ... proclaimed a fast ... from the greatest of them even to the least"

Acts 27:33-37

2. Examples of the individual fast:

II Samuel 12:15-16, 22-23 "... and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth."

I Kings 21:27-29 "When Ahab heard those words, he... fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly."

Psalms 35:13 "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting ..."

Daniel 9:3 "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer ... with fasting ..."

Luke 2:36-37 "And there was one Anna, a prophetess ... a widow of about 44 years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day."

Acts 9:9 " ... and neither did eat nor drink."

III. Fasting in itself is of no spiritual value (Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 14:12; I Corinthians 8:8) – "that which is of the flesh is flesh," John 3:6 – but it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with blessing.

Joel 2:12, 13 "Rend your heart, and not your garments ..."

Romans 14:6, 17

I Corinthians 15:50

A. Only fasting that is done with the right motive, that of glorifying God, can be pleasing in His sight.

Isaiah chapter 58 "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not? ... Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure ... ye fast for strife and debate ... ye shall not fast as ye do this day ... Is it such a fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands ... to undo the

heavy burdens ... 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 ..."

Zechariah 7:5-6 "... When ye fasted and mourned ... those 70 years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even to Me?"

Matthew 6:16-18 "The hypocrites ... disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast."

Luke 18:9-14 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I am not as other men are ... I fast twice in the week ..."

- B. The same Bible that teaches abstaining from foods (as God leads) also warns us against testing the Lord (Matthew 4:7).
 - 1. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:9), and we are to care for them as such (v. 20).
 - 2. It may indeed be profitable for a season for us to exercise severe discipline, to "keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (I Corinthians 9 :27), to be "temperate in all things" (I Corinthians 9 :25), but we must also realize that "that which is flesh is flesh," and we cannot produce spiritual results – however sincere our intentions – from that which is purely flesh.
 - 3. To deny the flesh of its natural desires may cause us to be more "in tune" to hear the voice of the Lord (Deuteronomy 9:18, 25, etc.), but it also places us in a realm more easily prone to the attack of the enemy. It was when Jesus had been fasting for 40 days that He was faced with the greatest Satanic attack (Matthew 4:1-3; Luke 4:1-2).
- C. Scripture warns that in the last days there will be many "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats," etc. (I Timothy 4:1-3). We are to test the spirits, to see whether they be of God (I John 4:1).

IV. How long should I fast?

- A. Bible personalities fasted and sought God diligently until they obtained from God what they desired (see the examples of Hannah, I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18; and Paul, Acts 9:9,17-19) – or until the Lord made it evident that what they requested simply would not be obtained (as in the case of David, II Samuel 12:15-23).
- B. The length of a fast may vary.
 - 1. One night.
Daniel 6:18
 - 2. One day.
I Samuel 7:6
II Samuel 1:12; 3:35
Judges 20:26
 - 3. Three days and three nights.

Esther 4:16
Acts 9:9, 17-19

4. Seven days.

I Samuel 31:13
II Samuel 12:16-23

5. Fourteen days.

Acts 27:33-34

6. Twenty-one days.

Daniel 10:3-13

7. Forty days.

a. Moses (at two different times).

Exodus 24:18; 34:28
Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29; 10:10

b. Elijah.

I Kings 19:8

c. Jesus.

Matthew 4:2 (Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2)

V. When should I fast?

Many occasions for fasting are recorded in scripture.

A. The ordination of elders and commissioning of apostles to ministry.

Acts 13:3 "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

Acts 14:23 "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord..."

B. Intercession for the people of God.

Exodus 24:18

Deuteronomy 9:8-9, 12-20, 23-27 Ezra 10:6

Daniel 9:3-4

Joel 2:12-14, 17-18

Jonah 3:5-10

C. Humbling and chastening of oneself.

I Kings 21:27-29 "... Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me?"

Psalms 35:13 "... I humbled myself with fasting ..."

