

Fasting and Forgiving

Matthew 6: 14-18

14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

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16 “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. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,

Matthew 6: 14-18

18 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.

1) Jesus expects us to fast

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“How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; *then they will fast.* (Matthew 9: 15)

Types of Fasts

Selective Fasts

Complete Fasts

Liquid only Fasts

Partial Fasts

Soul Fasts

Fasting is abstaining from food for a period of time as a reminder that (In the words of Jesus) “Man does not live by bread alone.”

“I need God to sustain me spiritually even more than I need food to sustain me physically.”

True statement: “I cannot survive
without food.”

Even truer statement: “I cannot survive
without Jesus.”

Simply put, Fasting is about less of us
and more of God.

(Chris Hodges)

Examples in Scripture:

- 1) Jesus fasted to Prepare for Ministry. (Matt. 4:1-17; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-14)
- 2) Paul and Barnabas fasted to Seek God's Wisdom. (Acts 14:23)
- 3) The people of Israel fasted to Pray for God's Power and Protection. (Ezra 8:21-23)

Examples in Scripture:

- 4) Ezra fasted to Grieve and Mourn and Seek God's Comfort and Peace. (Neh. 1:2-4)
- 5) The kingdom of Nineveh fasted and Prayed for Repentance. (Jonah 3:10)
- 6) The Israelites fasted to Seek God's Power for Victory. (Judges 20:26)

Examples in Scripture:

- 7) Anna fasted as a way to Worship God. (Luke 2:37)
- 8) Esther and her community fasted to Seek God's Favor in a Desperate Situation. (Esther 4:16)
- 9) Jesus said we sometimes need to fast to Engage in Spiritual Warfare. (Mark 9:29)

2) Fasting is between you and God

3) God the Father rewards fasting

When you fast, having intimate, life changing, transformational moments with God becomes a greater possibility.

4) Fasting is spiritual warfare that leads to spiritual breakthrough.

Mark 9:29: “This kind only comes out through prayer and fasting.”

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1) Jesus expected us to need and offer forgiveness more than once

19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. (2 Corinthians 5: 19-20)

2) Being forgiven and offering forgiveness are connected

Matthew 18: 21-35

The point: If we cannot forgive others, it shows that we do not understand the magnitude of our own debt, a debt that God offers to forgive.

3) With God all things are possible

The best question to ask is not, “Can I forgive?” But, “Am I willing to forgive?”

4) If there is a heaviness of my spirit, and a lack of joy, peace, and freedom in my life, it may be because I am withholding forgiveness.

Guideposts Story by Corrie Ten Boom

<https://guideposts.org/positive-living/guideposts-classics-corrie-ten-boom-forgiveness/>

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