

DAILY 10 COMMANDMENT SERIES

FASTING



MASTER PROPHET
ARCHBISHOP
JORDAN

With excerpts from the book *The Art of Prophetic Fasting* by **Bishop E. Bernard Jordan**

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1st Commandment

Prepare physically and emotionally



Fasting is important, more important perhaps, than many of us have supposed,... when exercised with a pure heart and a right motive, fasting may provide us with a key to unlock doors where other keys have failed; a window opening up new horizons in the unseen world; a spiritual weapon of God's provision, mighty, to the pulling down of strongholds.

- Arthur Wallis

Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in Him a source of sustenance beyond food.

- Dallas Willard

Fasting reduces the power of self so that the Holy Spirit can do a more intense work within us.

- Bill Bright

Power Truth

⁶ "Here is the way I want you to fast.

"Set free those who are held by chains without any reason.

Untie the ropes that hold people as slaves.

Set free those who are crushed.

Break every evil chain.

1st Commandment

- ⁷ Share your food with hungry people.
Provide homeless people with a place to stay.
Give naked people clothes to wear.
Provide for the needs of your own family.
- ⁸ Then the light of my blessing will shine on you like the rising sun.
I will heal you quickly.
I will march out ahead of you.
And my glory will follow behind you and guard you.
That is because I always do what is right.

Isaiah 58:6-8, NIRV

Purpose

If you read through the Bible, you will see how God has called on His people to humble themselves through prayer and fasting. Fasting is considered in the Bible and even by the church of today to be a spiritual weapon. Through fasting, we can be used by God to advance His kingdom, to change the destiny of nations, spark revival, and bring about breakthroughs to the lives of people.

As you begin a fast, believe in your heart that it will result in miracles and answered prayers.

Amazing things happen when we voluntarily humble ourselves, seek God's will and agree with Him for His plans to be fulfilled. When we prepare for the fast, we show value for this act. We give importance to it.

Over the years, as a result of a time of prayer and fasting, I have witnessed people receive healing, salvation, promotion, direction, family restoration, provisions, and tremendous growth in the ministry. As you begin a fast, believe in your heart that it will result in miracles and answered prayers.

Preparation

Preparation is an important part of the fasting. Wisdom tells us that you need to make sure you are physically and spiritually prepare to fast. You do not do it on a whim. You need ample time to prepare.

Do not make fasting more difficult than it has to be. Fasting is easier if you prepare your body in advance. There are things you can do to ease your fast after it has started. As you prepare physically, you also prepare spiritually. You need to set goals before you start. You need to pray for grace to surpass the fast.

Fasting without prayer is just going hungry.

In Faith

The first step is to be in faith. Prayerfully and thoughtfully, you can list down your prayer points by which you are fasting for. Fasting without prayer is just going hungry. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance. You can be clear and specific as to your faith goals for your personal life, your family, your finances, and your church. These points will be what you will believe God for throughout the fast and thereafter. Expect God to answer.¹ Moreover, maintain a thankful heart throughout after fast.

Plan your calendar

You must limit your physical and social activities when you go into a fast. Do not schedule hiking trips and marathons on the days of the fast. You need to have the wisdom to limit the activities that you do on those days. You must focus on increasing Bible and prayer time instead. You need to conserve your energy. Devote your time to prayer and reading the Bible.

You must limit your physical and social activities when you go into a fast.

Prepare physically

Be wise as you enter into the fast. Do not go to a buffet dinner the night before you fast, thinking you can survive on stocked up food in your body. This is not how our body works. This will only make you hungrier.

Do not go to a buffet dinner the night before you fast, thinking you can survive on stocked up food in your body.

The key is to gradually prepare your body. This means before you go into the actual fast, you are already eating fewer portions and meals for at least a week before it begins. Avoid food that is high in sugar or fat because this will affect your appetite. Two days before you go into a liquid or a water only fast, you must only eat raw fruit or vegetables. You can consult a physician if you need to.

Sudden deprivation can cause withdrawal symptoms, such as headache and nausea. This will make fasting harder. Moreover, do not talk about food or hunger during the fast. This will affect you physically. Focus your attention on God. Do not tempt yourself by watching the food channels and the like.

1st Commandment

Prepare spiritually

Aside from being practical in your activities and schedule during the fast, you must also prepare spiritually. More than anything, you fast because you want to have a fresh encounter with God. You want to experience His presence. Be prepared to meet the Holy Spirit, for him to show you areas in your life that you need to change. Repentance is the foundation of prayer and fasting. Be ready to repent and to change, and to be transformed. Be ready to obey. Be ready to surrender yourself to God. Be open to what He will do to your heart.

Be ready to surrender yourself to God. Be open to what He will do to your heart.

What now

- 1) Reflect on the times that fasting has brought about miracles and answered prayers in your life.
- 2) What are the personal benefits of fasting for you?
- 3) Are there things you need to fast about?

2nd Commandment

Know the need for fasting



When the Lord tells you to fast, that means He is about to visit you, your home or your business.

- Stella Okoronkwo

Fasting gives you power to see in the Spirit, hear in the Spirit, and think in the Spirit.

- David Magiera

Power Truth

⁸ But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way... ¹⁷ To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

Daniel 1:8, 17

In the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word “tsoom” or “tsum” has been used to define fasting. This literally means, “to cover the mouth.” Whether

2nd Commandment

for rituals or for deeper motives, people fast for a bunch of reasons whether they belong to the prophets, rulers, or common people (Dawson, 2009). While the prophet Isaiah defined true fasting as the genuine act of seeking God's very heart and finding the joy in Him.¹

Fasting for Victory over Battles

Another reason that Copeland (2001) had given why people, particularly the prophets in the Old Testament fast was because they were about to face battles or in the middle of the battle itself. They fast to seek God's guidance and favor in order for them to win the war. In the book of Judges, the Israelites fasted as they faced the war against the Benjamites. They fasted so that they could have God on their side and so they could win over their enemies.²

When the prophet Samuel led the Israelites at Mizpah (1 Samuel 7), they fasted and earnestly sought God. While the people were praying and fasting, the Philistines came to attack them so Samuel interceded harder, took a lamb and sacrificed it as a burnt offering to God. The Lord answered and the Israelites won over the Philistines. In this account, the reason for fasting has been illustrated as preparation for and facing battles. It was getting God on their side so that their victory was secured.

