

Love and Compassion Ministries

In the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit

October 1, 2010 In The Year of Our Lord

Volume 5, Issue 10

Drop That Twinkie

If I was President of these United States, I would call a nation wide fast and prayer week.



BIBLICAL FASTING

IS NEEDED TODAY AS NEVER BEFORE

-- WHAT IT IS, HOW TO DO IT, AND WHY

Let's begin with a little quiz on the subject of fasting:

- Who was the first person who fasted in the Bible?**
- What was the longest recorded length of time of a fast?**
- Who were the three people who fasted for 40 days each?**
- Do you fast on a regular basis?**

God's word assumes that fasting will be a regular part of a Christian's life. Yet for most of us, it's not. If we were to make a study of fasting, most of us would find ourselves very challenged in this area of Christian discipline. I'd like to encourage you to do something about that problem, but before I make that challenge, I want to talk to you about what fasting really is, some Biblical principles on fasting, and some of the appropriate occasions for fasting.

What Biblical Fasting is Not ...

Fasting is one of those religious acts which people have often misunderstood and misused. So let's be sure that we are clear on what Biblical fasting is not.

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God never tells people to fast as a purely physical instruction, dieting for the purpose of making the body beautiful or for some other physical benefit ...

I'm not saying that dieting is wrong -- only that it is not found in the Bible. The Bible never encourages "fasting" for that reason alone. When the Bible uses the term "fasting" it has spiritual goals in mind -- something very different from Weight Watchers.

Pastor Holbrook many years ago got me into fasting. I have been fasting on a regular basis, but I don't fast to keep my weight down. I fast to seek God and to have a better relationship with my Lord!

Many Christians testify to possessing a greater amount of discipline in their lives once they began fasting on a regular basis. Conquering the desire to eat transfers over to other areas. This is a helpful by-product of fasting, but should not be an end in itself. God never encourages fasting for solely discipline or self-denial reason. That is not a Biblical reason for fasting. God has a higher purpose in mind for fasting.

Fasting is not an attempt to twist God's arm or to win His approval ...

God doesn't respond to pressure. One group of people in the book of Acts tried to get God on their side by manipulative fasting: "In the morning some of the Jews made a plan to kill Paul, and they took an oath not to eat or drink anything until they had killed him. They went to the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders and said, 'We have taken an oath not to eat or drink until we have killed Paul'" (Acts 23:12,14). But God did not hear their prayer and their plan did not work.

We must never think of fasting as a hunger strike designed to force God's hand and get our own way. We don't need to strong arm God! God is good and eager to answer our prayers.

Do not be a hypocrite ...

Do not fast and become a "look-at-how-spiritual-I-am" person. Jesus said in Matthew 6:16-18: Moreover 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. 17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; 18. 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.

What Biblical Fasting Is ...

Fasting simply means "not to eat." Leviticus 16:29. This verse says that fasting is "afflicting one's soul." Fasting is more than just "afflicting one's body". It is "afflicting one's soul." In other words, fasting is something my soul participates in. Fasting is denying myself. It is denying not only my own body, but also my own wants. It is a way of saying that food and my desires are secondary to something else.

Biblical fasting is just not eating ...

How do we know this? Because, Biblical fasting always occurs together with prayer in the Bible - ALWAYS. You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast (Biblically speaking) without praying. Biblical fasting is deliberately abstaining from food for a spiritual reason... **communication and relationship with the Father.**

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Types of Fasting ...

The type and length of the fast should be between you and the Lord. Fasting has nothing to do with salvation or your ability to serve the Lord. There are many different types of fasting in the Bible. Please, do not feel overwhelmed by the thought of going without food for days and days.

There are types of fasting that don't involve such a radical commitment. I personally try to fast on Wednesdays. I will do without breakfast and lunch only having some juice or coke. Then I will have a light dinner later that evening. All that day I will be in prayer for something, or someone, that the Lord has put on my heart. There are very few rules when it comes to fasting, but fasting without prayer is only doing without food!

