

FASTING

WISDOM FOR THE WISE

There's a lot of people talking about it, but one has to wonder: *How many are really doing it; and how much do they really know about it?* Those questions lead us to today's study.

A TOTAL FAST means to abstain from food altogether (e.g. Jesus' fast in Matthew 4:1-11).

A PARTIAL FAST means to eat nothing that tastes good (e.g. Daniel's fast in Daniel 10:2, 3).

Since fasting is not designed as an affliction of the human body so God will take notice (Isaiah 58:3), and since it doesn't pressure God into action, **WHY FAST!** Because –

1. It is a discipline of the human appetites for dedication and obedience.
2. It cultivates faith, crucifies unbelief and aids in prayer.
(Matthew 17:16-21)
3. It brings the body into subjection and enhances control over fleshly desires.
4. It humbles the soul before God. (Psalm 69:10; Joel 2:12, 13)
5. It denies (crucifies) appetites, giving more quality time for prayer.
6. It manifests your sincerity and earnestness to God.
7. It shows obedience. (Pharisees fasted two times a week. See Matthew 5:20)
8. It gives the digestive system a much-needed rest.
9. It aids in resisting temptation.
10. It helps attain power over demons. (Matthew 17:21)

HOW SHOULD ONE FAST:

Jesus, the final authority said, “When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face that thou appear not unto men to fast but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:16-18).

I. SECRETLY

- A It is important to note that Jesus said “*when ye fast*” rather than “*if ye fast.*”
- B Jesus used an emphatic, non-negotiable phrase:
“..... that thou appear not unto men to fast”
Notice the words: “They have their reward”
Praise of men is their full (only) reward.
In other words, fasting has profited nothing but to generate self-righteousness.
Nothing spiritual has been accomplished.
- C Your Heavenly Father who sees you fasting secretly
Will reward you openly

II. WITH MUCH PRAYER

III. WITH THE WORD OF GOD OPENED BEFORE YOU.

BOTTOM LINE:

If you fast without praying and reading the Word, you become self-righteousness.
If you pray without fasting and reading the Word, you become proud and haughty.
If you read the Word without fasting and praying, you become judgmental and critical.

FASTING IS IMPORTANT! Equally important is fasting in secret.
In so doing, God is glorified.

EXPECT RESULTS;

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord (repent, pray, fast and seek God’s face), and if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His Presence like nothing you have ever known. (See John 14:21)

FOUR ABSOLUTES:

- 1 You will gain fresh, new spiritual insights.
- 2 Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened.
- 3 You will feel mentally, spiritually and physically refreshed.
- 4 You will see answer to your prayers.