Fasting for Healing

Copeland (2001) also construed healing as another reason for fasting in the Old Testament. When the son of King David from Bathsheba was struck by the God and became ill, he pleaded to God for the healing of his son and fasted while spending nights lying on the ground.³ This goes to show that is not just a preventive option but may also be a cure as well. Fasting has the power to open doors for miracles and complete healing – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Fasting when Mourning and Weeping

Fasting was also observed when people mourned and wept for the death of their loved ones (Copeland, 2001). The men of Jabesh Gilead fasted for seven days when King Saul died.⁴ When David heard that Saul and his sons died, he mourned and wept. He fasted for Saul and his son Jonathan.⁵

Fasting for Forgiveness

According to Copeland (2001), fasting was also done in the Old Testament for seeking God's forgiveness. Prophets fasted for the forgiveness of Israel. When the Israelites had fallen into sin, Moses fasted for forty days for their forgiveness.⁶ When the prophet Jonah went to the great city of Nineveh to proclaim God's message, the Ninevites fasted.⁷ The prophet Daniel also fasted for Israel's forgiveness.⁸

10 Commandments of a Fasting | Bishop E. Bernard Jordan

The prophets fasted in the Old Testament to seek God's mercy and deliverance. They fasted to ask for God's forgiveness to Israel. Even kings and other rulers fasted for forgiveness.⁹

Fasting for Protection

Fasting was also done in the Old Testament when God's people were in danger or there was a looming threat among them (Copeland, 2001). In several accounts in the Old Testament (1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther), prophets, kings, and nations fasted for God's protection.

Right after King Jehoshaphat had appointed judges in the cities of Judah, the Moabites, Ammonites, and some Meunites came over to attack him. When he heard about it, he immediately sought God's confirmation and proclaimed a fast in all of Judah. The whole nation fasted with him and the Lord answered them. Jehoshaphat defeated the enemies and Judah rejoiced in the Lord.¹⁰

What now

1. How do you know God's will?
2. Have you received any prophecies from God that you feel will not come to pass? Have you tried fasting about them?
3. What benefits do you relate with fasting and the prophetic?

3rd Commandment

3rd Commandment

Study the biblical accounts why you are fasting



There are Hannah's in the world today and there are purposes of God yet unfulfilled. Maybe he has "closed the womb" for a purpose. Maybe he is looking for desperate ones. Maybe he is longing to release another Samuel on the earth. Barrenness may yet produce fruitfulness in any one of our lives. If we are as "ordinary" as Hannah we can partner with God to produce results that are extraordinary for our own times.

- Barbara Landinaiis

Power Truth

¹⁰ In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. ¹¹ And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

1 Samuel 1:10-11, NIV

Did Moses Fast?

We will see how this prophet was able to carry out extremely huge tasks of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land from the oppression and slavery of the Egyptians. The challenge for this prophet did not end when they crossed the Red Sea, it continued as they wandered in the

wilderness for 40 years because of the stiffneckedness and the faithlessness of the Israelites.

Let's look at the Biblical accounts to prove that Moses fasted. One of the most important tasks that were given to this prophet is to bring to the world the commandments of God. The first account of Moses' fasting was when he was to receive the first tablets for God's commandments.¹

The tablets that Moses received the first time were already about the covenant God will be making with Israel. This was such a holy task that Moses did not eat bread, nor drink water for 40 days and 40 nights.

When Moses went up to the mountain to meet God, Israel was not a perfect state of faithfulness. In fact, God mentioned that the people aroused the anger of the Lord because of their rebellion against God. The tablets that Moses received the first time were already about the covenant God will be making with Israel. This was such a holy task that Moses did not eat bread, nor drink water for 40 days and 40 nights.

The Lord gave him the stone tablets that indicated His commandments. The Lord inscribed the tablets with His finger. Moses had the holy task of bringing it down to the people. However, when he went down after 40 days and nights, they were already wallowing in idolatry, as they made a Golden Calf for them to worship. Moses had to come back to God to receive a new batch of tablets. We look at the second time Moses fasted.²

Let's study the passage above. It was according to the words that God wrote on the new stone tablets by which the covenant was made between God and the Israel, something that we inherited through Christ. We cannot understate the importance of Moses' task as a prophet at this point. The 10 commandments were brought to us by Moses' obedience to God's commands. He was used by God, as His mouthpiece.

He did not eat nor drink water for 40 days and 40 nights. This was a complete fast from anything that will nourish his physical body.

If we study the verse further, we can identify the kind of fast that Moses did. He did not eat nor drink water for 40 days and 40 nights. This was a complete fast from anything that will nourish his physical body. Imagine, 40 days and 40 nights without any nourishment. It may seem impossible. Fasting involves a lot of sacrifice. We need to identify a more important point in this verse. Intentionally depriving yourself of food and

3rd Commandment

water is difficult. However, Moses did not need physical nourishment in the presence of God. It was as if God's presence was enough to sustain him.

When we fast, it is not because we just want to punish ourselves. It is not for rituals. It is not a matter of legalism. It is to have a physical body that acknowledges that spiritual health is higher than physical health. It is about being able to dwell in the presence of God. The mind may be weak, but the spirit is strong in the Lord.

¹⁸ Then once again I fell prostrate before the LORD for forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all the sin you had committed, doing what was evil in the LORD's sight and so arousing his anger. (Deuteronomy 9:15-18, NIV)

Take note. Moses said he "once again" fell prostrate before the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, without bread or water. When Moses fasted the first time, it was to be prepared to be in God's presence to receive the covenant on Israel's behalf with God. The second round of fasting was because of the sin the Israelites have committed, as they did evil in the Lord's sight by being idolatrous.

