

~ 21 Days of Consecration ~
The Season of Discipline, Deliverance, and Direction

A Call to a Corporate Fast

To "Fast" is a Christian's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes. Fasting is not limited to abstinence from food, but its ultimate purpose is to discipline the flesh.

Jesus said in Mark 9:29, "*This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.*"

Isaiah 58:6 offers God's very own words about the effects of rightful praying and fasting. God outlines the purpose of our fast. He says, "*Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the opposed go free, and that you break every yoke?*"

In both passages, the result of rightful praying and fasting is liberation, healing, and salvation. I believe that God wants us to be unencumbered with current or past bondage.

The Daniel Fast (excerpt from "*Toxic Relief*" by Don Colbert, M.D.)

Daniel and three other Hebrew youths, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, were Jews in captivity, but in the kingdom of Babylon. They were greatly favored for their purity. They were also well-educated and extremely gifted both mentally and spiritually.

When these four young men were captured and taken into the king's palace to educate them in the ways of the Chaldeans, Daniel 1:5 states, "The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table" (NIV). He planned to keep them on his rich diet of meats, fats, sugary pastries, and wine for three years. At the end of the three years, they would be presented to the king.

However, verse 8 says, "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine" (NIV). In other words, Daniel rejected the rich, temptingly delicious meats, wine, and pastries of the royal court, perhaps because they did not meet the requirements of Jewish dietary laws or because these youths may have taken vows against drinking alcohol.

So Daniel requested the prince of the eunuchs. Verse 12 says, "Please test your servants for ten days: give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink" (NIV). The King James Version uses the word *pulse*. "*Pulse*" consisted of *vegetables and grain, wheat, barley, rye, peas, beans, and lentils*.

Daniel and the three other Hebrew youths lived a fasted life for three years on the vegetarian diet of a pulse while learning and studying in the king's court, and God honored their partial fast. We're told in verse 15, "At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food" (NIV).

God tremendously favored their decision to fast and granted them favor, wisdom, and insight far above anyone around them. In verses 18 – 20 (NIV), we read:

At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

Daniel knew what was healthy to eat, and he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. The Daniel fast eliminates rich foods such as meats, pastries, cakes, pies, cookies, alcohol, and any other food that is tempting to the flesh.

Today, people are so bound to their flesh that they often cannot go one meal without eating some form of meat, something sweet, fatty, or some other type of rich food. We must crucify our flesh daily and take up our cross and follow Christ. (See Matthew 16:24.) What better way to crucify our flesh than to follow Daniel's fasted lifestyle?

Guidelines for the Daniel Fast (Types of Foods ALLOWED)

- Whole Grains, whole wheat, and brown or wild rice (be sure there is no white rice in the wild rice), *wheat/spinach wraps are ok but should be used in moderation.*
- Legumes: Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, Black Eyed Peas
- Fruits: Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries, Oats, 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, Gingerroot, 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: Spring Water, Distilled Water, 100% All-Natural Fruit Juices, 100% All Natural Vegetable Juices (no sweetened drinks or sweetened fruit juice), honey is a natural sweetener that may be used in moderation
- Pure olive oil, and peanut oil (in moderation)
- Natural herbs and spices

(Foods NOT ALLOWED)

- Sugar and sugar products, refined sugar products (desserts, soft drinks, diet soda, etc.)
- Wines, Alcoholic beverages
- Drinks including caffeine (coffee, dark teas, etc.), *Non-sweet green/herbal teas are ok*
- Refined Bread, grains, and rice
- Meats, poultry, dairy products, eggs

Spiritual Guidelines

Goals of the Corporate Fast

- First, may you develop a greater understanding and appreciation of who you are in Christ Jesus. (Col 1:27)
- Second, may your life experiences become captured testimonies to be used as tools for evangelism.
- Third, may you develop the discipline of studying your Bible and praying daily.
- Fourth, may you seek God for revelation and deliverance from any personal “ought” against any individual and become focused on accomplishing your divine assignment.
- Fifth, may you gain strength and discipline in every area of your life including deliverance from any carnal habit.
- Sixth, may you experience peace and contentment throughout the year.
- Seventh, may our Lord reveal to you that open door for your future!

