

BIBLICAL FASTING 101



Introduction:

Fasting is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments, let's begin by defining the Hebrew and Greek words:

fast =

Hebrew sum = "to cover the mouth"

Greek nesteuo = "abstain"

Both words deal with abstaining from food. Some people would insist that unless your fast consists of abstaining from food "God would not approve. a Biblical fast could involve abstaining from things other than just food.

Fasting is abstaining from food — or any other good gift from God.

Among those other good gifts could be things like social media, TV, video games, or even work. All those things can be good gifts from God if they are used properly. But all of those are just a manifestation of the greatest gift God gives us - the gift of time. So, it is at least possible that giving up something that takes up our time can meet the definition of a Biblical fast - but only if some other criteria are met as well.

- ✓ A Biblical fast means that I take the time that I would have devoted to preparing, eating, and cleaning up after a meal or whatever else I voluntarily choose to refrain from in order to engage in some activity in which I am humbly seeking God.
- ✓ If I skip lunch once a week and spend that time reading my Bible and praying, that would be a Biblical fast. Or if I give up watching TV one night a week to read a book that will help me to grow in my relationship with Jesus, that could be a legitimate fast. But if I'm skipping meals because I want to lose weight or I give up watching TV so I can play video games instead, that is not a Biblical fast.

What is fasting?

- ✓ **FAST, FASTING**- Fasting is the deliberate, temporary abstention from food for religious reasons.
- ✓ In medical terms, fasting is the detoxification of the body through the restriction of food.
- ✓ Spiritual fasting entails setting aside activities as well as reducing the intake of food and replacing these activities with the exercise of prayer and preoccupation with spiritual concerns. The NT word which is translated "**fasting**" literally means one who has not eaten, one who is empty.

What are the **3 types** of Biblical fasting?

Three types of fast are generally recognized:

normal, in which there is no intake of food for a prescribed period of time, though there may be an intake of liquids.

partial, in which the diet is limited, though some food is allowed.

absolute, in which there is a total abstinence from food and liquids in all forms.

Why is fasting always associated with food?

What should be the focus of fasting?

- ✓ The purpose of fasting should be to take your eyes off the things of this world, and instead focus on God.

Does the Bible command us to fast?

- ✓ No. Scripture does not command Christians to fast.
- ✓ Even though fasting is not commanded, we see it practiced throughout both the Old and New Testaments. We know that Jesus fasted Himself for 40 days before beginning His public ministry. So, there is some spiritual value in fasting. Notice that He says, “When you fast...” and not “If you fast...” And this is not the only place we see Jesus making it clear that He expects His disciples to fast.
- ✓ In Jesus’ day, religious Pharisees fasted twice a week - on Monday and Thursday. Jesus never condemns the fact that they were fasting. He only condemns them for the way they went about it, making a public spectacle of their fasting in order to show how pious they were. It was the heart behind the action that was wrong.

What does the Bible say about fasting?

- ✓ The Bible presents fasting as something that is good, profitable, and expected.

Fasting is a way to demonstrate what?

- ✓ Fasting is a way to demonstrate to God, and to yourself, that you are serious about your relationship with Him.

Are there other ways to fast besides food?

- ✓ There are other ways to fast. Anything you can temporarily give up to better focus on God can be considered a fast ([1 Corinthians 7:1-5](#)).

When fasting from food, what should happen?

- ✓ Fasting should be limited to a set time, especially when the fasting is from food. Extended periods of time without eating are harmful to the body.
- ✓ Fasting is not intended to punish your flesh, but to focus on God.

Can anyone fast?

- ✓ Yes, anyone can fast. Some may not be able to fast from food ([diabetics for example](#)), but everyone can temporarily give up something to focus on God.

How should fasting be done?

- ✓ Fasting is to be done in a spirit of humility and a joyful attitude. ([Matthew 6:16-18](#)) declares, "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

What are some dangers to fasting?

- ✓ The [first danger](#) is to deny that food is good. The Bible says food is a good gift from God and is to be received with enjoyment and thanksgiving ([1 Timothy 4:1-5](#)).
- ✓ The [second danger](#) is to think we can earn merit with God through abstinence. Fasting does not earn God's approval or blessing.

Can we win God's approval by what we eat?

- ✓ No. It's true that we can't win God's approval by what we eat. We don't miss out on anything if we don't eat, and we don't gain anything if we do. ([1 Corinthians 8:8](#)).

Fasting done the wrong way is what to God?

- ✓ fasting done for selfish gain which disregards other people is an abomination in God's sight ([Jeremiah 14:12](#); [Zechariah 2:5](#); [Isaiah 58:3](#)).

