

FASTING

101
MOST
ASKED
QUESTIONS

New York Times Best Selling Author

JENTEZEN FRANKLIN

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As the deer pants for the water
brooks, So my soul pants for
You, O God. My soul thirsts for
God, for the living God; When
shall I come and appear before
God? My tears have been my
food day and night, While they
continually say to me all day
long, “Where is your God?”

—Psalm 42:1-3

INTRODUCTION

Very early on in my ministry I discovered the power and the need for fasting. Little did I know that this powerful act would have such a profound effect on the ministry God had for me and on the lives I have come in contact with, and that includes my own family. Since we began the 21-day fast at our church over 15 years ago we have seen miracle after miracle and breakthrough after breakthrough and not just during that 21 days, but over the rest of the year as well.

If you seek a closer walk with God, consider fasting. If you are in desperate need of a breakthrough, fast. If you desire an access and an intimacy with God like you have never known, fast. The list of biblical characters who fasted reads like a list of MVPs of Scripture. For example: Moses the lawgiver, David the king, Elijah the prophet, Esther the queen, Daniel the advisor to kings, Anna the prophetess, Paul the apostle, and Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God. All of these and more fasted, and some more than once.

Throughout Scripture, fasting refers to abstaining from food, and sometimes food and drink, for spiritual purposes. Fasting is more than just going without food; it involves spiritual intensity and intercession. Fasting should always be accompanied with prayer, worship, and Bible study. We believe that there is strength and encouragement when we fast in community.

Fasting should never be motivated by thinking that fasting will move God to do what we want Him to do and on our terms. He is not a God of "our terms." We could never manipulate God. The purpose of our fasting is to move us closer to God and to seek His will in our lives.

One of the greatest spiritual benefits of fasting is becoming more aware of our own inadequacies and God's adequacy; becoming more aware of our own failings and his self-sufficiency. The purpose of all disciplines, including fasting, is to change us so that we may become more Christ-like. Fasting helps us to listen to what God wants us to be and do and opens doors we could never open without the anointing that fasting brings.

This book was birthed out of thousands upon thousands of emails and letters we receive each year asking these most common questions about fasting. It is designed to help anyone and everyone understand what fasting is, and isn't. It is written as a tool to help answer the many questions that arise when a person rearranges their life for a period of time, without food or something else of high value. This book was birthed out of a hunger by over a million people that join us each year for our 21-day fast to know God in a new way through fasting. This book is written for moms and dads, husbands and wives, singles of all ages, teens and children and everyone in between.

I pray that you will find the answers to your questions and that you receive the information you need to be a part of a movement that is changing the world. I guarantee it will change yours.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jentezen Franklin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Jentezen Franklin

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jentezenfranklin.org

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FASTING

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BASICS

**“Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with
all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and
with mourning.” – Joel 2:12**

Question 1: What exactly is biblical fasting?

Answer: Biblical fasting is setting yourself apart from the normal routines of daily life by abstaining from food for a specific period of time for a spiritual purpose —the purpose of communication, revelation, and a deeper relationship with the Lord. It is a discipline that has the power to release the anointing, favor, and blessing of God in the life of a Christian.

In Matthew 6, Jesus talks about three duties of every Christian: giving, praying, and fasting. Notice in the scripture reference below he doesn't use the word "if." He uses the word "when" just like He does in the other parts of Matthew chapter 6 when He talks about praying and giving. These are three duties Jesus teaches about early on in His ministry. They weren't just introduced as a choice or an option here in chapter 6...they were assumptions of life in the faith.

*Moreover, **when you fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, **when you fast**, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Matthew 6:16-18*

Special Note:

Fasting is NOT just going without food for a period of time. That's called dieting. And fasting is not just done by ministers or during special occasions. It is done anytime you want to draw closer to God.

Question 2: Who was the first to fast in scripture and why?

Answer: The first recorded person to fast was Moses when he met with God and received the Ten Commandments from Jehovah (Exodus 34:28). He was in the presence of God for forty days and he ate no food. In this case, Moses was in the presence of the Life-Giver Himself, so food was not even necessary. God sustained him.

The first time a corporate fast was declared was for the Day of Atonement. God commanded the Israelites to fast once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-31). The Day of Atonement was the annual day for the removal of all the confessed sins that had been transferred to the sanctuary. It was a day of judgment. On that day, each person was to humble himself before God by abstaining from work and food.

We first learn of the first absolute fast (no food OR water) in the book of Esther. *"Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."* (Esther 4:15-16)

Question 3: Why should I fast?

Answer: People fast for different reasons. You should fast



Jesus taught us to fast. Jesus fasted 40 days. Daniel fasted 21 days. The apostle Paul fasted for 14 days. Peter fasted for three days. Moses fasted for 40 days. Joshua fasted for 40 days. Many of the major characters in the Bible had their lives seasoned with a time of fasting and prayer.