Hannah's Fast

Hannah was fasting during the time wherein she made this vow. It was not because she was just desperate. It was because she gave everything to the Lord. She was in total surrender, spiritually and physically. She was crying out to God, revealing her weakness. Sometimes, in our times of desperation, we cannot really do anything else but fast. It is through fasting that we can truly be connected to God. Sometimes, when we are consumed by our problems, we disregard the role of God. We place our problems above Him. We forget to consider the power and sovereignty of God in our lives. Let us study Hannah's account and how fasting placed her in a position of total desperation before God.³

It is through fasting that we can truly be connected to God.

There could have been other responses to barrenness. She could have been bitter against God. She could have rebelled against Him. She could have cursed God. However, she prayed to Him. She cried out to God. Hannah knew the power of prayer and fasting. She poured out her heart to God. She exposed herself to God. She made herself vulnerable before God. It took faith. Hannah knew that the Lord would grant her a son. She felt it. She struggled with God. She had a basis for praising God for an answer.

The Elijah Fast

Elmer Towns (1995), among many other bible scholars, consider Elijah's fast as fasting to break habits and emotional problems. If our fast focuses on our problem, God will show us how to overcome emotional defects and personal habits. Towns consider fasting as a time of self-examination that prepares a person for an encounter with God. "Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning".⁴

If our fast focuses on our problem, God will show us how to overcome emotional defects and personal habits.

The Merriam and Webster dictionary defines a habit as "a behavior pattern acquired by frequent repetition." The word "habit" comes from a root meaning "clothing that is usually worn"—like a nun's habit. According to Natalie Nichols (2010), habits may be displayed through simple outward acts and traits, or through multifaceted emotional responses and attitudes toward life.

Due to his negative emotional habits, when problems threatened Elijah's control over his circumstances, or his self-image, Elijah had a tendency to withdraw from people and run from his problems. He would slide into despondency and depression. He would suffer from either emotional burn out or self-pity. (Nichols, 2010)

What now

- 1) What does the biblical accounts of fasting teach you about this spiritual activity?
- 2) Does understanding spiritual accounts of fasting bring you encouragement to participate in this activity? How come?
- 3) What lessons can you learn from these biblical characters about humility and repentance?

4th Commandment

4th Commandment

Identify the Nature of the Fast



People are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of them.

-Epictetus

Power Truth

⁸Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

1 Kings 19: 8-9, NIV

Fasting as a Celebration

In the book of the Zechariah, fasting was viewed as a festive moment (Bible Answers, 2000). When the Lord declared His promise to bless Jerusalem to the prophet Zechariah, He declared that the fasts held on several Jewish fast days would be happy festivals for Judah. Therefore, fasting was not only done in the Old Testament as an act of atonement but for celebration as well.¹

Fasting as an Act of Love and True Worship

Hillyer (2007) explains fasting as the right practice of religion. The practice of self-denial is what the Lord calls as “true fasting” and He rewards those who abides and observes this discipline (Hillyer, 2007). It is an act of love, a way of worshipping Him, and an act of obedience.

In the New Testament, the Greek word “nesteuo” has been used to define fasting. This literally means, “abstain from food” (Dawson, 2009). In other words, fasting in the New Testament was done in the absence of any food and drink. It was a total abstinence from eating.

In the New Testament, the Greek word “nesteuo” has been used to define fasting. This literally means, “abstain from food”

In Isaiah 58, God’s idea of fasting has been well-defined. It is the overarching definition that connects the Old Testament’s standpoint to the New Testament’s. Fasting is sincerely seeking God and submitting to His will, leading us to a total dependence on Him and finding our joy in Him.

Fasting reveals spiritual strength

Just as the prophets fasted in the Old Testament, Jesus fasted as well. Before Jesus was crucified, he fasted for forty days in the wilderness as He was led by the Holy Spirit. Because of the span of time that He had not taken food, Jesus was hungry and was physically weak.

The devil came to tempt and test Him three times: first by asking Him to turn the stones into bread, second by asking Him to worship devil in exchange of all the riches and authorities of the world, and last, by asking Him to command His angels to rescue Him as He throws Himself from Jerusalem’s temple’s highest point.

In all of these, Jesus responded by proclaiming the word of God.² His body might be physically weak due to His lack of food intake but His spirit was renewed and strengthened. Because of this, Jesus was able to overcome the devil’s temptation.

Fasting does makes us physically weak and vulnerable to spiritual attacks that is why we must be spiritually alert. We have to be aware with the tactics and schemes of the devil so we may not fall into temptation. As we do this, our spirits are being renewed, thus enabling us to overcome (Griffiths, 2007).

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Fasting is a Response to Extreme Sorrow

When Saul realized how he had offended a holy God, he fell into deep and extreme sorrow. He grieved over his sins and fasted to seek God’s forgiveness (Bible Answers, 2000). Saul’s response when Jesus spoke to

4th Commandment

him led him to his conversion from being a murderer and persecutor of the followers of Christ to becoming an Apostle of Christ. Another picture to describe fasting, as response to extreme sorrow is the response of Jesus to the Pharisees when He was questioned about fasting.³

In this passage, the bridegroom that Jesus is pertaining was himself while the guests were His disciples and followers. He was saying here that when the day of His death and resurrection arrives, His people would fast out of their sorrow. His people were in sorrow because the time has come when Jesus will be leaving them to go back to His Father in heaven.

Fasting is a Commitment to Worship

The New Testament also views fasting as a commitment to worship. In the book of Luke, a prophetess named Anna was described as woman whose commitment to God was so sincere that she devoted her life worshipping the Lord. Her genuine commitment to worship caused her to stay in the temple all day and night honoring and glorifying God through prayer and fasting.⁴

Fasting is not a “show-off” practice. It is not to be done in an obvious manner with the intent to show people of our so-called “holiness.”