Psalms 69:10 "I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting ..."

D. Seeking the Lord and His way.

Judges 20:26-28, etc. "Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that

day until evening, and ... inquired of the Lord ... (whether to) go out to battle ... And the Lord said, Go up ..."

II Chronicles 20:3 "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah."

Ezra 8:21-23 "Then I proclaimed a fast ... that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to ask the king ... to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him ... So we fasted and besought our God for this: and He was intreated of us."

E. Repentance and confession of sin.

I Samuel 7:6

I Kings 21:27-29

Ezra 10:6 "... he ate no bread, nor drank water: for he mourned because of the transgression ..."

Nehemiah 1:4-7, etc. "...when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed..."

Nehemiah 9:1-3 "... the children of Israel were assembled with fasting ... and stood and confessed their sins ... one fourth part of the day ... they confessed ..."

Jeremiah 36:6-10

Daniel 9:3-5, 20 "... confessing my sin and the sin of my people ..."

Jonah 3:5-10

F. Receiving healing.

I Samuel 1:

NOTES:

[illegible]



As in times of giving an offering, fasting has more to do with your heart. We cannot trick God into blessing us; our heart must be in the right place to receive blessings from the Lord. I believe if we make a heart sacrifice during this fast, God will respond because we are operating in the Word of God.

FASTING

Bible Study

2024 Consecration

40-Day Dominion Fast

Begin: February 20, 2024

21-Day Daniel Fast

Begin March 10, 2024

Theme – OUR YEAR OF DIVINE OPEN DOORS 2024

Purpose: This consecration is to activate a sensitivity of the spirit man to see divine open doors in our lives individually and collectively.

Scripture References: **Revelations 3:7-14, 1 Corinthians 16:9, Romans 12:1-2, Revelations 3:20-21, Acts 16:1-40, Psalms 23:1-6, 1 Chronicles 16:9-11, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Isaiah 60:11, John 16:13, Colossians 4:3, and Acts 14:27**

Expected Results:

- God will give us the ability to see the opportunities in everything we encounter in 2024.
- God will renew our mind to be sensitive, wise, and timely in the thing he has ordained for our lives.
- God will open doors in my family, in my community, and in my ministry individually as well as ecumenically.

This fast is a consecration to sensitive to God's open doors in our lives to walk through every opportunity to fulfill His Divine Kingdom mandate.

	<u>40-DAY FAST</u>		<u>21-DAY FAST</u>
Feb 20	No meat (You may have fresh water fish only)	March 10	Fish, Fruit and Vegetables
March 1	No meat and no fish	March 17	Days of no meat and no fish
March 11	Fruit, Vegetables and Water only	March 24	Fruit, Vegetables and Water only
March 21	Eden Fast (Seed Bearing meat)		

Other Variations for Consecration:

40 Days – One (1) Meal per Day

One balanced meal at the same time daily, liquid meal replacement for other meals.

40 Days Liquid Fast

Some may choose to do fruit and vegetables or liquids only for the whole fast. You have that liberty.

*****Due to health restrictions, some people may not be able to complete every aspect of the fast. Please consult with your doctor before entering this fast. At a minimum, go as far as your health will allow.*****

The fast will also consist of some abstinence as well as some behavioral modification. Please see below a list of things we must do during this fast.

1. Limit the amount of Television and Radio (Substitute with Religious Programming).
2. No excess spending. Pay your bills and buy your necessities i.e. Groceries, medicines, and so on. Refrain from eating out unless you have to because of employment or prescheduled events.
3. Whenever you have a desire to spend, take the money that you would have used for an item of desire and put it into savings. Keep a list of the things you desired.
4. Keep your thinking and conversations positive. Phil 4:8
5. Seek opportunities for community service to the poor and disenfranchised while fasting.
6. Some may have birthdays, anniversaries and major family events during the fast. This year you and your family may break the fast for that one day for the special event and immediately return to the restrictions of the fast thereafter.