Prayer and Study

Your goal in fasting is to develop a closer relationship with God by voluntarily denying your flesh. Fasting is a time of consecration from the things of the world to the things of God. First, fasting allows you to improve your communication with God through prayer, and as your communication improves your relationship with God is strengthened. Thus, to effectively communicate with God you must have a strong prayer life. It is critical to increase your prayer time during a fast. Pray as often as possible, or do as the Scripture says and pray without ceasing. Carry yourself in a posture of prayer not only to ask of God but to hear from Him as well. Set aside certain specific times for prayer and journaling.

Here are some pointers that will also help:

- Take time to be quiet before the Lord and listen to the voice of the Spirit.
- Record in your journal what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you.
- Write down prayer requests.
- Write down revelations and insights given to you during the fast.
- Write down your praise reports.
- Write down any dreams and pray for their interpretation of them.

A second and more powerful way to develop a closer relationship with God is to study the scriptures. The scripture is the very Word of God. To know God, you have to know His Word. In addition to prayer, during a fast, you should increase your time studying His Word. Listen to Bible teaching tapes while you're driving, at work, or at home to help you stay focused on God's Word. Try to saturate your atmosphere with the Word of God. When the fast is over, you should be spiritually renewed and strengthened because you have more control over your flesh and intensified your commitment to God through prayer and study.

Please pray in your closets (isolation) and/or with a partner for 20 minutes twice each day, but maintain a posture of prayer throughout the day and meditate on the following scriptures daily throughout the fast:

Day 1

Bible Verse: Daniel 10

This passage is a source for the idea of the 21-day fast. As you set apart these three weeks to seek God, know that God has already heard your prayer. He is already at work on your behalf. What specific clarity of vision are you seeking from God during this time? Write down your prayer so you can reflect on it at the end of the 21 days. Spend time praying for God to speak to you and give you strength.

Day 2

Bible Verse: 1 Chronicles 21:18-27

During this fast, build an altar and lay a sacrifice on it that honors God. It will cost your convenience, and your comfort, and it will also take some serious willpower and commitment. What will your sacrifice be during this fast? Make sure it's a sacrifice that will cost you something. Make your commitment in writing and share it with a friend who will hold you accountable for your commitment. Pray for God to show you what He wants you to sacrifice.

Day 3

Bible Verse: Daniel 1

Nothing but vegetables and water. And not just for three weeks, but more likely for the duration of their training in Babylon! This response from these four young men didn't come from a fear of being caught. It came from a devotion to God's commands already formed in them before being taken from their homeland. During this fast, you'll have many opportunities to deviate from your commitment—especially if you're fasting alone or if no one will find out. Pray that God will give you the resolve and courage to stick to the standards you've set and honor Him no matter what.

Day 4

Bible Verse: Psalm 119

The longest Psalm in the Bible is primarily about a passion for God's Word. These 21 days you've set apart will be much richer by combining Bible reading with your fasting and prayer. You may want to make plans to start a reading plan that takes you through the Bible. How would you describe your passion for God's Word at this moment? Pray today that God will increase that fire in your heart during this time.

Day 5

Bible Verse: Matthew 6:5-18

Isn't fasting supposed to be a secret? You may have started this journey with a group that is fasting along with you. Many fasts in the Bible were corporate fasts called by authority figures for a whole group to participate in together. Reflect on the heart of what Jesus is saying in this passage. What has been the motive behind any conversations you've had about fasting? Is it to encourage others or receive support? Is there some secret wish to be seen as holy or spiritual? Only two know the answer to those questions—you and God. Pray today asking God to uncover your motives for fasting and ask for ways you can seek the encouragement you need without clouding your heart with pride.

Day 6

Bible Verse: Isaiah 58

This is a message from God to His people who were frustrated with His lack of response to their fasting. It's easy to confuse fasting with a hunger strike to get God to do what you want. But this chapter says what He wants. Pray that God will use your experience with hunger and discomfort to permanently alter how you see those in the world who are lost and needy. Pray that God will empty you of all that is you and fill you with all that is Him.

Day 7

Bible Verse: Mark 14:1-26

Broken and poured out. You see those words in both the story of the woman and the last supper. Since bread and wine are likely not options for you to remember Jesus during these 21 days, do what the woman did. Do what Jesus did. Live your life broken and poured out in remembrance of what He has done for you. How can your life be a living memorial to Christ? Talk to God about things in your life that need to be broken and poured out like that vase of perfume.

