

## FASTING WEEK, SAYING YES AND NO

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1.16.22

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**Intro:** Beginning of fasting week.

- Today we are beginning a week of fasting.
- If you're just visiting with us today. I'm sorry.
- Fasting is like the worst, best week ever.
- I hate it, but I love what it produces in my life.
- "I'm sorry for what I said when I was hungry."

**I want to give you three Biblical ideas that will equip us to fast well this week.**

### 2 Chronicles 20

**v.1** After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to make war on Jehoshaphat.

Does anyone feel like the enemy is ganging up on our kids—feel as if ethics, morality, and intellectual truths are now somehow the enemy of a free society—feel like so many of the theories embraced by Universities are designed to help us fail faster, erode compassion, destroy unity and cultivate immorality. I'm concerned.

**v.2** Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea. It is already in (En Gedi)." (That's just 25 miles—that's only two days.)

It's more urgent than you think. You don't have as much time as you thought. We have to be realistic about the pervasive spiritual sickness in our nation. I don't think that talking about the bad news is being alarmist any more than I think that ignoring the bad news makes you an optimist. We have to have a realistic appraisal of the situation. I still have hope in the middle of that. But we have to face it squarely. The doctor has to diagnose his patient. We have to start from where we are.

**v.3-4** Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.

Throughout the scriptures we see examples of people in a moment of crisis, fasting (going without food) in order to petition God in heaven to intervene on their behalf.

### **1. By fasting we are petitioning God to intervene!**

Fasting raises an outcry to heaven that says, this is urgent. "Our best solutions aren't enough. Our determination isn't going to get us through this. We need your intervention. Come with

your power again. I need your wisdom. Create in me a clean heart, in a culture where we've polluted it with so much filth."

**v.15-16** (Musician Jahaziel prophecies)

This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them...You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you.'"

**V.20-24** (King Jehoshaphat)

v.20 "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful."

v.21 ...Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever."

v.22-23 As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

v.24 When the men of Judah came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped.

- What if your fasting was the secret weapon of breakthrough?
- What if the sound of your praise could change the atmosphere of your school district?
- What if the sound of praise released the armies of heaven to do God's work in your friend's life, in your niece or nephew's life, in your family?

*The Clash of the Titans, Poisedan says, "Release the Cracken" Unstoppable, Titanic force.  
**Release the Waymaker.***

I've asked the worship team to come back out and help us capitalize on this atmosphere of faith and praise. We are not helpless. We've got the Champion on our side that no enemy has yet stood against. When he wants to do something, he can. He's just looking for people who will partner with him to pray it into the earth.

**Song:** *We Praise You; Great I Am*

**2. By fasting we are filling ourselves with God instead of filling ourselves with content.**

Fasting is literally cutting off the supply line to the flesh in order to feed the spirit.

What happens is my spirit becomes more alert, awake, hungry, expansive, and capable of containing more of God because I created room for him.

The week of the fast my body to feel like sludge.

Then Jesus declared “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” John 6:35

Fasting can lead to greater intimacy with God, breakthrough from addictions, supernatural answers to prayer, divine appointments, wisdom in decision making, and a shattering of the enemy’s lies and strongholds. Fasting makes room for his presence. It’s a power weapon.

### **3. By fasting we are training our spirit (your will) to be master over the body’s desires.**

#### **Titus 2:12**

“For the grace of God...teaches (correctional training) us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...”

#### **An Analogy: Professional Baseball Batter**

- **Video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9FsL3rDIXk> (start from 5 sec until 1:23)
- In professional baseball the best hitters are successful by deciding which pitch to swing
- the batter has 225 milliseconds to identify the pitch and where it’s going and decide whether he wants to swing at it. It takes 25 milliseconds for the electrical signal to travel from the brain to his limbs, and 150 milliseconds to swing the bat around to the right place before a 90 mph fastball reaches the plate in 425 milliseconds.
- Do you know how they do that? Answer: Practice

Big league players literally take hundreds of thousands of swings of practice, so that they know what to say yes to, and what to say no to. Your muscle memory says don’t swing at this. Swing for that. You learn to say no to the wrong pitches so that you can say yes to the right pitch.

- Police officers have to make life or death decisions in seconds.
- EMTs, ER docs.
- Fasting teaches our spirit and our will to be in control over my body’s desires, so that we are in the habit of saying “no” to the wrong things, and “yes” to the right things.

#### **When we spend enough accumulated time with the Father...**

- When situations come up, or content on your device, and you’ve got milliseconds to respond:
- That doesn’t smell like faith, that smells like fear to me.

- That doesn't sound like truth, that sounds like judgement to me.
- That doesn't look like wisdom, that looks like control.
- That attitude doesn't produce unity, that erodes our team
- I don't need that anymore to cope with pain.
- I'm not becoming that person anymore, I'm starving that person. That behavior doesn't help me become a better employee, a better mother, a better spouse, better role model.

**In summary:**

1. Fasting is not only a petition for God to intervene
2. It is an appeal for God to fill us
3. And it's a training ground to teach my spirit mastery over my desires and feelings.

**Practical Pointers to Fasting:**

1. God wants your hungry heart, not a guilt driven performance
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern what your goals are and what you are fasting
3. Suggested things we fast:
  - **Food, comfort food, junk food:** Daniel. Full fast. In Petra news link to Daniel fast.
  - **A relationship** Dependence on a person.
  - **Overtime** You're looking to your business, or the extra money, or success for fulfillment.
  - **Media** Probably most of us need to fast media of some sort. **Detoxing Dopamine!**
    - Internet, phone, computer, social media, music, podcasts, youtube, or candy crush.
4. Embrace boredom. Embrace slow. Embrace meditation and prayer. It may feel clumsy or dry, that's ok.
5. Stay connected to our daily prayer targets.
 

**Slide: [www.petra.church/prayer](http://www.petra.church/prayer)** - the digital prayer booklet, and email
6. Pray with others!

**Slide: FASTING WEEK EVENTS**

**FREEDOM**

- (Juicy fruit) position yourself
- **Join a Freedom Group! QR**



- Ask your friends if they are in a group and if you can be a part of it.
- If you're having trouble finding a group: Sunday Night; Tuesday Night