21-Day Daniel Fast Daily Log

My twenty-one day Fast Begins _____ (dates) and ends on _____ (dates).

The reason I'm fasting:

From what am I fasting?

The results of my Perfection Fast

1st seven days

2nd seven days

3rd Seven Days

Testimonies I will share:

40-Day Dominion Fast Daily Log

My forty day Fast Begins _____ (dates) and ends on _____ (dates).

The reason I'm fasting:

From what am I fasting?

The results of my Perfection Fast

1st Ten days

2nd Ten days

3rd Ten Days

4th Ten Days

Testimonies I will share:

Vegetarian Recipes

Fried Cabbage

- 1-2 Tablespoons of Olive Oil
- 1 Onion sliced
- 1-2 Tablespoons of minced garlic
- 1 Carrot shredded or julienne
- 1 Yellow Bell Pepper sliced
- 1 Cabbage sliced
- 3-4 Tablespoons of butter
- ½ or 1 Teaspoon Thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil on medium to high in a large frying pan. Add onions. Cook for 1-2 minutes. Add garlic. Cook for about 30 seconds. Add Carrots. Cook for about 2 minutes. Add peppers. Cook for about 1 minute. Add Cabbage. Stir all of the ingredients together, then add the butter and the rest of the ingredients. Add a lid to allow the cabbage to simmer. Stir occasionally. Cook until desired tenderness.

Ravioli Bake

- 2 Packages of cheese ravioli
- 2 Tablespoons of minced garlic (or garlic to taste)
- 2-4 Portabella mushrooms, roughly chopped
- 1 Small bag of baby spinach
- Fresh basil, oregano, parsley, rosemary, or thyme (All optional)
- 2 cups of heavy cream
- ½ Cup of chopped tomato
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ Cup of Parmesan cheese, shredded

Cooking Directions:

Cook the ravioli according to package directions. Preheat oven to 375 Fahrenheit

Sauté garlic in teaspoon or two of olive oil over medium to high heat. Add the mushrooms, cook until tender. Next, add the spinach. When the spinach has wilted, add the heavy cream. Add the chopped tomatoes. Salt and pepper to taste.

Add 1/3 of the ravioli in a roasting pan. Add 1/3 of the sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan. Repeat the steps. Top with Parmesan and bake for 20 minutes.

Note: Cut the ingredients in half for a small ravioli.

Quesadillas Recipe

- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil or olive oil
- ½ cup of chopped onions
- 1 can of black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can of whole kernel corn, drained
- ½ cup of salsa (more or less...optional) Note: I prefer Tostitos brand.
- ¼ teaspoon of red pepper flakes (optional)

Cooking Directions:

Heat oil in a large saucepan on medium heat. Stir in onion, and cook until softened. Stir in beans and corn, then add salsa, and pepper flakes; mix well. Cook until heated through, about 3 minutes.

Butter

Large tortilla

Package of shredded Mexican blend cheese

Melt 2 teaspoons of butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Place a tortilla in the skillet, sprinkle evenly with cheese, top with some of the bean mixture, add more cheese, and then fold the tortilla. Cook until golden, then flip and cook on the other side. Melt more butter as needed, and repeat with remaining tortillas and filling.

Top with Sour Cream (optional)

Links to Other Recipes

<http://www.veggiesoulfood.com/>

<http://www.veggiesoulfood.com/blog/2016/1/10/basic-and-bbq-seitan-meatless-monday-week-2>

<http://www.veggiesoulfood.com/blog/2014/11/1/seitan-steak-meatless-mondays-week-24?rq=seitan%20steak>

<http://www.veggiesoulfood.com/blog/2014/11/2/bbq-seitan-sub-or-burger-meatless-mondays-week-26?rq=sub>