Day 8

Bible Verse: Psalm 100

You are entering week two of your fast! This psalm talks about entering God's presence with thankfulness, gladness, joy, and praise in your heart. If you've become focused on the physical hardships you're facing or the burdens you're bringing to God in prayer, then spend today just being joyful in the Lord. Write down some things that bring you joy today. Sing a song of praise to Him. Pray that God will stir an urgency to press in and see what God has for you beyond His gates.

Day 9

Bible Verse: Romans 12

This is a great time to explore how you can present your body as a living sacrifice to God. This passage starts with that challenge and offers many ways to express it. In what ways has your fast been helping you experience true worship in new ways? Pray today and ask God to continue to reveal His will for you during this time of sacrifice and worship.

Day 10

Bible Verse: Luke 4

Forty days of nothing? Not hardly. Even though Jesus fasted for forty days, He came out stronger than ever based on the events following it. How is your fast strengthening you? Do you feel like you're floundering? Maybe you're not experiencing the outcomes you expected. Ask God to lead you into the same kind of preparation, power, and purpose that Jesus gained from His time of fasting.

Day 11

Bible Verse: James 1

This chapter has many convicting challenges—one being for you to match your faith with action. Don't just contemplate God's Word—do what it says. You are now beginning the second half of your fast. Reflect on whether your fast would be characterized more by listening or doing. Ask God for wisdom about where He wants to lead you during this second half of your fast.

Day 12

Bible Verse: 2 Corinthians 1

Food is a source of comfort for many. Reflect on how much your thoughts have been overtaken by craving certain foods, missing the things you're fasting from, or even how much weight you could lose. Is it often? If it were alcohol or a harmful drug, would you consider yourself addicted if you were this consumed with your desire for them? For many, this fast can begin an awareness of a harmful place food may have in your life. It can reveal an addiction. Pray that the God of compassion and all comfort will become your primary source of comfort. Ask Him to use this experience with suffering to remove anything in your life that has taken the Holy Spirit's place as your Comforter.

Day 13

Bible Verse: 1 Peter 2

You are chosen, holy, set apart, a royal priest—you are a child of God. You may need an anchor right now. Set Christ as your cornerstone today. Write down the ways He has brought you from darkness into light. Spend time in prayer today thanking God for beginning a work in you with His Son set as the foundation for Him to build upon.

Day 14

Bible Verse: Matthew 5:1-14

Blessed are those who hunger... If you can relate to that, spend time meditating on this passage called the Beatitudes or Blessings. Make a point today to count your blessings. Keep a journal with you all day to

write down the blessings that God brings to your mind. Pray to thank Him for the blessings, even the ones that come as a result of enduring hardships or trials.

Day 15

Bible Verse: Psalm 51

You're starting the third and final week of your fast. If you're fasting with a group, take time to reflect together and celebrate what God has begun. If you've been fasting alone, be sure to write down your experiences. Even though you may feel like you're in a groove now, for many this final week will be harder than the others. Ask God to search you and begin to shine a light on all the dark corners of your heart. Ask Him to use this last week to refine you and cleanse you.

Day 16

Bible Verse: Psalm 27

The title of today's reading is A Psalm of Fearless Trust in God. It talks about seeking one thing. During this time of seeking, it's easy to focus on seeking things from God instead of just seeking God—to seek His hand and not His face. Think of the difference between approaching a king to kiss his hand and approaching a loving father to kiss his face. God is both our King and Father. He is capable of meeting your needs and answering your prayers. But He also loves you more deeply than you can ever know. When you seek His face, you end up in a much closer posture to Him. Pray today that you will seek God's face and get closer to Him than you ever have before.

Day 17

Bible Verse: Daniel 3

This is one of the most dazzling stories in the Bible. You can surely relate to the situation these three young men faced—when facts fly in the face of truth. The facts were that they had broken the law, the punishment was death, Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful man in the world, the fire was hot enough to kill a nearby guard, there were plenty more guards to throw them in, and they were either going to bow or burn. Period. But the truth opposed those facts, and truth was what the three men stood upon. The truth was that either their God was going to deliver them or they would willingly die in His service. The truth is that the Son of God walked with them through the flames. What facts are you facing that defy God's truth? Take the facts to God in prayer today and believe with boldness that your God will be with you in the fire.