Now, a radical fast may be harmful to your health and in most cases should not exceed three days. An example of a radical fast can be found with Esther and her household. Esther decided to fast for three days abstaining from both "food and water" both "day and night" (Esther 4:15-16). The apostle Paul also went without food and water for three days (Ezra 10:6-9; Acts 9:9). David is another example of a radical fast. He went seven days without food as a plea to God to save the life of his child (2 Samuel 12:15-20). Fasts that extend beyond three or seven days can be found in the Bible, but these exceptions were based upon direct guidance from God or a supernatural ability given by God to complete the fast. Examples of these extreme fasts are: Moses (Deuteronomy 9:9-18 and Exodus 34:28); Elijah (1 Kings 19:8); and Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11).

Why Fast ...

God said, "When you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you" (Jeremiah 29:13,14). When a man or woman is willing to set aside the desire of the body to focus on the work of praying, they are demonstrating that they mean business, that they are seeking God with all their heart.

Fasting is an expression of wholeheartedness. This is clear from Joel's call to the nation of Israel: "Yet even now," says the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting. . ." (Joel 2:12).

How do we know when to pray and fast, and when to just pray? That is not a question that someone else can always answer for you. But here is a principle, in God's word we always find fasting connected with a very troubled spirit or a very anxious heart before the Lord. So a reason for fasting is not something you choose on the spur of the moment. Rather the reason is a consuming one. In a sense, it's not something you choose, so much as something that chooses you, because it's that important.

So why fast? To demonstrate that we are seeking God "with all our heart." Fasting puts things in proper focus. It is a physical way of saying, "Food and the things of this life, such as my house, the TV, money, my car, my children, my job, my wife, my grandchildren, (you fill in the blank) are not as important to me as God."

Of course, denying yourself food to focus on God and His program shows humility. That is why fasting is also the same as "to humble oneself before the Lord" (Psalm 35:13; 1 Kings 21:29; Ezra 8:21). When a person is really concerned about the things of God, he will humble himself. There will be times when he will abstain from the enjoyment of food to focus on that which is important to God.

Fasting is assumed by the New Testament ...

When Jesus spoke about fasting, he didn't say if you fast, but "when you fast" (Matthew 6:16). Our Lord assumes that Christians will fast. And from the rest of the books in the New Testament we know that they did.

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The Occasion for a Fast is Voluntary ...

So when should a Christian fast? When he or she feels the Spirit of God leading them to fast. The occasion for fasting is a totally voluntary decision. Basically, we can say a Christian may decide to fast whenever there is a spiritual concern or struggle in his or her life.

The Length of a Fast is Voluntary ...

The Biblical principle here is that the length of time you fast is determined by your own desires and the occasion or purpose of the fast. The duration can be that which the individual or group feels led to do. There is a great deal of freedom in the Lord here. However, the more common practice of a "normal fast" appears to be one day.

How You Spend Your Time While Fasting is a Personal Decision Too ...

In the Bible, fasting often occurs as something you do while carrying on your everyday activities! Matthew 6:16-18 demonstrates this. Jesus pictures a situation in which Christians are among other people going about their normal duties and activities. In fact, soldiers involved in the activity of warfare sometimes fasted (1 Samuel 14:24) as well as the sailors on the ship with Paul (Acts 27:33).

What a marvelous freedom God gives us in the area of fasting. Jesus assumes that we will fast, yet he leaves the choice of when to fast, the length of our fast, and the decision of how we will spend our time while fasting, completely up to us!

Fasting Does Not Negate Our Responsibility to be Obedient to God ...

We cannot fast and pray expecting God to bless when there is known sin in our lives. Fasting does not impress God with our spirituality to the point that he ignores our disobedience. On the contrary, genuine fasting will always cause us to examine our hearts to make sure everything is right with Him.

Occasions for Fasting ...