<http://www.veggiesoulfood.com/blog/philly-cheesesteak-meatless-monday-week-40>

EASY Vegan RECIPES

delicious, nutritious, compassionate cuisine

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BREAKFAST

Carrot Muffins

Makes 1 dozen

- 1 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 cup oats or wheat bran
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup raw carrots, grated
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup sugar or maple syrup
- ¼ cup mild-flavored oil or vegan butter, melted

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, oats or bran, cornstarch, baking powder, allspice, cinnamon, and salt. Toss in the grated carrots. Add the water, sugar or maple syrup, and oil or butter, and mix gently.
3. Spoon the batter into a lightly oiled or lined muffin pan, so each tin is about two-thirds full. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean. Allow to cool in pan for 5 minutes before transferring to a baking rack.

Fluffy Pancakes

Serves 4

- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 ½ cups dairy-free milk
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1. Heat a non-stick skillet over medium heat until a drop of water gently sizzles and pops.
2. Mix together the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Whisk in the wet ingredients, being careful not to over-mix. If there are lumps, allow the batter to sit for a minute so they can break down.
3. Fill a quarter cup and pour batter onto the skillet. Cook over medium heat. Flip when the edges begin to dry and bubbles on the top start to pop.
4. Cook for another 1-2 minutes and serve with vegan butter, maple syrup, agave syrup, or fresh fruit.

Savory Breakfast Sandwiches

Makes 4 sandwiches

- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoons black pepper, divided
- 1 14-ounce package firm tofu, drained and cut crosswise into 8 slices
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 8 ounces button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 medium tomato, chopped
- 2 cups baby spinach leaves
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Vegan butter (optional)
- 4 English muffins, toasted

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. In a shallow baking dish, mix together the vinegar, soy sauce, olive oil, and ½ teaspoon of the black pepper with a whisk. Place tofu slices in a single layer in the dish, then turn over to coat on all sides. Allow tofu to marinate for 20 minutes, turning occasionally.
3. Place baking dish in oven for 20 minutes. Flip tofu slices over and continue to bake for an additional 10-20 minutes until crispy and most of the liquid has been absorbed.
4. Meanwhile, spray a large skillet with oil or cooking spray. Sauté onion and garlic over medium-high heat until onion begins to soften. Add mushrooms and continue cooking until they begin to brown. Add tomato, spinach, thyme, salt, and remaining black pepper. Cook and stir until spinach is wilted and any liquid has evaporated, turning heat to medium low if the vegetables are browning too quickly. Adjust seasoning.
5. To assemble sandwiches, spread vegan butter on English muffins, if using. Then add 2 tablespoons of the cooked vegetables to the bottom half of each muffin. Top with 2 slices of tofu and evenly distribute the remaining vegetables on top of the tofu slices on all 4 sandwiches. Cover with the other muffin halves and press down to help keep vegetables from spilling out.

Tofu French Toast

Makes 6-8 pieces

- 8 ounces silken tofu
- ½ cup dairy-free milk
- 1 teaspoon agave or maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 ripe banana
- Vegan butter or mild-flavored oil for cooking
- 6-8 slices of bread

1. Heat a non-stick pan over medium heat.
2. Blend the tofu, dairy-free milk, syrup, cinnamon, and banana on high until smooth. If too thick add a few tablespoons extra dairy-free milk or water. Pour the coating mixture into a shallow dish and dip the bread into the mixture, thoroughly coating both sides.
3. Melt a teaspoon of oil or vegan butter on the hot skillet, then add your soaked bread.
4. Cook for 2-3 minutes and flip to cook the other side once the edges begin to turn golden brown. Repeat with remaining bread.
5. Serve with fresh fruit, powdered sugar, or maple syrup.