Day 18

Bible Verse: Joel 2:12-32

Tear your hearts instead. You can finish strong by making sure you are weeping and mourning and tearing your heart open wide to allow God's power and presence to sweep across the landscape of your life. Tell God today that you are baring your heart before His mercy, compassion, and unfailing love. Ask Him to give you the courage to join His advancing army. Ask Him to open your eyes to dreams and visions.

Day 19

Bible Verse: Psalm 84

Do your heart and flesh feel faint? As you near the end of your fast, think of the marvelous joy of spending this one day in His courts. Praise Him for the ways you are growing and seeking Him more. No matter where you are, read this psalm out loud today as your prayer to God. Personalize it or add to it. Sing it loudly or just whisper.

Day 20

Bible Verse: Zechariah 7

Are you considering continuing your fast or maybe beginning new habits of regular fasting? In this chapter, people wonder if they should continue the fasting calendar they had kept and the Lord answers through Zechariah. Since Moses' time, God instituted a whole calendar of fasts and feasts. Both were designed to

draw His people closer to Him. If drawing closer to God is your goal every day, both times of fasting and feasting can be holy to the Lord. Take time to allow God to speak to you about your fasting experience. Ask God to help you reflect on the ways your fast has softened your heart and influenced you to treat others differently.

Day 21

Bible Verse: Ezekiel 47:1-12

No matter how deep you are now, wade in deeper still. Don't worry about what's going to get wet. Don't stop at the point where you can keep your feet underneath you. Get swept away. What are you holding on to? What are your hesitations about living a more Spirit-led life of faith? What illusion of control are you clinging to? Go all in. Pray today that this fast will be just the beginning of a deeper relationship with God. Pray that He will continue to beckon you to dive in and let Him take complete control of your life.

Accountability

Accountability is a powerful tool for success. You will probably be most successful with this fast if you make yourself accountable to at least one other person during this fast. Encourage one another. If someone falls and eats the wrong foods, do not condemn them. Help them start again. Walk in love and mercy. During this period, as you continually place your flesh under submission to your spirit, you will find increasing opportunities to reflect the character of God in your daily walk.

Special Note: For those with health issues, consult your physician for guidance and participation. You may not be able to participate in the Daniel fast, but ALL may select one or more of the following fasts to participate in:

- A word fast (a refusal to speak any words that hurt, injure or cause fear, doubt, anger, strife, shame, or guilt)
- A media fast – (a fast from media, TV, internet, and radio to listen to the Bible on tape or listen to teaching tapes instead)
- A fast from harsh, critical words at home (This fast will help you as a mother or father to use language that is courteous, kind, and uplifting to children. It will help you as a husband or wife to speak only encouraging, uplifting words to your spouse.)
- A fast from gossip (Are you surrounded by gossip, criticism, and negativity at work or with a social group? This fast helps you gain control over such deadly, toxic social environments. Simply refuse to listen to any gossip.)
- A financial fast (Purchase “The Power to Prosper: 21 Days to Financial Freedom” by Michelle Singletary – available in Hope Treasures).

Children may participate under parental supervision. Parents are encouraged to explain fasting to their children and solicit their commitment (i.e. ask them what are they going to fast – sugars, dessert, television, phone, etc.)

The initial awareness of hunger, though very real, is only a habitual feeling, which has been acquired over the years. The body has a routine, and it does not take easily to a break in that routine. Our bodies come to assume that food will arrive at regular intervals. If this habit feeling is ignored, it will leave eventually; it is only a feeling. It is bound to appear, and we can't stop it from coming, because habits do **die hard**. You may experience moderate to severe headaches for the first day or two as your body rids itself of caffeine, salt, sugar, and various impurities. If a glass of warm water is taken at intervals of not less than every four hours, the feeling of hunger will be diminished considerably. **Also remember, it is very important to drink 8 glasses of water daily throughout the fast.**

Important exceptions: Anyone with a medical condition related to eating or under a physician's treatment must consult their doctor. Children, especially small children, will have special needs that must be considered. Under these conditions, find some sacrifice in the area of food that can be made without endangering your health. Also, if you have extreme difficulty with the fast, such as impairment of your ability to work at your job, you will have to make adjustments. This is not a failure of will but is wisdom. Seek the Lord and discuss it with other Christians involved in the fast to find alternatives.

Breaking the Fast

After the fast slowly introduce your normal eating patterns. Start with soft foods for at least one day and slowly introduce those foods that God is leading you to eat in your new dietary plan (notice those things/items that God has delivered you from.)