When is it appropriate to fast? What types of situations should induce a fast? What is a good Biblical reason for going without food? The Bible has answers to those questions. We find seven occasions when the people of God fasted.

God's people fasted in these situations:

- Mourning someone's death!**
- Mourning sin. In repentance and confession!**
- For protection!**
- Direction! Finding God's will!**
- Sickness!**
- The ordination of missionaries or church leaders!**
- Special revelation!**

What Will Be Your Response?

As we look at the Bible it becomes evident that fasting was practiced more often than Christians usually practice it today. I want to challenge you today to begin the practice of fasting. If you accept the challenge of God's Word to fast, I would like to provide some guidelines for you as you begin to make this a more regular part of your Christian life. Here are some individual guidelines for fasting:

#1 Get into the Word on your own. See what the Bible really says about fasting. Check the things that have been said here, read the Scripture, and go deeper.

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#2 You may need to talk to your physician before starting a fast. Make sure you are medically able to fast before attempting it. Some brothers and sisters that I know can only do a one-day fast. They drink different types of juice, but take no food. God knows and understands their medical conditions and does not expect them to harm their "temple" (1 Corinthians 6:19). There are no firm standards about fasting in the Bible that say you must do this or that.

#3 Begin with short fasts and gradually move to larger periods of time if you desire. If you've never fasted before, you need to start slowly. Don't start with a three day fast! Be prepared for some dizziness, headache, or nausea in the early stages. Most of our bodies have never gone without food for longer than a few hours.

#4 Break a prolonged fast gradually with meals that are light and easy to digest. Trying to gorge yourself following a fast will only make you feel ill and will leave you with an unpleasant memory of fasting.

#5 Enter with a positive attitude that God will reward those who fast with the right motives. Jesus gave this promise: "When you fast, your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:18).

#6 During your fast, mix your fast with prayer, time in Scripture reading, singing, or devotional reading. Remember, fasting is not an end in itself! Seek the Lord, not the experience of fasting.

#7 Keep checking your motives concerning your fasts. Remember spiritual pride can easily creep in. There is a reward for fasting, but only for fasting done with the right motives (Matthew 23:28).

SOME BIBLICAL REFERENCES ON FASTING TO GET YOU STARTED

Ezra 8:21-23; 10:6

Exodus 34:28

Nehemiah 1:4

Deuteronomy 9:9

Psalms 69:10; 35:13; 109:24

2 Samuel 12:16-17; 12:23

Isaiah 58:3-4 6:10

Matthew 4:2; 6:16-18; 9:15

Daniel 9:3; 10:2-3

Mark 2:19

Joel 1:14; 2:12; 2:15

Acts 13:3; 14:23

Jeremiah 36:6

1 Corinthians 7:5

Zechariah 7:5

2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27

Jonah 3:5-10

Answers To Questions On Front Page:

#1 Moses

#2 80 days – 2–40 day fast Deuteronomy 9:9 and 9:18

#3 Jesus, Elijah, Moses

#4 I Don't Know! You tell me!

*The wonderful goodness of
God
is a comfort to all
those who call on Him.*

Praise God in every circumstance.
He wants to forgive and restore us.

All we need to do is
go to Him with a grateful
heart and repent!

God has given us so much!

**Won't you please tell others about
Jesus Christ**

**PRAYER IS OUR
GREATEST ASSET
USE IT!**

**You
have the power
to change lives!**

When you support LCM it gives us the power to
reach the lost, imprisoned, homeless, troubled
youth and hurting people of this world!

Are you using that
power?