New-To-You Food Guide

Cheese

Dairy-free cheeses are often made from nuts, soy, or tapioca. Nutritional yeast (see below) also adds a cheesy flavor to foods. Brands: Daiya, Parma, Teese, Tofutti, Treeline, Vegan Gourmet

Condiments

Condiments, including butter, mayo, and sour cream, are available in veg-friendly forms. Brands: Earth Balance, Just Mayo, Nayonaise, Tofutti, Vegan Gourmet, Vegenaïse

Milk, Yogurt, and Ice Cream

Dairy-free products are made from almonds, coconut, flax, hemp, oats, rice, and soy. All are free of cholesterol. Brands: Almond Breeze, Coconut Bliss, Pacific, Silk, So Delicious, Tempt, Tofutti, Whole Soy

Nutritional Yeast

This flaky, inactive yeast has a cheesy flavor. Try substituting for parmesan on top of pasta or pizza, or in any other food to which you'd like to add a cheesy taste. Fortified versions are packed with B vitamins, including vitamin B12, and other essential minerals. Brands: Bragg, Red Star

Seitan

Made from wheat gluten, seitan is packed with protein and offers a meaty texture when cooked. Brands: Upton's Naturals, West Soy

Tahini

A calcium-rich, creamy, sesame seed paste often used in Middle Eastern cuisine.

Tempeh

Tempeh is a firm, fermented soybean product. It has a nutty flavor and can take the place of meat in a recipe. Brands: Lightlife, Tofurky

Tofu

Made from soybeans, tofu is popular in vegetarian recipes because it is high in protein and calcium, and it easily absorbs flavors in a recipe. It comes in a white block that can be fried, sautéed, steamed, or used in smoothies. Check recipes to see whether you should use a firm or silken variety.

TVP/Vegan Crumbles

Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) is a dried protein that must be soaked in liquid before adding to a recipe. Vegan crumbles can be used straight from the package. Both add

a meaty texture to stew, chili, and pasta sauce. Brands: Beyond Meat, Bob's Red Mill, Gimme Lean, Tofurky

LUNCH

Barbecue Seitan Sandwiches

Serves 4

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 package seitan strips or chunks cut into strips
- 1 cup vegan barbecue sauce
- ¼ cup water
- Hot sauce (optional)
- 4 hamburger buns
- Suggested toppings: lettuce, tomato, green pepper, coleslaw, red onions

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté for 5-8 minutes, or until the onion is very soft. Add seitan, and cook until lightly browned, stirring often.

2. Add the barbecue sauce and water and cook, stirring every 5 minutes, until the sauce has thickened and been absorbed by the seitan. Add hot sauce to taste if using.

3. Toast the inside of the buns to prevent them from getting soggy, then spoon the seitan mixture onto the rolls and garnish. Serve hot.

Black Bean Soup

Serves 6-8

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons white or apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 3-4 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 cups black beans, cooked
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- ¼ cup fresh parsley

1. In a large stockpot over medium-high heat, sauté the onion, garlic, and bell pepper in the olive oil until the onion begins to soften, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the tomato, vinegar, cumin, coriander, paprika, bay leaves, salt, and pepper and cook for another 5 minutes.
3. Add the beans and broth and reduce to a simmer. Cook for about 15 minutes, covered.
4. Remove bay leaves and serve garnished with parsley.

Egg-Free Salad Sandwiches

Makes 4 sandwiches

- 1 12-ounce package extra firm tofu
- ½ cup vegan mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons mustard
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice or apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 1 small pickle, diced
- 2 green onions, diced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Indian Black Salt (kala namak) (optional)
- Bread, tomato, lettuce, or other desired sandwich fixings

1. Wrap the tofu in a paper towel, then a clean dish towel. Press by leaving between two heavy pots for about 10 minutes. Replace the soaked dish towel with another dry towel and press for another 5 minutes. Chop up the tofu into nonuniform chunks or cubes.

2. Toss tofu in a bowl with the vegan mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice or vinegar, garlic powder, and cumin. Stir in the celery, pickle, and onions. Season with salt, pepper, and black salt if using. Use less salt if also using black salt, which adds a great egg-y flavor.

