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## **Fasting**

### **Mark 2:18**

And John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? <sup>19</sup> And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup> But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day. ASV

Yeshua said that His disciples would fast when he was gone. So, are you fasting? Do you fast at all? How often do you make fasting a part of your everyday life?

This is a subject where there is little discussion from the Scriptures. In fact, we couldn’t find any commands telling us to fast.

There are indeed some who believe that the Day of Atonement is to be a day of fasting. For more detail regarding that day and the topic of fasting that would seem to apply to it, please see our teaching titled “Is Yom Kippur a Day of Fasting?”.

But in general, there is really no commands found in the Scriptures regarding fasting in our everyday life. Typically speaking, fasting found in the scriptures refers to a time of humbling yourself by going without food and sometimes even without water.

But again, it must be noted that there are no commandments regarding fasting that tells us we are to do so in our everyday life throughout the year.

In fact, the only instructions that we have regarding the “how” of fasting comes from Yeshua. They are based on the premise of keeping yourself humble. Which is normally the purpose for fasting to begin with.

### **Matthew 6:16**

“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. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> 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.

That being said, please know that we do not believe it is a sin to NOT fast. This is not the topic or concern of this teaching. But rather, our concern is what our attitude and even our desire of fasting should be in light of what Yeshua said our actions would be on this topic during His absence.

But why so much silence on a topic that supposedly has SO much value?

Yet we do find that it's often practiced in the Scriptures, especially in a time of humbling oneself before the Lord.

Yeshua fasted 40 days and AFTER overcoming temptation, he left in the power of the spirit. Consider...

**Luke 4:1**

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

Concluding this event, it's recorded...

**Luke 4:14**

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

It's obvious that this 40 day fast Yeshua did was for preparation of His ministry.

Reasons for fasting can vary on a wide spectrum. From desiring an answer to prayer, needing a break through in your life or simply desiring a closer walk with the Father. But it seems that the most common reason found in the Scriptures is that of the humbling of oneself.

The length to fasting is truly dependent on the individual in what they believe the Father is leading them to do. There are even accounts where fasting takes place with no time allotted to it's needed length.

One example of this is where David fasts for his son in 2 Samuel 12. He simply wanted to intercede for his son as long as needed or until the Father took him.

Some attribute the amount of days of their fast in accordance to what that number represents for them as individuals. Some will fast for a certain number of days in which that number seems to represent in the Scriptures.

For example:

- 3 Days can represent Resurrection or new life
- 5 Days can represent Grace
- 6 Days can represent Overcoming the human nature
- 7 Days can represent Perfection
- 8 Days can represent New Beginnings
- 21 Days can represent Release or Breakthrough
- 40 Days can represent Completion or Readiness

When one considers doing a fast, they need to base it on what they believe the Father is telling them to do and not what someone else tells them.

This is important and really needs to be understood. Fasting is to be between you and the Father and no one else.

If it's one day or 40, it's between you and the Father. It's not to be boastfully displayed or shared with others.

Long term fasting is not for everyone. In fact, there are very few people recorded in the Scriptures as doing long fasts. We truly believe this is for a reason. Simply put, showing us that it isn't for every one.

Scripturally speaking, we only know of Moses, Elijah and Yeshua doing a 40 day fast. Interestingly enough, these are the ones the Disciples saw in Matthew 17 when Yeshua was transfigured. An interesting note for sure.

But please know this is not to say that others didn't fast 40 days. But rather that the Scriptures only record these three as doing so for that specific time.

We see even where Moses went without not only food but also without water.

Compare

### **Deuteronomy 9:9**

When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the LORD had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water.

It's obvious that he was supernaturally nourished by being in the presence of the Father. Honestly, I just don't see it any other way. This really goes to show as a reminder that we truly do not live by bread alone.

The longer you go in your fast the harder it is to hide that you are truly fasting.

And it's then that we really need to do our best to stay humble according to the words of Yeshua.

One time when doing a long fast, I actually dropped a lot of weight. In fact, by the end of the fast I dropped over 30 pounds. I went from weighing 155 to just under 125. That's almost a pound a day. I had several pull me aside out of concern wondering if I was fighting some kind of illness or disease. When in reality I was doing great. A little hungry at times, maybe, but in all, I was really doing great.

It's in those times it's really difficult to hide what you are doing. But do your best to keep that time of fasting between you and the Father. In fact, I would even suggest reading the words of Yeshua every day of your fast.

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fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> 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.

Long fasts are just difficult to hide. They truly interrupt your everyday life. Suddenly gatherings with friends change because you're the only one not eating. Your co-workers ask why you're not going to lunch. It's no wonder why we see both Moses and Yeshua getting alone during those days of their long fasts.

