

The goal of fasting is to connect deeply with God. There are many benefits to fasting; physical and spiritual. Fasting has many physical benefits, and has even more recently become very popular as a weight loss technique. Fasting is mentioned throughout the Scriptures in conjunction with powerful prayer, repentance, and hearing clearly from God. Those are all wonderful, desirable rewards that can flow out of a season of fasting, but they are not the goal of fasting. The goal is a deepening, expanding, richening relationship with God Himself.

F A S T I N G

The act of fasting at its core is decluttering our spiritual lives through physical means. We can become so full of distractions, idolatries, and imitations that we neglect or drift away from the one true source of joy, power, and fulfillment found through Jesus. As John Piper once said, "Fasting is a physical exclamation point at the end of the sentences: 'I need you! I want you! I long for you! You are my treasure! I want more of you!...'."

So when we choose to remove certain foods, activities, or distractions from our lives for a season through fasting we are saying that we want our whole heart, mind, soul and strength to be fixed upon God so that we can connect clearly and wholly to Him. We allow the ache, or longing to binge on sweets, streaming services or social media to expose to us our idolatries, and drive us through repentance, prayer and worship to binge on Jesus instead.

Types of Fasts

Complete Fast

In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option.

Selective Fast

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits and vegetables for food.

Partial Fast

This fast is sometimes called the "Jewish Fast" and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 am to 3:00 pm, or from sunup to sundown.

Soul Fast

This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

How to Fast during the 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting

Your fast will last for 21 Days as the whole church goes through the 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting

What Type of Fast will you be doing?

- Complete Fast
- Selective Fast
- Partial Fast - What time period each day? _____
- Soul Fast

Name the specifics

What are you laying aside?

What will you be doing in place of the above?

What will you do when you feel the ache or longing of what you are fasting from?

DAY 1

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

QUESTION: As you begin your fast this week remember that the point of it all is to press reset on your focus, and fix your eyes on Jesus. What are you laying aside today so that you can run with endurance towards Jesus?

DAY 2

John 6:27

“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”

QUESTION: In fasting we attempt to strip away competing interests, temptations, and fillers so that we can taste and see true life in Jesus. Name some things you have used as cheap imitations for the abundant life Jesus promises and how you are going to replace them with Jesus’ better way.

DAY 3

Matthew 6:1, 16-18

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

QUESTION: It can be easy to forget why we fast. It is not for approval, acceptance or applause. Rather it is for alignment, alliance, and affection with and for our Father in heaven. Why is this a reward for you?

DAY 4

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

QUESTION: What true, honorable, pure, or excellent thing will you fix your mind on today as you fast?

DAY 5

Joel 2:12-13

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.”

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

QUESTION: Where have you gone astray that God is calling you to repent and return to Him with all your heart today?

DAY 6

Colossians 3:1-17

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

QUESTION: Which “things above” will you set your mind on today?

DAY 7

Acts 13:2-3

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

QUESTION: What is Jesus trying to reveal to you through this fast?

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Solitude and Rest may be the two most misunderstood, under utilized, and yet most powerful spiritual disciplines of our day. They carry with them the potential to break down old habits and strongholds and breathe new life into our spiritual lives. The catch is they are difficult and uncomfortable at times; this is because they are designed to discipline and reshape us more into the likeness of Jesus. It is in these moments of silence and solitude that we gain clarity on what the true problems are in our lives that need solving, and we re-encounter our Savior who can bring his grace, healing, and restoration to every area of life if we would acknowledge and submit them to Him.

“Solitude is the biblical practice of temporarily withdrawing to privacy for spiritual purposes” - Donald Whitney

Our days are filled with noise. Auditory and visual noise that is repeatedly beckoning us to strive. It’s not merely a passive pull either. We often choose the noise, because the silence is deafening. Solitude forces us to strip away distraction so that we can better practice other spiritual disciplines such as prayer, meditation on God’s Word, confession, etc. This solitude has no set time range, it could last for a few minutes or a few hours, some have even ventured to make a practice for a set number of days as they get away to connect with God. The point of solitude is not the length of time spent alone, but who you are spending that time with.

God demonstrated in 1 Kings 19:9-13 that He often speaks to us not in loud, powerful words or gestures, but in a still small voice or whisper. As my wife tells our kids, His voice is a whisper not because He is small, but because He’s so close to us He doesn’t need to shout; we just need to be quiet enough to hear.

