

21 Day Fast Devotional

Week 2

January 17th - 23rd

Day 8

Replacing vs. Abstaining

Fasting is more about replacing than it is about abstaining — replacing normal daily activities with focused praying, confessing, feeding on the Word, and worshiping the Lord.

Scripture reading Nehemiah 9

Key passages Nehemiah 9:1-3 — On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting, and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads.... They stood at their places and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God.

"Fasting thought "

We tend to think of fasting as going without food. But we can fast from anything. If we love music and decide to miss a concert in order to spend time with God, that is fasting. It is helpful to think of the parallel of human friendship. When friends need to be together, they will cancel all other activities in order to make that possible. There's nothing magical about fasting. It's just one way of telling God that your priority at that moment is to be alone with him, sorting out whatever is necessary, and you have cancelled the meal, party, concert or whatever else you had planned to do in order to fulfill that priority."

Day 9

Thirsts

Let your thirsts drive you to God that he may satisfy your desires and meet the needs of your soul.

Scripture reading Psalm 63

Key passages Psalm 63:1 "You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

"Fasting thought "

Prayer needs fasting for its full growth. Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible. Fasting is the other hand, the one with which we let go of the visible....

Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God."

Prayer

Father in heaven, I reach out to you, the only one who can satisfy my thirsty heart and meet the needs within my soul. Through this fast may I crave you and your kingdom more and more. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Day 10

Cravings

Fasting has a way of revealing what our hearts really crave. It can reveal what our soul needs and how we satisfy those deepest wants.

Scripture reading

Matthew 4

Key passages

Matthew 4:2-4 — “After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’ Jesus answered, ‘It is written: “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’

“Fasting thought”

Fasting can be an expression of finding your greatest pleasure and enjoyment in life from God. That’s the case when disciplining yourself to fast means you love God more than food, that seeking him is more important to you than eating. This honors God and is a means of worshiping him as God.

Prayer

Father in heaven, only you meet my deepest needs. Today grant me the ability to turn my hunger pains into moments of worship and praise, focusing on the beauty and splendor of your holiness and reveling in your infinite mercy. May you receive all the honor and praise as I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 11

Cheerfulness

In fasting it is virtuous to conceal our suffering and discomfort with cheerfulness.

Scripture reading Matthew 6

Matthew 6:16-18 — “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others 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.”

“Fasting thought”

Let us learn from our Lord’s instruction about fasting, the great importance of cheerfulness in our faith. Those words ‘anoint thy head and wash thy face’ are full of deep meaning. They should teach us to aim at letting men see we find that Christianity makes us happy. Never let us forget that there is not religion in looking melancholy and gloomy. Are we dissatisfied with Christ’s wages and Christ’s service? Surely not! Then let us not look as if we were.

Prayer

Father in heaven, let me finish this fast with joy and cheerfulness as I feed on your beauty, truth, and goodness. May every growl of my stomach, every internal complaint and headache be turned into moments of dependence on you and delight in every spiritual blessing I have in Christ. In the precious name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Day 12

Satisfaction

Fasting is rewarded because it is a cry from the heart of those who find their ultimate satisfaction in God and in God alone.

Scripture reading Psalm 73

Key passages Psalm 73:25-26 —“Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My heart and my flesh may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” Fasting thought “When God sees the confession of need and this expression of trust, he acts, because the glory of his all-sufficient grace is at stake. The final answer is that God rewards fasting because fasting expresses the cry of the heart that nothing on earth can satisfy our souls besides God. God must reward this cry because God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”

Prayer

Father, whom have I in heaven but you? And besides you I desire nothing on earth. My heart and my flesh may fail. But you are the strength of my heart and my portion forever and ever. I declare this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Day 13

Sacrifice

Are you tired of fasting? Fasting is a sacrificial act that realigns our affections, moving them from the temporal to the eternal. It turns each moment of craving into a prayer of intense dependence.

Scripture reading Psalm 109

Key passages Psalm 109:24 — “My knees give way from fasting; my body is thin and gaunt.”

“Fasting thought”

If our faith requires us to sometimes fast and deny our natural appetites, it is to lessen that struggle and war that is in our nature; it is to render our bodies fitter instruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace; it is to dry up the springs of our passions that war against the soul, to cool the flame of our blood, and render the mind more capable of divine meditations. So that although these abstinences give some pain to the body, yet they so lessen the power of bodily

appetites and passions, and so increase our taste of spiritual joys, that even these severities of faith, when practiced with discretion, add much to the comfortable enjoyment of our lives.”

Prayer

Father in heaven, my flesh is tired, my spirit is weakening; grant me the mental focus, spiritual awareness and physical will to push through the quitting points as I seek to realign my desires to your perfect will and your mission and for your glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Day 14

Discerning

Fasting is a tool that aids in discerning the call of God in our lives. Fasting helps us slow down and hear God's voice.

Scripture reading Acts 9 Key passages Acts 9:3-6, 9 —

“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. ‘Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’.... “So, they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything.”

“Fasting thought”

A discerning fast “involves focusing on our choices instead of on our foods and praying our decisions through to successful conclusions... this type of fast helps us receive God's wisdom to make our decisions. This type of fast is not for every minor decision in life, such as where to go for lunch or what minor purchase to make. A discerning fast offer help in weighty decisions such as choosing a mate, resigning from a job and other life-changing choices. Fasting brings more light into the application of good decision-making skills.”

Prayer

Father in heaven, today in my fast I yield to you and seek your wisdom in my life. Through this fast today grant me a greater perspective on those decisions before me, both minor and major. I want your best in my life. Protect me from being impulsive and rash and guide me in your perfect ways. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