So in that light, we would suggest to make your public outings to a minimum when doing a long fast, simply to make it easier to not bring attention to yourself. This also makes it easier for the fast as you will minimize the frequency of being around good smelling food.

Whatever your surroundings may be during your fast, just make sure your motive is to humble yourself before the Father and not elevate your image to those around you. Otherwise, your fasting is in vain.

Fasting with the motive to appear holy or humble is not the only fasting that the Father disregards though. Consider.

### **Isaiah 58:3**

'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. <sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. <sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to (Yahweh) the LORD? <sup>6</sup> "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Consider what "fast" the Father has chosen. It has nothing to do with food. But it has everything to do with loving your neighbor. Verse 6...

<sup>6</sup> "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Bottom line with all these verses, how can one fast and expect to be heard from the Father if they are not keeping the basics of the Father's instructions? These people in Isaiah 58 were fasting to the Father but division between one another was all around them. And not just division but harsh division. They had no love for one another.

This is obviously talking to those who claim they are in Him. Their fasting was almost an insult to the Father. This really shows that just because one may fast, it doesn't mean they are truly following the Father.

Yet consider this case of people fasting:

### **Jonah 3:3**

Jonah obeyed the word of (Yahweh) the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very

important city — a visit required three days. <sup>4</sup> On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.” <sup>5</sup> The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. <sup>7</sup> Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

“By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. <sup>8</sup> But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. <sup>9</sup> Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

What’s the difference between these people and those found in Isaiah’s account in chapter 58? I believe it’s quite clear. Consider verse 8 in Jonah’s account.

<sup>8</sup> But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.

“Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.”

Fasting while willingly holding ill feelings or even hatred against your neighbor will all but nullify your fasting. And those in Isaiah 58 were CLEARLY not loving their neighbor. Breaking the second greatest command of all. Remember, fasting is an act of humbling oneself before the Father. But if this act is joined with willful rebellion, what’s the use?

Again, fasting is designed for us to humble ourselves and draw closer to the Father. So during your fast, make the time that you would be eating a time of praying and focusing on Him.

It’s not JUST about doing without food. It’s about drawing closer to Him. Growing in Him. Setting yourself to the side and letting Him take center stage in your life. That should be the focus and motive to your fasting.

It can even be considered an act of showing the Father that HE is your sustenance. That HE is your life. Thus, fasting truly includes praying and devoting your time to HIM.

In fact, every time you would be eating physically, you should be turning to prayer and getting nourishment from the Scriptures or from your time with Him in prayer. Make sure that nothing steals that time from you.

This brings up the question if one can fast from something OTHER than food? Of course. However, let it be known that there is no other kind of fast mentioned in the Scriptures. The only kind of fast that we can find mentioned in the Scriptures is from food. But that doesn’t mean that one can’t fast from something other than food.

And please don’t underestimate the power of fasting from something other than food. There can be many advantages to setting “things” in our life to the side for a while.

All that being said, there may be those times where you break a fast too soon by failing to reach the given end. This has happened several times to me over the years. And each time I gave in to the temptation it wasn't but minutes later that I thought to myself "Man. I gave in for this?" It smelled SO good, but it just didn't deliver. And then you're left feeling that you just blew it.

When temptation is hard, there is quite possibly another reason besides just being hungry. You could really be on the road to a breakthrough and the enemy doesn't want you to get there.

Remember, even Yeshua was tempted to give in. And it wasn't just because He was hungry.

It's kind of funny, but I've seen people say that when they fast that it's a total spiritual experience and that they can only think about the Father. Well, I wish I could say that was the case for me, but every time I fast I think about food.

In fact, I've had times when I had to fight thoughts about foods that I didn't even like. Sounds silly I know, but it's amazing what can go through your mind when you're fasting.

It's not like this happened 24/7 mind you. In fact there have been days when I fasted that I didn't even desire food. This can happen when one fasts for longer periods of time. But trust me, when the desire comes, it can come hard.

If one has never fasted before, we strongly suggest that you start small and only grow into it as the Father leads you.

Fasting can indeed be dangerous if not entered into properly. Some health conditions may even prevent you from doing so. If you have concerns or questions if you are able to fast, please consult your doctor. We are not, in any way, health specialists. So please use caution and wisdom when considering a fast.

The focus of this teaching is not to condemn anyone for not fasting. But rather to encourage us to consider the words of Yeshua when he indeed said that His disciples would fast when He was gone.

<sup>20</sup> *But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.*

Please pray and seek how this verse should apply to our individual lives today as we await His return.

We pray that this message has blessed you and encouraged you to draw closer to the Father.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

*For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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