Fasting is done in Secret

Fasting is not a “show-off” practice. It is not to be done in an obvious manner with the intent to show people of our so-called “holiness.” Fasting is a sacred practice and should be done with the correct motives. Griffiths (2007) defined fasting as a private matter. Fasting should be done out of humility and it shouldn’t be done in a proud manner just as to show to everyone that those who observes it are more spiritual than those who does not (Dawson, 2009).

¹⁶ “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. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ 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. (Matthew 6:16-18, NIV)

According to Griffiths (2007), fasting should be done privately. The design of fasting is not for us to concentrate to ourselves but to concentrate on God and make Him the center of it. When the focus of the fast diverts to

the act itself, then the fast is not of God anymore, but of the flesh instead (Griffiths, 2007).

When the focus of the fast diverts to the act itself, then the fast is not of God anymore, but of the flesh instead

Fasting is accompanied by prayer

Fasting is a spiritual practice that “is often accompanied by prayer” (Griffiths 2007, p. 1). When Paul and Barnabas were about to be sent to Cyprus to preach the word of God, the disciples together with the prophets in Antioch prayed and fast for them before letting the two go. In the book of Acts, the emphasis on fasting accompanied by prayer has been made evident as an effective preparation for the work of God. It also strengthens the view of the New Testament on the power that comes along the combination of prayer and fasting – that is the sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.⁵

Fasting is a Mark of Paul’s Ministry

The ministry of Paul started through prayer and fasting when he first encountered Jesus on his way to Damascus to perform his murderous plans to the followers of Christ, as he was made blind for three days.⁶ Since then, fasting has been a mark of his ministry. According to Cauchi (2010), fasting was an essential component in the ministry of Paul. Paul fasted several times in the course of his ministry. Paul has fasted together with several of the early churches. In Paul’s letters to the Corinthians,⁷ he “mentioned fasting as a mark of his ministry” (Copeland 2001, p. 10).

What now

- 1) Were there moments in your life that you feel you wanted to compromise your faith?
- 2) Was there ever an instance wherein your job or occupation has pressured you to do something that will defile you?
- 3) Have you ever tried fasting in order to spare you from such kinds of pressures?

5th Commandment

5th Commandment

Go where God can meet you



Honor is not about making the right choices. It's about dealing with the consequences.

- Midori Koto

Power Truth

¹⁵ ...the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. ¹⁶David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

2 Samuel 12: 15-17, NIV

Where can God meet you?

There are different places by which you feel you can meet God. Our relationship with God is personal. We can “be” with Him in a coffee shop, in our bedroom, in a retreat house, a prayer mountain, or wherever. The point is to go to a place wherein we can have an encounter with Him; a place that helps us shut down the distractions of the world and to just focus on God.

You can visit a place symbolically in your mind to the place where you can encounter God.

Go where you can meet God. Sometimes it is necessary to temporarily get away from home and friends to be alone with the Lord. You can visit a place symbolically in your mind to the place where you can encounter God. You might remember a quiet place in your childhood where you used to pray or a journal that you kept.

The Wilderness

Jesus is the third person identified in the Bible who fasted for forty days. Like Moses and Elijah, Jesus went into the wilderness and ate nothing the entire time. In Jesus' case, He was filled with the Holy Spirit when John baptized Him in the Jordan River. The Holy Spirit then guided Him to the wilderness. He started His ministry after fasting for forty days and emerged from the wilderness.

Jesus presents us with a template for personal encounters with the Lord. The Merriam and Webster Dictionary defines the wilderness as “a tract or region uncultivated and uninhabited by human beings.” The Wild Foundation (2012) defines it as, “The most intact, undisturbed wild natural areas left on our planet – those last truly wild places that humans do not control.”

Going into the wilderness means that there is a need to find a place of solitude preferably a place where a person can commune with God's creation in nature without human interference.

Going into the wilderness means that there is a need to find a place of solitude preferably a place where a person can commune with God's creation in nature without human interference. This indicates that we should make a conscious effort to isolate ourselves from all human distractions and return to a place most similar to the Garden of Eden God. This can be extremely difficult in this day and age when we are constantly bombarded by technology and very few places uninhabited by man. Apart from physically removing ourselves from human civilization is removing all psychological distractions to focus on God alone.

Apart from physically removing ourselves from human civilization is removing all psychological distractions to focus on God alone.

Being devoid of human interaction eliminates the need for rules of social conduct and allows us to be ourselves as we come into God's presence. We often become less self-conscious in solitude. But the sad

5th Commandment

thing about our society today is that solitude is not viewed in the best of terms.

Most people do not like to be alone and feel uncomfortable without human companionship even for a few moments. While technology has made us more connected to each other, it has also made it more difficult to find time to really be alone with God. This deprives us of the opportunity of strengthening our personal relationship with the Lord.

Jesus was brought by the Spirit to the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Whether He knew this beforehand, we will never be certain. Don Schwager (2008) says that while the word tempt means “to entice someone to do what is wrong or forbidden,” the scriptural word used here also means “to test in the sense of proving and purifying someone to see if they are ready for the task at hand.” God often tested His servants to see if they were fit and ready for service. He even uses the evil one for this purpose. Jesus, despite being the Son of God, was no exception. But Jesus knew what to do. He fasted and prayed.

Jesus’ replies to Satan’s temptations were based on Scripture. Jerome, the great bible scholar who lived near the Judean desert (347-420 AD), explains:

The Lord responded in this way, for it was his purpose to overcome the devil with humility and not with power. ...the Savior’s very response indicates that it was as man that he was tempted: “Not by bread alone shall man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.” So if anyone does not feed upon God’s Word, that one will not live. (as cited in Schwager, 2008)

The two other tests, jumping from high ground and worshipping Satan, were also attempts to test Jesus on man’s free will. While Adam and Eve relied on their own judgment, Jesus teaches us absolute obedience to the will of God. Notice that up until the end, Jesus trusted God for providence who sent angels to minister to Him.¹

In the Old Testament, Jewish believers fasted to demonstrate their obedience to God. In the New Testament, we are not required to fast but are allowed to fast for certain reasons. Notice in Matthew 6:16 that Jesus said “when,” not “if.” He was acknowledges the value of fasting by saying people should do it but emphasizes the importance of proper fasting.