3. Toast bread before assembling your sandwiches and serve with your favorite fixings.

DINNER

Champion Chili

Serves 8

- 1 cup dry TVP or 1 package vegan crumbles (optional)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 small can tomato paste
- 1 jalapeño pepper, minced (optional)
- 3 tablespoons chili powder (or more to taste)
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Black pepper to taste
- ½ cup vegetable broth
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 2 15-ounce cans of beans drained and rinsed (kidney, black, pinto, etc.), add a third can of beans if not using vegan crumbles or TVP
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1 zucchini, chopped

1. If using TVP, start by heating a few teaspoons of vegetable oil in a large skillet. Add the TVP and toast over medium-high heat, stirring constantly for about 3 minutes. Toasting the TVP will give the texture a bit more of a bite and keep it from getting soggy. Bring 1 cup of water or vegetable broth to a boil and pour over the TVP. Set aside.

2. In a large stockpot, heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for about 2 minutes. Next add the diced tomatoes, tomato paste, jalapeño (if using), chili powder, ground cumin, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper and allow to cook for about 5 minutes.

3. Add the broth, soaked TVP or vegan crumbles (if using), carrots, and bell pepper. Cover and turn down heat. Simmer for 30 minutes.

4. Add the beans, corn, and zucchini and simmer uncovered for an additional 30 minutes.

5. Adjust seasoning to taste and serve with rice or pasta and top with vegan sour cream, if desired.

Lots of Layers Lasagna

Serves 6-8

- 1 14-ounce package extra firm tofu
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice or white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 package vegan crumbles or 2 cups TVP
- 2 cups vegetable broth, if using TVP
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 6 cups red marinara sauce
- 1 12-ounce package lasagna noodles
- 8 ounces raw spinach
- ½ cup vegan mozzarella shreds

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. To create tofu-ricotta, drain and mash the tofu in a mixing bowl. Add the lemon juice, salt, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, and nutmeg. Set aside.
3. If using vegan crumbles, break up in a small frying pan with the tablespoon of olive oil. Fry for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Once it starts to turn golden and crispy, remove from heat. If using TVP, soak it in the 2 cups of boiling broth.
4. Spread a thin layer of marinara sauce on the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch pan.
5. Prepare the dry noodles by spreading the tofu-ricotta evenly on each piece. Place 1 layer of noodles on the bottom of the pan. Place a layer of spinach leaves on top of the noodles, followed by half of the vegan crumbles or TVP.
6. Then pour 1 cup of marinara sauce, making sure it is evenly distributed over the whole pan. Repeat with the second half of your ingredients. Top with a final layer of noodles, the last cup of marinara sauce, and the half cup of vegan cheese.
7. Cover with foil and bake for 35-45 minutes, until the sauce is bubbling. Uncover and bake for an additional 5 minutes. Allow to cool and set for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Meatloaf

Serves 4-6

- 1-pound vegan crumbles
- ½ cup soft bread crumbs
- ¼ cup dairy-free milk
- 1 small onion, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup ketchup or tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 teaspoon horseradish
- 1 teaspoon salt

Glaze

- ¼ cup ketchup or tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon molasses

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Combine all of the meatloaf ingredients in a large bowl and mix thoroughly. Line a bread loaf pan with parchment paper and press the loaf ingredients into it.
3. Whisk together the glaze ingredients and spread evenly across the top of the loaf.
4. Cover pan with foil and bake for 50 minutes. Uncover and bake for another 10 minutes.

Roasted Lemon Garlic “Chicken”

Serves 4

- 8 small red potatoes, quartered
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 lemons, 1 cut into thin slices or wedges and 1 juiced
- 3 sprigs fresh rosemary, de-stemmed
- 6-8 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¾ pound green beans, trimmed
- 1 package of vegan chicken cutlets

1. Preheat oven to 400F. Place the potatoes on a large baking sheet and toss with a tablespoon of the olive oil. Sprinkle with some salt and pepper. Roast for about 15 minutes, while preparing the rest of the ingredients. This step will form a nice skin on the potatoes.