Jesus, as usual, sets an example for us in the spiritual discipline by often retreating to isolated places to pray and connect with the Father (Matthew 4:1-11, Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, Luke 4:42). He also exhorted us to do this as well in **Matthew 6:6** *“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.”*

Rest as a spiritual discipline can encompass many other spiritual disciplines, but it is altogether unique. It is often referred to in the Scriptures as the Sabbath and was to be treated very seriously. Modeled after the account of Creation in Genesis where God created for six days and on the seventh day he rested, or ceased from His labor. Now keep in mind this is not because God got tired. He modeled for us how we too should live; six days of labor, one day to rest. It is further explained in Exodus as God would provide manna from heaven six days a week, but they were not to collect on the seventh day. This was to remind them that God is the provider or that they need and enjoy, and that they need not strive as if they had to provide for themselves.

Rest is an intentional break from earning, striving and achieving and an intentional step towards receiving, trusting, and enjoying.

How to Practice Solitude & Rest

Stop Earning - Start Receiving

Your favor with God is not earned, it is received. Rest is an intentional step to stop trying to earn God’s love and favor, and to start receiving it as the gift that it is. Similarly with our resources and finances. We can get so caught up in trying to earn a paycheck or provide resources, which does require our efforts, that we forget that it is ultimately God who is the giver of all good gifts.

Be Intentional

Make a plan to rest. Assuming that rest is the same as taking a day off, lounging around and flying by the seat of your pants is simply inaccurate

Consider things that refuel you and breath life back in to you. Try to avoid anything that is draining physically, emotionally or spiritually.

Stop Striving - Start Trusting

Rest puts you in an uncomfortable position to have to trust God to take care of the details as you ultimately practice relinquishing control of your life for the day. We strive to get the most out of everything, and prize efficiency and effectiveness, but sometime God just wants you to trust that whether you strive or not today, He will still be as faithful as the rising sun.

Ideas

- Game night
- Family dinner
- Leisurely walk
- Prayer walk
- Reminisce of what God has done for you this week

Stop Achieving - Start Enjoying

Rest is a time much like God did in Genesis 1 & 2 to sit back and enjoy the work of your hands. There is a time for hard work, and a time for exertion, but constantly trying to achieve the next benchmark is exhausting and fruitless. The Spiritual Discipline of Rest invites us to take a deep breath, look around and enjoy what God has made, and what He has blessed us to accomplish by His grace.

DAY 8

Mark 1:35

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he [Jesus] departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

QUESTION: Why do you think Jesus prioritized solitude? As His follower, how could you begin to prioritize it as well?

DAY 9

Matthew 6:5-6

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

QUESTION: What time and place will you choose in order to connect with God through solitude in your own life?

DAY 10

Psalm 62:5-8

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah

QUESTION: Silence can be peaceful, but sometimes silence can amplify our thoughts, fears, and insecurities. Picture in the silence of your mind God as a fortress and you running to Him as a refuge.

DAY 11

1 Peter 5:6-7

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

QUESTION: Rest requires humility, because to truly rest we must realize we are not truly in control, God is. What anxieties arise in you when you think of truly resting? How will you place them on Jesus today?

DAY 12

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

QUESTION: In rest and solitude we are able to more easily see and remove burdens that we should not be carrying. This call from Jesus lets us know that He wants to trade burdens with us. What burdens are you carrying that you need to rest from by giving them to Jesus?

DAY 13

Isaiah 40:28-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 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.