Again, like in Isaiah, Jesus reiterates that fasting should not be just a mere ritual and must be done in secret. Since you cannot always go to the wilderness, you must at least be in solitude and not let anyone know what you are doing. This keeps our motives in check. Fasting will also be in vain if there is no repentance from sin and submission to God’s will.

He says that people who make a great show out of their fasting by have already been rewarded with the recognition or attention that they are seeking. He encourages us by looking at the greater reward of fasting which is building a closer bond to the Lord and receiving the blessings from the Divine.

Public Display of Fasting

Jesus asks people who fast to wash their faces and anoint themselves with oil. The practice of anointing with perfumed oil was common among the Hebrews and other nations. It was also the custom of the Jews in like manner to anoint themselves with oil, as a means of refreshing or invigorating their bodies.²

Fasting is supposed to bring a person closer to the Lord and communing with God usually results in peace and joy.

Jesus also asks those who fast not to show a somber face in public like the hypocrites do. This may be telltale sign of fasting. Fasting is supposed to bring a person closer to the Lord and communing with God usually results in peace and joy. While there may be repentant sorrow for sins, seeking and accepting God's forgiveness should result in tranquility. Jesus calls them hypocrites because they are acting out their own interpretation of how someone should look when fasting.

Elmer Towns (1998) says that Jesus instructed his disciples on fasting because it is a discipline to build character and faith. Fasting assures a devotion that lasts. A regular practice of prayer and fasting helps assure more consistency in our devotion to God because it develops a lifestyle of self-denial. This is part of the cost of true discipleship. However, Jesus was also questioned about the conduct of His disciples.³

What now

- 1) How do you feel when you are alone? Are you comfortable being in solitude with God?
- 2) How can we find God "in the wilderness" today? What are the physical and psychological barriers to meeting God in this place?
- 3) Have you personally experienced the greater power of combining prayer with fasting?

6th Commandment

6th Commandment

*Let God reveal your weakness and sins during
fasting*



As worship begins in holy expectancy, it ends in holy obedience. Holy obedience saves worship from becoming ... an escape from the pressing needs of modern life.

- Richard Foster

Power Truth

⁶Is not this the kind of fasting that 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? ⁷Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Isaiah 58: 6-7, NIV

Open your mind

If you go into a period of fasting with a closed mind and a closed spirit, then you are just starving yourself. During the time of fasting, you must open your mind to the truth that comes from God's word. It is when our physical body is weakened that our spirit grows stronger. It is then that we can accept what God wants us to receive.

We do not fast to twist God's arm for Him to give us what we need. We fast because we want our hearts to be aligned with His will.

We do not fast to twist God's arm for Him to give us what we need. We fast because we want our hearts to be aligned with His will. Part of the process of being aligned with His will is the exposure of sin and shortcomings before God. Because we have a holy God, we need to let go of sins so that we can go into the next level of faith.

When you open your mind, you will experience the Word of God shedding light to the negative mental and emotional habits you may have. You will be more aware of the things that are hindering you from serving God. During the time of fasting, God will reveal to you areas you need to change.

Remember when Elijah went to Mount Sinai and the Lord asked him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"¹ God used this question as a mirror for Elijah to reflect and view himself from outside his inner compulsions. God does the same for us. During the Elijah fast, he used the Word to mirror and to expose our weaknesses.

Destroying strongholds

Prayer and fasting are described as the spiritual atomic bomb that God gives us to destroy the strongholds of evil and to usher in a revival in the world. When we fast, we begin the battle against evil and we start within ourselves.

Prayer and fasting are described as the spiritual atomic bomb that God gives us to destroy the strongholds of evil and to usher in a revival in the world.

Prayer and fasting is considered as one of the most potent weapons that we can have. Jesus declared that some things could only be moved through prayer and fasting.² In order for you to become effective in prayer and fasting, you must be willing to change. You must be willing to be lead by God to repentance.

No Christian can "graduate" from this spiritual practice. Even Jesus fasted. Fasting should become a part of your regular life. It is not a one-time-big-time kind of thing. You must always find the time for prayer and fasting so that you can be refreshed and you can repent of sins you may be holding on to. Since we live in a sinful world, prayer and fasting is used to expose how we are affected by the world.

6th Commandment

Prayer and fasting shows your willingness to abandon your personal will for God's will. Sometimes, it takes a lot of courage to do this. Prayer and fasting helps because it strengthens your spirit and your ability to hear from God. We always need to be strengthened on a consistent basis.

Accept and acknowledge your weakness

Accept and acknowledge your weakness. While it may be difficult to accept something negative about yourself, you need to bask in God's unconditional love to give you the strength to accept personal weakness. Elijah was embarrassed and attempted to justify himself. "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant".

This seemed like a great self-defense, but in reality, it was Elijah's admission of failure. Self-justification keeps us from confessing our needs. Elijah disguised his need with the claim to be defending God. He didn't see that God could defend Himself. (Towns in Nichols, 2010)

What now

- 1) Can you identify negative mental and emotional habits that you would like to change?
- 2) What do you think is the source of these negative habits?
- 3) What concrete steps can you do to break these negative habits?

7th Commandment

Confess & Repent



Fasting liberates us from slavery to our appetites while we focus on the true “Bread of Life,” Jesus Christ.

- Don Hooser

Power Truth

“¹⁷...when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ 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.”

Matthew 6: 17-18, NIV

Unconfessed Sin

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any unconfessed sin. In the last chapter, we have discussed that during the time of fasting, God will reveal to you your sins and weaknesses. How must you respond then? Is it enough to simply know your sins and your shortcomings? Is it enough to remain unchanged?