2. Coat a large baking dish or cast-iron skillet with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Arrange the lemon slices and 1/3 of the rosemary in a single layer on the bottom of the dish or skillet.

3. In a large bowl, combine the remaining olive oil and rosemary with the lemon juice, garlic, salt, and pepper; add the green beans and toss to coat. Using tongs, remove the green beans and arrange them on top of the lemon slices. Remove the potatoes from the oven and arrange along the edge of the dish or skillet on top of the green beans.

4. Place the vegan chicken in the same bowl as the olive oil mixture and coat thoroughly. Place the chicken onto skillet and pour any of the remaining olive oil mixture over the top.

5. Roast in the oven for 20-30 minutes or until the green beans are tender, but still bright, and the chicken is golden brown around the edges. Place a piece of the roasted chicken on each serving plate and divide the green beans and potatoes equally. Top with the lemon slices and serve hot.

SNACKS/SIDES

Egg-Free Potato Salad

Serves 6

- 2 pounds red potatoes, cut into large cubes
- 1/3 cup vegan mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons Dijon or brown mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup celery, diced (optional)
- ¼ cup red onion, chopped (optional)
- ¼ cup parsley or chives, finely chopped

1. Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil, then carefully add the chopped potatoes. Cook for about 10 minutes or until potatoes are soft enough to be pierced with a fork, but not at all mushy. Drain and rinse in cold water. Set aside to cool completely.

2. Separately, combine the mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a small bowl and mix well to combine.

3. When the potatoes are fully cooled, place them in a large bowl with the celery, onion, and parsley or chives. Mix gently to combine. Add the mayonnaise mixture and toss to coat. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours. Adjust seasoning before serving.

Creamy Mac & Cheese

Serves 2-4

- ½ pound pasta
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice or apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter or tahini
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1 cup nutritional yeast
- 2 cups dairy-free milk
- 1-2 teaspoons salt
- ½ cup vegan cheese shreds (optional)

1. Cook the pasta until al dente (cooked through, but still slightly firm). After draining the pasta, use the hot stockpot to cook your sauce.
2. Combine the mustard, lemon juice, soy sauce, and peanut butter (or tahini) in the stockpot over low heat. Add the garlic powder, paprika, and nutritional yeast, whisking to combine. Slowly add the dairy-free milk, a little at a time, until it reaches your desired thickness. Add salt and adjust to taste.
3. Add the vegan cheese if desired and cook until cheese is completely melted. Turn off the heat and add the pasta, tossing to coat all the noodles.

Holiday Stuffing

Serves 6-8

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- ½ small onion, diced
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 4 cups bread cubes, toasted
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- 2 Fuji, gala, or pink lady apples, cored and chopped
- 1/3 cup raisins
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil. Sauté the onion and celery until tender, about 5-7 minutes.
3. Use the remaining oil to grease a medium casserole dish and pour the sautéed vegetables into the dish.
4. Add all the remaining ingredients and toss well, making sure all of the bread cubes are soaked in the vegetable broth. Bake for 45 minutes.

DESSERT

Chewy Chocolate Chip Cookies

Makes 25-30 cookies

- 1 cup vegan butter, softened
- ½ cup white sugar
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup dairy-free milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 ¼ cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 12 ounces dairy-free chocolate chips

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, mix the butter, white sugar, and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Slowly stir in the dairy-free milk and then add the vanilla to make a creamy mixture.
3. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, salt, and baking soda. Add this dry mixture to the liquid mixture and stir well. Fold in the chocolate chips.
4. Drop small spoonfuls of the batter onto non-stick cookie sheets and bake for 8-10 minutes.