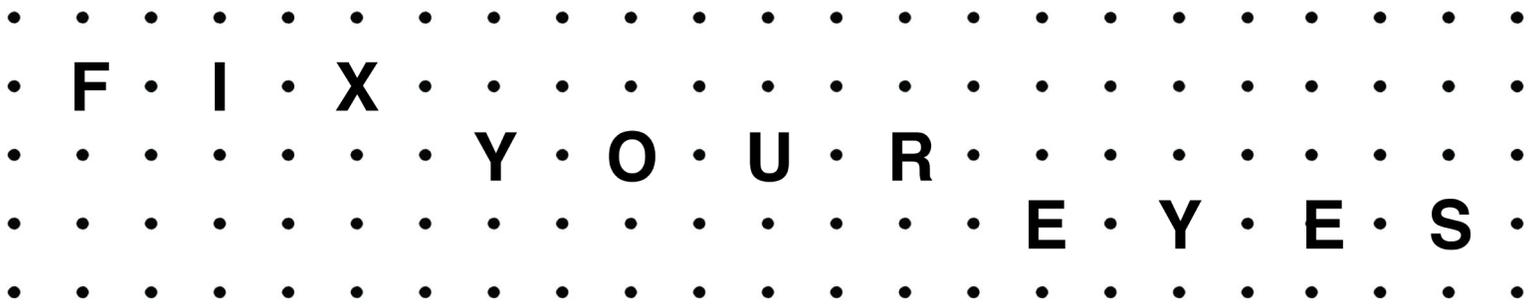
QUESTION: Resting does not always equal stopping, as those who rest/wait on the Lord still walk, run and fly, so what does it mean to wait on the Lord?

DAY 14

Isaiah 30:15

For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.”

QUESTION: It’s easy to think that strength comes from effort and striving. Scripture tells us that strength is found in quietness, and in trust. Why is trusting stronger than striving?



Worship is the continuous outpouring of all that I am, all that I do, and all that I will ever become in light of a chosen or choosing God. What does that mean. It means that worship is not merely an action or something I can turn on or turn off. You may have heard before that we were made to worship. More accurately the statement should be that we were made worshipping. We can't help ourselves, we just continuously pour out who we are, what we do, and what we are becoming towards or away from something we have chosen, or has chosen us. Worship is happening all the time. The question isn't if we are worshipping, the question is what are we currently worshipping?

WORSHIP

This also means that worship is not merely singing a certain genre of song in a corporate church setting. That is certainly included in worship, but nowhere near limited to it. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. I love this view of worship. It is so inviting, so freeing, so expansive. It's saying that enjoying a warm cup of coffee on a cool morning can be worship when my heart is turned in gratitude towards God. It means enjoying a medium rare steak can be an act of worship if it draws my heart's attention towards Jesus and His goodness for creating such a masterpiece. It means anything can be worship if it causes my heart to pour out in gratitude, submission, obedience, joy, or in any way assigning worth to God.

Worship Is Sacrifice

Paul writes in Romans 12:1 *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."*

Worship is saying I will lay down my entire life, every little area of it, to live my life God's way. It is submitting in obedience to say God's way is the best way, and I will follow it no matter the cost.

Worship is Satisfaction

John Piper has been known to say that God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. In so many ways this is the essence of worship; finding deep satisfaction in God and in God alone. God provides all that we need, and as the Psalmist wrote in Psalm 16:11, *"in your presence there is fullness of joy, in your right hand are pleasures forevermore."* It is in the presence of God that we find satisfaction for our souls.

Worship is Worth

We focus on what we think is worthy of our attention. We work for what we think is worthy of our efforts. We endure pain for what we consider worth it. Worthiness is a big deal, and it's a big deal in worship. Worship is attributing the proper worth to God. It is acknowledging the truth that He is worthy of every second of every day, of every ounce of every bit of effort, of every tear shed in the process. Revelation 4:11 *"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*

DAY 15

1 Corinthians 10:31

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

QUESTION: Worship is more than singing, it can be seen in everything we do. What are some new ways you can worship today?

DAY 16

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 God, which is your spiritual worship.

QUESTION: What does it look like to offer yourself in worship as a living sacrifice to God?

DAY 17

John 4:23-24

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

QUESTION: True worship is spiritual and truthful. What truth would Jesus have you focus on today as you

DAY 18

Psalms 145

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.

They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.

They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

QUESTION: Much of worship finds its fulfillment in testifying to the goodness of God others. Who could you share God's faithfulness with today?

DAY 19

Revelation 4:11 & 5:12

"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

QUESTION: We fix our attention on our efforts around what we think is worthy of it. Why is Jesus the only one truly worthy of our giving our entire lives to?

DAY 20

John 15:8

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

QUESTION: Worship is more than words, it involves bearing fruit. Is your life bearing worthy fruit? What shifts could you make to bear more consistent fruit?

DAY 21

2 Thess. 1:11-12

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTION: We are able to truly worship because of the grace God has given us, which is exactly why we're worshiping Him in the first place. What daily rhythms could you build into your routines to continue growing in this gracious cycle of worship?