7th Commandment

God will reveal to you your sins and weaknesses. How must you respond then?

Your fasting period will be futile if you do not respond to what God wants you to see. The Holy Spirit will only reveal them to you. If you do not respond, God cannot change your heart. God is a gentle God. He will not force you to change. You need to humble yourself and ask to be changed. Otherwise, you will not be changed.

If there is unconfessed sins, you must confess them to God. You must also repent. Repentance is about turning away from sin and turning to God. It is not enough to simply turn away from sin. You must turn to God as well.

If God is telling you to seek forgiveness from those you have offended, you must do so. Forgive all of those who have hurt you. Allow God to lead you towards restitutions. Examine your motives in every word and deed. Moreover, ask the Lord to search and to cleanse your heart daily; not only during the time of prayer and fasting.

Constantly participating in a prayer and fasting allows you to be protected from complacency and mediocrity. Moreover, it helps you to break free from sinful patterns or even to prevent them from developing. Prayer and fasting keeps you in check. Praise and give thanks to God continually in all ways on all days, regardless of your circumstances.

It begins with repentance

Fasting begins with a repentant heart. The act of depriving yourself of food or something you love reveals your humility. It shows that you want to be consecrated to God. It is an act that speaks that all you need is God. It is about sacrificing these things to be closer to God.

Repentance is the beginning of a Christian life. It is about a lifestyle of repentance. We need to constantly repent of our sins because we live in a fallen world. We cannot just repent once and be solved for the rest of our life; untouched by sin. We live in a sinful world that can affect us. Thus, we constantly need to repent of our sins.

What now

- 1) Think about how you come to God in worship. Do you worship in humble acceptance to God's will or to ask for God's favor?
- 2) What are the bondages and barriers that hinder you from offering fasting and worship that is pleasing to God?
- 3) Are there sins you need to confess and to repent of?

8th Commandment

Commit to a type of fast



Fasting is the abstinence from food with a spiritual goal in mind. It is when I pursue the God of Heaven to do something powerful and supernatural in and through my life.

- Ronnie W. Floyd

Power Truth

⁸ “Then your light will break out like the dawn,
And your recovery will speedily spring forth;
And your righteousness will go before you;
The glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
⁹ “Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
You will cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’
If you remove the yoke from your midst,
The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness,
¹⁰ And if you give yourself to the hungry
And satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
Then your light will rise in darkness
And your gloom *will become* like midday.

Isaiah 58:8-10, NASB

Commitment and Conviction

The second thing about your preparation is your commitment to a type of fast. I want to encourage you to have a commitment. Before you even go into a time of fasting, you must be decided in your heart as to the kind of fast you will do.

8th Commandment

Before you even go into a time of fasting, you must be decided in your heart as to the kind of fast you will do.

Do not rely on the circumstance during the time of fast. For example, if you have committed to water fast and your officemates suddenly decided to go to a buffet, do not change it right there to a one-meal fast because of circumstance.

As much as possible, we encourage everyone to commit to a water-only or a liquid fast. However, there are cases wherein some are unable to do so because of circumstances, such as pregnancy, a physically demanding profession, or medical conditions. If you belong to this category, there are alternatives. There can be a combination fast. For example, you can do a liquid fast for three days and a one-meal-a-day fast after.

Do not decide on a day-to-day basis. Commit before the fast and be determined

The point is to commit to a fast. Decide beforehand. Your commitment is shown by having the conviction to commit to a certain kind of fast. It can be a media fast wherein you will abstain from using or being exposed to the media. This can be done by turning your phone off for a week, or not watching television, or not going online. For young people, they have a “social media” fast, wherein they will commit to not sign into their Twitter and Facebook account. Instead of spending time online, they will read their Bible for more periods for that day. There are those who abstain from speaking for a week as a type of fast as well.

Do not decide on a day-to-day basis. Commit before the fast and be determined to complete it. Ask God for His grace to do so.

How did Daniel Fast?

As we discuss Daniel’s fast, we can also mention that the king of Babylon also fasted. The king fasted for one night while Daniel was in the lion’s den. The duration of the fast can also be over night. The Bible shows: “Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep”.¹

Let’s study the biblical account of when Daniel fasted. He practiced a partial fast, which involved a restriction of diet. He did not do a total abstention, just like the way Moses did it.

Daniel did not eat meat or choice food, and he did not drink wine. He fasted for three weeks. Aside from abstaining from these kinds of food, he did not use lotion for that time. Daniel did a partial fast that involved

abstaining from choice food and meat, as well as wine. It is safe to say that anything other than this, such as fruits and vegetables, he was able to eat. This is where the term “Daniel Fast” came about.

The “Daniel Fast” came from Daniel’s resolution that he will not defile himself with royal food and wine. He asked the chief official for permission not to eat the food that he feels would defile them. God moved and the official was able to show favor to Daniel. ²

Daniel was only eating fruits and vegetables for a certain amount of time and abstaining from meat products. Some people use the Daniel fast as form of diet. Some people use this fast for prayer and fasting. Nevertheless, there was no commandment or requirement to the type of fast. The important thing is the heart of the believer who is fasting. In this case, Daniel’s heart was to honor God and to stay committed to Him.

*Daniel was only eating fruits and vegetables
for a certain amount of time and abstaining
from meat products.*

How did Elijah Fast?

According to Wayne Blank (2002), in all of biblical history, only three people were recorded to have fasted for forty days and nights: Moses, Elijah, and Jesus. Both Moses and Elijah fasted in Mount Horeb to which rabbis, according to the Jewish Encyclopedia (2010), consider to be two names of the same mountain. While Moses stayed with God during his fast of forty days and nights,³ Elijah would spend the same amount of time without food and water travelling on foot.⁴

How did Paul fast?

