



Route 66 Thoughts on Fasting

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Scripture does not command Christians to fast. God does not require or demand it of Christians. At the same time, the Bible presents fasting as something that is good, profitable, and beneficial. The book of Acts records believers fasting before they made important decisions (Acts 13:2; 14:23). Fasting and prayer are often linked together (Luke 2:37; 5:33). Too often, the focus of fasting is on the lack of food. Instead, the purpose of fasting should be to take your eyes off the things of this world to focus completely on God. Fasting is a way to demonstrate to God, and to ourselves, that we are serious about our relationship with Him. Fasting helps us gain a new perspective and a renewed reliance upon God.

By taking our eyes off the things of this world, we can more successfully turn our attention to Christ. Fasting is not a way to get God to do what we want. Fasting changes us, not God. Fasting is not a way to appear more spiritual than others. Fasting is to be done in a spirit of humility and a joyful attitude.

Matthew 6:16-18 declares, “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men 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.”

(i) Fasting is good for health. Many of us live a life in which it is easy to get soft and lazy. It is even possible to live to eat instead of eating to live. It would do a great many people a great deal of physical good to practice fasting far more than they do.

(ii) Fasting is good for self-discipline. It is easy to become almost completely self-indulgent. It is easy to come to a stage when we deny ourselves nothing which it is in our power to have or to pay for. It would do most people a great deal of good to cease for some time each week to make their wishes and their desires their master, and to exercise a stringent and an antiseptic self-discipline.

(iii) Fasting keeps us from becoming the slaves of a habit. To many often indulge in certain habits because we find it impossible to stop them. They have become so essential that we cannot break them; we develop such a craving for certain things that what ought to be a pleasure has become necessity. If we practiced a wise fasting, no pleasure would become a chain and no habit would become a master. We would be masters of our pleasures, and not the other way around.

(iv) Fasting preserves the ability to do without things. One of the great tests of any man's life is the number of things which he has come to regard as essential. Clearly, the fewer things we regard as essentials, the more independent we will be. When all kinds of things become essentials, we are at the mercy of the luxuries of life. Some kind of fasting preserves the ability to do without the things which should never be allowed to become essentials.

Abide in Christ

John 15:7 *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."*

Ask, Seek, Knock

Matthew 7:7-8 *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."*

Do not be Anxious

Philippians 4:6-7 *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Pray Continually

I Thessalonians 5:16-18 *"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

God knows what you Need

Romans 8:26-27 *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."*

Prayer is Effective

James 5:13-16 *"Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."*