GUIDELINES FOR BIBLICAL FASTING

● Start small

✓ This is an important principle for us to apply. But it's particularly crucial when it comes to fasting. If you've never fasted before, don't try to fast for 40 days. In fact, you probably shouldn't even

begin with a whole day fast. You might just want to start with one meal.

✓ If you're going to fast from social media or TV or video games, maybe **start with one day** rather than committing to a whole month up front.

The goal is to be able to work up to longer periods, but most of us aren't going to be able to do that right off the bat. It's better to start small and succeed than to try to start too big and then fail and just give up altogether.

● Determine my purpose

Most of the fasts that we see in Scripture were done for a particular purpose. This list of reasons that people fasted in the Bible:

- 📖 **Mourning**
- 📖 **Repentance**
- 📖 **Pray earnestly for others**
- 📖 **To overcome fear**
- 📖 **To seek God's protection/favor**
- 📖 **Pray for healing**
- 📖 **To prepare for ministry/to anoint people for ministry**
- 📖 **Worship**

I suppose that there is nothing wrong with fasting just to be with God, but I think our fasts will be more effective if we have defined a particular spiritual purpose ahead of time.

● Plan

Check with your physician. If you are going to fast from food and drink, and you have medical issues or take medications, you should always consult your physician before you begin a fast. I'm pretty sure that God does not want you to endanger your life with a fast.

Determine the length of your fast. You should plan ahead of time exactly how long you are going too fast. Don't just say that you'll fast until you're hungry or until you feel like quitting. Having a definite timeline in advance will help you stick to your fast.

Determine how you are going to seek God. Are you going to spend that time reading the Bible and praying? Are you going to read a book on prayer or on the attributes of God? Where are you going to spend your time - in a quiet room in your house or outdoors?

● Limit who I tell

Since the purpose of a fast is not to impress others, you should limit who you tell. You will want to tell those who are going to be directly affected - like your family. If you're not going to eat for some period of time or if you're going to refrain from some other activity that will impact them, they probably need to know. You might also want to tell someone who is going to pray for you or hold you accountable. But beyond that, this is between you and God and nobody else needs to know. So, it's probably not a great idea to schedule a breakfast or a lunch meeting or a dinner with friends while you're fasting and then try to explain why you're not eating.

1. What are you fasting for?

- ✓ Some fast for a deep intimacy with the Lord and knowledge perfect will.
- ✓ Open doors, Miraculous provisions, favor.

2. Fasting is the key that unlock Heaven door and shut the gates of hell.

3. Do you know how to fast?

4. There are some things we desire more than food. ([Matt 5:6](#))

5. What happens when you practice your righteousness before men to be noticed?

- ✓ You have no reward from your father who is in heaven ([Matt 6:1-8](#)).

6. How does fasting effect your soul.

- ✓ ([Psalm 42:1-3](#)) As a deer pants for the water brooks.

7. What is fasting is not?

- ✓ Fasting is not going without food for a period. That's dieting or starving.

8. Fasting is not limited to ministers or special occasions.

9. **Biblical fasting is refraining from food for a spiritual purpose.** Fasting has always been a normal part of a relationship with God.

10. **Who can give me some people who fasted in the Bible?**

- ✓ David in Psalm 42:7
- ✓ Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:3–4) The people fasted to persuade God to spare them from impending calamity.
- ✓

11. **When we eliminate food from our diet for a few days, what happens.**

- ✓ Your spirit becomes uncluttered by the things of this world and sensitive to the things of God.

12. **What's the 3 duties of a Christian?**

- ✓ Giving, praying, and fasting

13. **Much attention should be given to fasting as is giving and to praying. Why?**

- ✓ (Eccles 4:12) When giving, praying, and fasting are practiced together in the life of a believer, it creates a threefold cord that is not easily broken.

14. **Jesus took it further by saying, nothing will be impossible (Matt. 17:20)**

15. There was a story in (Matt 17:15) of a father who had a demon possessed son. He tried everything to cure the boy and even taking him to the disciples but still with no luck. When they brought the boy to Jesus, He rebuked the Devil, and he departed out of him. Why? The disciples couldn't cast him out because of their unbelief. Jesus told them they need faith, even faith as small as a seed. Jesus spent 40 day and night without food. And he said this kind only come out by prayer and fasting.

16. **If Jesus could have accomplished all he came to do without fasting, why would he fast?**

- ✓ He knew there were supernatural things that could only be released that way.

17. **Fasting is for everyone.**

- ✓ It's the duty of every believer to fast. (1 Peter 2:21).