On the road to Damascus to arrest people who belonged to The Way (later referred to as Christians), a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” When Saul asked who He was, He answered, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.” He asked Saul to go into the city. But when he got up, he could see nothing. His companions guided him by the hand into the city. He was blind for three days neither eating nor drinking anything.

*He was blind for three days neither eating nor
drinking anything.*

8th Commandment

Now what

1. What kind of fast are you committing to?
2. Why is a fasting commitment important to have before you even start fasting?
3. What kinds of fast have you had trouble committing to? Why?

9th Commandment

Be expectant



“A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.”

-Collin Powell

Power Truth

²²⁻²⁵Servants, do what you're told by your earthly masters. And don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you'll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance. Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ. The sullen servant who does shoddy work will be held responsible. Being a follower of Jesus doesn't cover up bad work.

Colossians 3:22-25, MSG

Believe

According to the bible, all of us have sinned and because of our sins, we have been separated from God. Thus, this pushes us to face judgment. But God has been so loving and merciful that even though He is a mighty and just God; He chose to show His mercy and grace to us in order for us to be saved from the condemnation that awaits us. Because of the grace of God, salvation has been made available to all mankind. God made the way

9th Commandment

for Him to be reconciled to His creation – Us. God initiated the restoration of our lives. We are bound to eternal death, but God, in the abundance of His mercy, sent His Son Jesus to save us.¹

Therefore, this requires us to be humble before God. We have no right to be arrogant, but in full humility, we have to seek Him and claim the salvation and restoration we have through Jesus. The discipline of fasting is one effective and truthful manner to demonstrate our submission and 100% devotion to God. Piper (1986) described fasting as the act of setting aside personal hunger and appetite because we are just so serious in the pursuit of something great. Restoration is indeed a great thing to be pursued.

Fasting is life restoring because it brings us closer to God and enables us to view Him in a different perspective.

Piper (1986) noted that the reasons why people fast is because we are craving and are hungry for something that is more than the food can satisfy our stomach. That hunger comes from within. It comes from the bottom of our hearts. It is a hunger that only food that comes from God can satisfy. It is the desire of the soul and the crushed spirit to be repaired. And that can only be filled with spiritual food, which is the Word of God, as physical food revives and restores our physical strength, fasting revives and restores our broken and crushed spirits. It brings spiritual nourishment. It rebuilds our faith. It restores everything that sin has taken away from us.²

Fasting is a humbling experience that has the power to draw us back to where we really are (Ritenbaugh, 1994). It is when we think less of ourselves that we tend to understand the will of God in our lives. Through fasting, we deprive ourselves from the usual pleasures of food and this causes us to seek God and allow Him to replenish the dead cells in our spirits. Fasting allows us to be restored by the power of God.

Food is essential to human. In fact, man will die in the absence of food. It supplies energy and strength to the physical body. So, in order for our physical strength to be restored, we have to eat healthy and nutritious foods. In the same manner, the word of God is essential to a man's spirit (Ritenbaugh, 1994). Our spirits will die in the absence of God's word. Therefore, in order for our spirit to be revived and be nourished, we have to feed it with the word of God. Ritenbaugh (1994) have put it this way:

Fasting can help bring us face to face with what we really are: very mortal beings who need all the help we can get. Because fasting usually intensifies the feelings of self-concern, it reminds us that we are still flesh and how much of our time is consumed caring for ourselves. This is indeed humbling. (Ritenbaugh 1994, p. 6)

Fasting in context may cause us physical weakness; however it has a mysterious effect that develops strength from the inside. This gives us the feeling of being restored and revived. It is like an oxygen pump that revives a dying patient. Fasting is life restoring because it brings us closer to God and enables us to view Him in a different perspective. Fasting revives our broken soul, it restores the crushed spirit, and it repairs the damaged emotions and most of all it rebuilds our foundations.

Fasting for Revelation

As humans, there is an innate desire in us that longs for guidance and revelation. There is a certain level of superiority and inferiority. We are superior over all creation and we are inferior under our Creator, who is God. As every little creature on earth submits to humans, we, on the other hand submit to the will of God. We follow His desire and comply with His revelations.

According to Victory Church of Christ Ministries [VCCM] (2008), we are surrounded with darkness. Everywhere we point our direction; darkness enjoins us to succumb to its nature. Darkness can disturb our mindsets. It can sway our perspective. But there is good news! VCCM (2008) pointed out that no matter how dark and vague our world may seem God is the lamp that will light our pathways. In fact, He is the Light that we have to look up to. All we have to do is to seek Him and He will make Himself available for us. Once we had the heart to search God deep down in our hearts, He will reveal Himself and lead us to the right direction that He intends us to go (VCCM, 2008). Since fasting is a discipline that requires complete devotion and sincere commitment to searching and understanding the heart of God; it would result to God's revelation in our lives.³

Norris (2010) added that the Holy Spirit is also there for us to enlighten us and reveal more clearly the Word of God for us. He also noted that God has been waiting for us to come to Him and seek Him with full humbleness through fasting (Norris, 2010). When we fast, we demonstrate our humility before a Holy God. Also, when we fast, we make ourselves vulnerable to the power of God; therefore, the Holy Spirit can move freely and can minister to us.

When we fast, we make ourselves vulnerable to the power of God; therefore, the Holy Spirit can move freely and can minister to us.

The bible has told several stories of the prophets and other characters who have received revelation from God while they were fasting. Moses received the Ten Commandments while fasting.⁴ Daniel remained faithful to God and chose not to defile himself with food. So when the time came when the king of Babylon had visions and dreams, Daniel got the revelation

9th Commandment

and vision to the King's dream.⁵ The prophet Elijah received God's revelation and instructions for survival from Jezebel through fasting.⁶ The Holy Bible has been evident to the promise of God's revelation and guidance to us when we fast. Our part is to remain faithful to Him.

