

WHAT IS FASTING?

FASTING IS



- when you choose to take a break from things like food, drinks, or even things like TV or video games for a little while. You do this so you can focus more on God and grow closer to Him.
- like saying “no” to something you like—like food or entertainment—so you can say “yes” to spending time with God. Fasting helps you make space in your heart and mind so you can listen to God more clearly and understand His love for you.
- a way to turn off the distractions in the world around you so you can hear God’s voice and follow Him.

FASTING IS NOT



- about what you’re giving up, but about what you’re getting ready to receive. Think of it like preparing for something that God wants to give you that is better than anything this world has to offer.
- like a magic trick to make God do what you want. Fasting doesn’t mean God will answer your prayers right away, or exactly how you want. If we’re not living the way God wants, fasting might not change things. But, when we really seek God with a sincere heart, fasting helps us get closer to Him and His plan for us.

WHY SHOULD I FAST?

Fasting helps remind us that we are more than just our bodies, we are also spiritual beings. When we choose to give up something that makes us comfortable, like food or entertainment, we make room to hear from God and grow closer to Him.

Here are some reasons why fasting is important:

- 1. Deepening in our relationship with God (John 6:27):** Fasting helps us grow a deeper in our relationship with God. He's not just someone we turn to when we need something; He is the most important thing in our lives. When we trust Jesus, He gives us something better than food—He gives us eternal life!
- 2. Growing our desire for God (Colossians 3:2):** When we stop eating or doing something we like, we often realize we need God more than we need anything else. Fasting helps us feel the hunger in our hearts for God.
- 3. Saying "no" to things we don't need (Mark 8:34):** Fasting is not about making ourselves unhappy; it's about making room for God. When we fast, we practice saying "no" to things of this world, so we can say "yes" to living for Jesus.
- 4. Depending on God for strength and security (Luke 4:1-14):** When we fast, we become closer to God, feel more secure in who we are, and get the strength we need to make choices that please God—even when we're tempted to sin.
- 5. Having clarity in prayer (Daniel 10 & Isaiah 58):** Sometimes, when we pray and fast, we feel like God answers us in a new way, giving us peace and understanding that no matter the outcome, His plan is perfect.
- 6. Humbling ourselves before God (2 Chronicles 7:14):** Fasting helps us to grow in humility, and when we do that, it makes it easier to feel God's presence in our lives.
- 7. Taking every thought captive to obey Jesus (2 Corinthians 10:4-5):** When we follow Jesus, we don't fight battles the way people do in movies or video games. Instead, God gives us spiritual weapons like His Word, prayer, and fasting to help us fight against the enemies lies.

WHEN SHOULD I FAST?

You might want to fast when you're going through tough times or when you feel lost and confused. It can also be a time when you want to grow closer to God or when you need help, healing, comfort or guidance from Him. It's a way to ask God for help and feel His love and presence more deeply!

WHAT SHOULD I FAST FROM?

Sometimes, fasting can really challenge us to trust God more, especially when we give up something we love or feel we "can't live without." It helps us see what things we might be holding onto too tightly and shows us where we turn for comfort instead of turning to Jesus.

Here are some common things you might fast from:

- **Food:** Things like candy, fast food, or drinks like soda and juice.
- **Entertainment:** Things like music, sports, video games, TV, or social media.

Fasting helps us see where we can grow and reminds us that true joy and peace can only be found in Jesus.

How do I fast?

1. **Major Fast:** This is when you don't eat or drink anything for a whole day or more. You might try this after checking with your parents/guardians and doctor to make sure this is a healthy option for you! (Matthew 4:2).
2. **Minor Fast:** In this fast, you might only eat at certain times of the day. For example, only eating between 6am and 3pm, or eating only after the sun goes down. Typically, you can still drink liquids during the day.
3. **Partial Fast:** Here, you choose to give up some specific foods. For example, you might not eat meat, candy, or junk food for a while, like in the Daniel Fast from the Bible (Daniel 1). This helps you focus on God instead of those foods.
4. **Soul Fast:** This is when you give up things that aren't food, like video games, TV, social media, or even shopping. It's about taking a break from the things that distract you so you can spend more time with God and focus on what's really important.

These different types of fasts help us grow closer to God by making space in our lives for Him!

FASTING IDEAS:

When you take a break from eating, you can fill that time with other things that help you grow closer to God. Here are some ideas to help you do that:

MORNING

The time you spend with God in the morning can help make your whole day better!

- Start your day by singing songs or listening to worship music, or you can read a chapter from Psalms.
- Pick one book of the Bible to read and think about what it means.
- Take a moment to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you see if there's anything in your heart that you need to talk to God about.

MID-DAY

In the afternoon, spend time with God and get your heart focused on Him.

- Read a Bible verse or story and think about what it means.
- Go on a short walk and talk to God in prayer.
- If you know friends who are fasting, you can meet up to pray, read the Bible, and worship together.

EVENING

Take some quiet time at the end of your day to spend with God.

- Try to avoid distractions like TV, the internet, or social media, so you can focus on God.
- Spend some time on your knees praying alone in a quiet room.
- Think about how your fast has gone and write down your thoughts in a journal. It's a great way to reflect on what you've learned and how you've grown!

HELPFUL REFLECTION QUESTIONS WHEN FASTING:

- Is there anything I've done that I need to tell God about and ask for forgiveness?
- Is there anyone I need to say sorry to or ask for forgiveness from? (James 5:16)
- Is there someone I need to forgive? Or someone I need to make peace with? (Matthew 5:23-24)
- When I feel bored or upset, what do I usually do to try to feel better? What does that show me about my heart?
- How do I feel when I spend time praying instead of eating, watching TV, or doing something else fun?
- What things distract me when I'm praying or trying to sleep?
- What is God showing me about the things I struggle with? Is there anything He wants me to stop doing or let go of?
- Are there things I love too much, like stuff or habits, that are getting in the way of loving God more? Am I ready to let those things go?
- What am I most afraid of? What worries do I have? How can I tell Jesus about them? (1 Peter 5:6-7)
- Do I sometimes feel like I deserve more than others? How can I change that and be more thankful?
- What changes do I hope will happen in my heart or life during this fast?
- Am I asking God what He wants me to do with my life? What is He telling me?
- How am I using my time, talents and treasures for God's glory?

TOPICAL SCRIPTURES TO READ WHEN FASTING:



Psalms 34:8 - "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him."

- This verse reminds us that when we turn to God, He gives us everything we need.

Matthew 4:4 - "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

- Even when we're fasting from food, God's words give us the strength we need.

Isaiah 58:6 - "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free?"

- God uses our fasting to help others and bring Him glory.

Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

- This reminds us that through Jesus, we can do all things, even when it feels hard.

Matthew 6:33 - "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

- When we put God first, we can trust that He will take care of everything else.

Jeremiah 29:13 - "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."

- We can grow deeper in relationship with Jesus by praying, worshiping and reading God's Word.

Psalms 63:1 - "O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water."

- Fasting helps us remember how much we need God, just like we need water.

Romans 12:1 - "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to..."

- Fasting is a way of offering our time and hearts to God as a way of worship.

Isaiah 40:31 - "but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

- When we feel weak, God gives us strength to keep going.