18. How to Dethrone your stomach?

- ✓ You must crucify your stomach.
- ✓ Have you ever heard someone say the way to a man's heart is to his stomach? (Gen 2:8-9)
The serpent was cunning and convinced Eve that she should eat from the forbidden tree. And with that one meal, Adam and Eve went from peacefully enjoying God's presence to hiding.

Daniel Fast

Question: "What is a Daniel Fast?"

Answer: The Daniel Fast is a partial fast based on two accounts of the prophet Daniel fasting. When done as a fast, it is intended to be a time of drawing closer to God. The Daniel Fast, or perhaps more properly the "Daniel Diet," has also been popularized as a healthy eating regime. In either case, the fast usually lasts ten to twenty-one days. Some adopt principles of the food plan into their lifelong diet.

Those following the Daniel Fast are not limited in the amount of the approved foods they can eat. That being said, part of the benefit of a fast from a spiritual perspective is spending less time with food and more time focused on God. In fasting the intent is to deny the flesh and be reminded of our need for God and to draw near to Him. Those using a Daniel Fast primarily as a healthy-eating program often find unprocessed food to be more satiating, and thus they naturally eat less.

From a spiritual perspective, a Daniel Fast can be a helpful way to focus on God. Changing our habits and not relying so much on the comforts of food can be a physical reminder that we rely on God. True satisfaction is found only in Him. Those wanting to use the Daniel Fast in this way should be certain of their motives and make steps to use the fast in a way that will be spiritually beneficial. For example, spend more time with God in prayer and in reading His Word while on the fast. Also, be certain to prepare in advance for the dietary changes. Without proper preparation, the Daniel Fast could cause an overemphasis on food instead of being a tool for spiritual growth. Pray for God's wisdom before beginning, and then trust Him to guide along the way.

FOODS TO EAT

WHOLE GRAINS: Brown Rice, Oats, Barley

LEGUMES: Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, Black Eyed Peas

FRUITS: Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangelos, Tangerines, Watermelon

VEGETABLES: Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Ginger Root, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini

Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

LIQUIDS: Water, Unsweetened Soy Milk, Herbal (caffeine free) Tea, Natural Fruit Juice (no added sugar), Honey

FOODS TO AVOID

Meat, Poultry, Fish

White Rice

Fried Foods

Caffeine, Coffee, Tea (including decaf)

Carbonated Beverages

Foods Containing Preservatives or Additives

Refined Sugar or Sugar Substitutes

White Flour

Margarine, Shortening, High Fat Products

All Breads

Dairy (milk, butter, cheese, yogurt, etc.)

The logo for 'The 21 Day challenge' is centered in the bottom right. It features the words 'The' and 'challenge' in a small, simple font, with '21Day' in a large, bold, serif font in between. The entire text is enclosed within a thick, dark, hand-drawn style oval border.

The
21Day
challenge

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Food Guidelines for Your Fasting Experience Daniel-Fast.com

*Prove thy servants, I beseech thee . . . and let them give us
pulse to eat, and water to drink.*

General Guidelines

Only foods grown from seed; the only beverage is water.



All fresh, frozen, dried or canned vegetables.

Alfalfa sprouts	Edamame	Peas
Artichokes	Eggplant	Peppers
Asparagus	Garden cress	Potatoes
Beans	Garlic	Radishes
Bean sprouts	Ginger root	Summer squash
Beets	Jicama	Sweet potatoes
Broccoli	Kale	Tomatoes
Brussel sprouts	Legumes	Turnips
Cabbage	Lettuce	Watercress
Carrots	Mushrooms	Winter squash
Cauliflower	Okra	Yams
Celery	Onions	
Corn	Parsnips	



All fresh, frozen, dried or canned fruits.

Apples	Guava	Plums
Apricots	Kiwi	Prunes
Bananas	Lemons	Raisins
Blackberries	Limes	Raspberries
Blueberries	Mangoes	Strawberries
Boysenberries	Melons	Tangelos
Cherries	Nectarines	Tangerines
Cranberries	Oranges	Watermelon
Dates	Papayas	
Figs	Peaches	
Grapefruit	Pears	
Grapes	Pineapples	



All whole grains and legumes.

Barley	Black Beans
Brown Rice	Black Eyed Peas
Buckwheat	Chickpeas

NECC 14 Day Church Daniel Fast

Our 14 Day Church Fast begins this Sunday, January 15th through Sunday January 29th, 2023.

Please use the next few days to prepare to join our Church Family in fasting and prayer, that we may draw closer and hear from God individually and collectively as the body of Christ, and the NECC Family.