As Newton (2012) emphasized, God's revelation and our rebellion can never meet at the same point. It is either we choose to receive God's revelation or we choose to continue our rebellion against God. Newton (2012) further defined rebellion as merely a simple form of disobedience – "Our small act of disobedience is a giant form of rebellion" (Newton, 2012). Therefore, even if we fast, but in our hearts we harbor disobedience, still, we cannot receive revelation from God.

Fasting is so sacred and our God is so holy that the slightest blemish of sin and rebellion will hinder us from receiving His revelation. More so, when God revealed Himself to us, we have to remain faithful and fulfill His revelations. We should not be like the prophet Jonah who ran away from God and was swallowed by a huge fish because of his disobedience.⁷

We have to bear in mind that we have an expectant God, and His expectations from us are to be faithful to Him (Newton, 2012). Thus, when we fast, we have to really do it with a whole heart of humility and faithfulness. We also have to be expectant to receive God's revelation. The moment God revealed Himself to us, He will continually reveal more of Him as we continually become faithful and obedient to Him (Newton, 2012).

*We also have to be expectant to receive God's
revelation.*

See the potential

See potential results. Identify milestones or landmarks that indicate your progress no matter how small. This will encourage you to keep pursuing the goal of breaking bad habits. "Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress."⁸

What now

- 1) What are the things you are believing God for breakthroughs for?
- 2) Do you have doubts in your heart that you can receive what you are praying for? How come?
- 3) What does the Bible tell you about asking God by faith? How does that encourage you.

10th Commandment

Fast on Food, Feast on God



Fasting is the strongest appeal to the human being's natural powers of healing and self-rejuvenation, on both a spiritual and corporeal level.

- Heinz Fahrner, M.D.

Fasting is the soul's nourishment, it reins in language and seals one's lips, it tames desire and calms the choleric temperament. It awakens consciousness, renders the body docile, dispels nightly dreams, cures headaches, and strengthens the eyes.

- John Chrysostom

Power Truth

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily... ¹¹ The Lord will
guide you continually,
And satisfy your soul in drought,
And strengthen your bones;
You shall be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

Isaiah 58:8, 11 NKJV

Feasting on God

When we fast, we abstain from things we normally love to do. Most people love to eat. While we cannot feast on food while we are fasting, we can feast on God. If you are a young lady, reading this, you will understand what it means to get ready for your wedding day. You want to look your best. Thus, you will go on a diet and exercise so that you will fit your dress. While it requires you to

10th Commandment

sacrifice time and eating great-tasting food, it comes easier. It even comes with joy in your heart because you are excited to look great on your wedding for your groom.

When you fast, it requires the same kind of devotion. It requires the same kind of excitement and joy. You need to want fasting. It requires you to have a heart that is filled with joy and love for God for you to truly enjoy this experience.

You may fast on food, but you can feast on God.

You may fast on food, but you can feast on God. You feast on His presence. It is an amazing thing to be smack in the center of God's presence. As the psalmist said, "Better is one day in your courts, than a thousand days elsewhere".¹

The presence of God can sustain you. The hunger and the sacrifice will be nothing compared to God's amazing revelation. In short, the sacrifice is worth it. To be in the presence of God and to truly hear from Him is worth more than the most lavish food feasts.

What now

- 1) Are there areas in your life that you urgently need to experience God's guidance in?
- 2) Are you experiencing weaknesses in this current season? Write about how God's strength can help you get through it.
- 3) Are you or any member of your family being attacked by sickness?
- 4) Have you ever experienced how fasting brought about physical strength? Describe this experience.
- 5) Have you ever experienced God's guidance and healing during a time of fasting?

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Scriptural References

1st Commandment

¹ Romans 12:12

2nd Commandment

¹ Isaiah 58

² Judges 20:26-28,

³ 2 Samuel 12:13-16

⁴ 1 Samuel 31:13

⁵ 2 Samuel 1:11-12

⁶ Deuteronomy 9:15-18

⁷ Jonah 3

⁸ Daniel 9

⁹ 1 Kings 21:17-29

¹⁰ 2 Chronicles 20:1-30

3rd Commandment

¹ Deuteronomy 9:7-12

² Deuteronomy 9:18

³ 1 Samuel 8-18

⁴ Joel 2:12

4th Commandment

¹ Zechariah 8:18-19

² Luke 4:1-12

³ Luke 5:33-35

⁴ Luke 2:36-38

⁵ Acts 13:2

⁶ Acts 9:1-9

⁷ 2 Corinthians 6:4-10; 11:23-28

5th Commandment

¹ Matthew 4:11

² Deuteronomy 28:40; Ruth 3:3; 2 Sam 14:2; Micah 6:15; Psalms 104:15; Proverbs 27:9; Amos 6:6

³ Mark 2: 18-20

6th Commandment

¹ 1 King 19:9

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² Matthew 17:21

8th Commandment

¹ Daniel 6:18

² Daniel 1:8-14,

³ Exodus 34:28

⁴ 1 Kings 19: 7-9

9th Commandment

¹ Romans 3:21-26

² Isaiah 58

³ Jeremiah 29:11 – 14

⁴ Exodus 34

⁵ Daniel 1-2

⁶ 1 Kings 19

⁷ Jonah 1

⁸ 1 Timothy 4:15

10th Commandment

¹ Psalm 84:10

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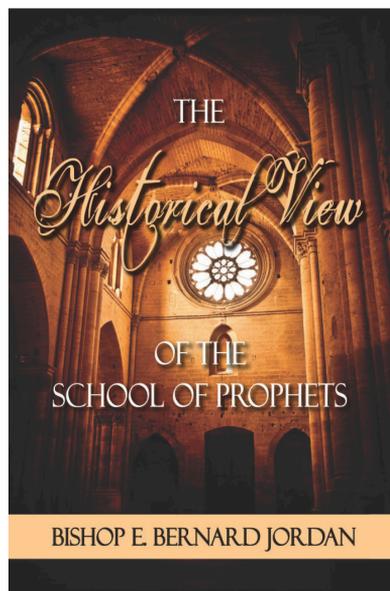


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