Classic Cupcakes with Buttercream Frosting

Serves 2-4

Cake

- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 ¼ cup dairy-free milk
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt

Buttercream Frosting

- 1 cup vegan butter
- 3-4 cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3-4 tablespoons dairy-free milk

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare a cupcake tin by placing baking liners into each of the cups.
2. In a small bowl, slowly mix the oil, vinegar, and vanilla into the dairy-free milk, allowing it to curdle. In a large bowl, sift together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
3. Pour the liquid mixture over the flour mixture and stir gently, being very careful not to over-mix. Once combined, spoon the batter into each of the lined cupcake cups, filling each about two-thirds of the way full.
4. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a cake comes out clean. Remove from oven and allow to cool for a few minutes in the tray. Once cool enough to touch, remove from the tray and cool the rest of the way on a cookie rack.

Buttercream Frosting

1. While the cupcakes are cooling, prepare the buttercream. Start by whipping the vegan butter with an electric mixer or by hand until slightly soft and smooth. Add the powdered sugar, 1 cup at a time. Add the full 4 cups for a sweeter and stiffer frosting.
2. Mix in the vanilla, salt, and a little bit of the dairy-free milk until your desired consistency is reached. Spread or pipe the frosting onto the completely cooled cupcakes in whatever fashion you like and enjoy.

Fudge Brownies

Makes 20 brownies

- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ cup cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup vegetable oil (½ cup can be substituted with apple sauce for a more cake-like brownie)
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup dairy-free chocolate chips (optional)
- ½ cup chopped walnuts (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and grease a 9 x 13-inch baking pan.
2. Combine dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Whisk together wet ingredients and fold into the dry ingredients. If desired, add half the chocolate chips and chopped walnuts to the mix. Pour mixture into the prepared pan and sprinkle with remaining chocolate chips and walnuts, if using.
3. For fudge-like brownies, bake for 20-25 minutes. For cake-like brownies, bake 25-30 minutes. Let the brownies cool slightly before serving.

Pumpkin Pie

Serves 6-8

- 16 to 24 ounces silken tofu
- 2 cups pumpkin purée
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup maple or agave syrup
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup evaporated cane sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 9-inch unbaked pie shell

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Combine all of the filling ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until completely smooth. Pour the mixture into the pie shell.
3. Bake for 30 minutes, then turn down the oven temperature to 350°F. Bake for another 30-45 minutes or until the center of the pie appears set.
4. Remove from oven and allow to cool completely. Chill for at least 2 hours to allow the pie to firm up even more.

VEGAN EATING ON A BUDGET

Whether you're a student, raising a family on a tight budget, or just saving for the future, choosing vegan foods doesn't mean breaking the bank. There are plenty of nutritious vegan options that are as economical as they are tasty. Here are some meal ideas to help you discover how easy—and affordable—it is to transition to a more compassionate diet:

Breakfast

- Oatmeal with fruit or maple syrup
- Cereal with soy milk and sliced bananas
- Peanut butter or jam on toast or a bagel
- Smoothie of fresh or frozen fruit with soy milk

Lunch & Dinner

- Rice, beans, and vegetables on a platter or in a tortilla
- Pasta with marinara sauce and frozen veggies
- Baked sweet potato topped with salsa, baked beans, or veggie chili
- Lentil soup with veggies

Snacks

- Celery, apples, or carrots topped with peanut butter or hummus
- Popcorn seasoned with nutritional yeast or salt
- Make-your-own trail mix with nuts, raisins, and sunflower seeds

Visit ***TryVeg.com*** for additional meal ideas and to request a free Vegetarian Starter Guide!



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OUR YEAR OF DIVINE OPEN DOORS
2024
REVELATION 3:8
COMPASSION • SACRIFICE • DISCIPLESHIP • LOVE
Vision: Restoring earthly families to a Godly glory through education, emancipation, and empowerment.

Bishop **ESAIAS & LADY GRETA MERRITT**

Due to health restrictions, some people may not be able to complete every aspect of the fast. Please consult with your doctor before entering this fast. At a minimum, go as far as your health will allow.