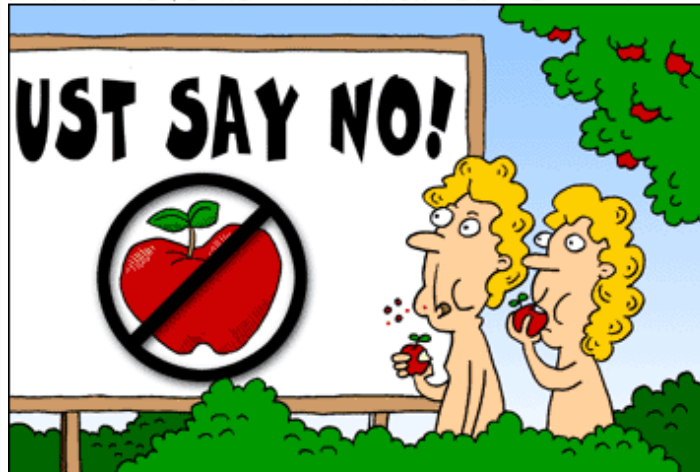
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Thanks to Dad Hengeveld (See Genesis 3)
WHERE WAS THAT BILLBOARD TEN MINUTES
AGO?



01-14-2000(See Luke 6:31) 01-15-2002
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF?



Love And Compassion Ministries

Dear Friends,

Is it too late in the game to change what this country has become?

Many believe that God Himself placed the dream of America into the hearts of our Founding Fathers, but many now have forgotten that this nation was rooted in the belief that it was God Himself who made man and gave him rights. The only reason our nation has been great is because of the blessing of God. The Founders did not believe in "big government."

The greatest threat to America is not our enemies - it is us! We need not fear nearly so much what the terrorists are hoping to do to us. We need to fear what God Himself is going to do through them or someone else. God is our only hope, but He also wants us to get right with Him. The lack of righteousness will destroy a nation. It will lead to the ruin of any people. We have become depend on government for everything, when we should be depending on our Lord!

Rather than relying upon God, hard work and responsibility, we want Uncle Sam to take care of us. Our Constitution says government is to provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare - not provide for all the people of this nation what they want!

Since 1920, the divorce rate has risen more than one thousand percent. Baby boomers' divorce rate is twice as high as their parents. Did you know that we have killed more than 45 million babies since Roe vs. Wade. Pornography is everywhere. It is being piped into the homes of America's families through cable and the Internet, as though a broken sewer pipe is being spewed out on America. We have people on national TV stating that it is OK to have lovers of the same sex. We even have Churches giving their blessings to these people.

We live in an alcohol and drug soaked society. One reports stated that 95% of college students drink beer and many are hooked on drugs. We sing "God Bless America." and at the same time we are allowing our government to do all it can to remove God from our schools, court houses, government buildings, and now, even our money. It's a wonder God doesn't blot us off the face of the earth!

I will be honest, I do not see a lot of hope for America, because Christians will not stand up for Christ. Many are ashamed of the gospel. We have become stiff necked, unloving, selfish, stingy and too much of the world.

America can change, but it must start with the Christians. The answer is not in Washington. We must want the change bad enough to get on our knees and pray that God will send a revival in these dark days. When we get right with God, God is going to hear us. 2 Chronicles 7:14 says: ***If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land..***

One praying Christian is worth more than a thousand of those who want God removed from America. We need to get in our prayer closets, get on our faces before God, and cry out to God for mercy. We need to believe God for a revival. "O Lord, let it begin with Ron Willis." How about you! Who will join me?

In the Presence of our LORD,

Ron Willis

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Stamp



If you would like to be a part of our exciting prayer team, please send us your e-mail address and we will send you updates of people who need our prayers.

It is a great privilege that we have, as sons and daughters of the KING, to be able to come into HIS presence with our needs, our hurts, and our cares.

We know that we can leave them at HIS feet because HE cares for us and will always answer us in our time of need.

Prayer requests are very important to us! We always need people who are caring and willing to personally pray for others' needs.

As we pray for their physical, moral, and spiritual needs, we must under-

stand that because of JESUS CHRIST'S love for all of us, we are able to do this. CHRIST is the answer to every human's needs.

As members of the Body of CHRIST, we have the privilege and responsibility to pray for our Churches, our missionaries, public officials, other ministries, and each other.

It is so exciting to see prayers being answered. May we always give CHRIST the Glory!