A VOW TO GOD THROUGH FASTING

because you are in need of spiritual direction, wisdom, healing or even a miracle or because you desire a fresh encounter with God. Maybe there's a dream inside of you that only God can make possible. Maybe you desire a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord. Maybe you have come up against an unmovable obstacle that is hindering you or a loved one.

Also, as discussed in question 1, scripture is full of examples of fasting and Jesus talked about it in Matthew chapter six as a basic part of our faith (Matthew 6:16-18). The list of biblical characters who fasted is filled with very important people: Moses, David, Elijah, Esther, Daniel, Anna the prophetess, Paul, and Jesus Christ the Son of God. All of these and more fasted, and some more than once.

Question 4: What are the benefits and results of fasting?

Answer: Fasting gives you a heightened sensitivity to the desires of God and can help you break away from bondages that have been holding you hostage. It can also open up communication between you and God and give you greater insights into God's will for your life. Also, there are times when the obstacles before you seem insurmountable. Fasting can lead to God removing obstacles you could never overcome in the natural. When you fast, it changes YOU but it also attracts the attention of God in ways you may not experience in your normal daily routine.

Question 5: What does God see when He sees me fasting?

Answer: When you fast, you *“present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* (Romans 12:1 NKJV) God sees a choice you have made to consecrate yourself, or to set yourself apart, just to pursue Him. He knows how much food means to our daily

routine, and is keenly aware of the body's desire for food throughout the day. He also knows how much we enjoy eating. For many, this is also their place of social interaction. When you choose to go without such a basic human fleshly need because your spiritual desire is to be with and hear from God, you have attracted the Lord's attention in an extraordinary way. Extraordinary sacrifice leads to supernatural intervention and attention.

con-se-crate

verb

To dedicate or set-apart formally to a religious or divine purpose. Synonyms: sanctify, bless, make holy, make sacred, to dedicate to God, devote, reserve, set apart

Question 6: When should I fast?

Answer: It's easy to recognize physical hunger, but it's not as easy to recognize spiritual hunger. There are times when you should fast, and you need to know how to recognize those times. Fast when you need God's direction or intervention in your life. The Holy Spirit knows when you need to fast and He will prompt your spirit to set yourself apart to fast and pray just as He did when He led Jesus on His first fast in the wilderness.

The Holy Spirit knows when you are losing the edge in your life or when you are up against an immovable obstacle. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." (John 16:13 NKJV). The more you choose to make fasting and prayer part of your life, the more sensitive you become to the Spirit of God.



When we fast and pray we connect with God's assignment for our life. If we don't fast and pray, we will not connect with His mission.

MAKING THE PRAYER CONNECTION

You should never make a major life decision without first fasting and seeking God’s face and divine direction. First pray —then put a little power behind that prayer—and fast. It enables your ears to be more open to hear God’s voice.

Question 7: Should I fast when I am at my weakest points in my life?

Answer: Remember, when you are at your weakest is when you need the presence of God more than ever. When you are feeling the weakest because of temptation or conflict or you are overwhelmed, God is nearer than ever. When you are faced with something that you know is impossible to accomplish on your own, it’s time to fast.

God gave Nehemiah a burden for the city of his people. When he received word about the condition of Jerusalem he said, *“So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven”* (Nehemiah 1:4 NKJV). Nehemiah knew he had to do something. Against amazing odds, Nehemiah got the job done, but it all started at that moment of greatest weakness!

A broken and contrite heart is incredibly attractive to a God who wants to be your everything...even your food. God empowered and equipped Nehemiah to rebuild the city in a ridiculously short period of time with an enemy just a football field away taunting and threatening him every step of the way. You may not be rebuilding city walls, but God has put a dream in your heart. Fast and pray for His revelation and direction to accomplish the task that you are faced with.

Question 8: What about when I feel like I or those I love are under attack?

Answer: When you are in physical danger or under attack, fast. Queen Esther and all the Jews were under threat of extermination at the hand of Haman. She called a 3-day fast for the Jews. What the enemy intended for evil, God turned around for good because the queen humbled herself, fasted and prayed, and sought His face! If you are facing surgery, a dangerous journey, if you or someone you love is serving in the military, fast and pray for protection. Or maybe your child is facing a bully. Maybe YOU are facing a bully...a Goliath. Fast and pray to see God move on your behalf the way He has over and over again.

When you face family challenges you should fast. My wife Cherise and I have five children, and we fast for each of them on their birthdays. We pray that God's will, His plan, His anointing, and His direction are upon our children. Fast and pray for your family, and I believe that God will honor that commitment and will target your loved ones.

Question 9: We have made critical mistakes in our finances...totally our fault. Will fasting help even when we are the ones who screwed up?

Answer: When you need God's wisdom for a financial breakthrough, fast. Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) says to "*seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*" Seek Him first, and He'll add blessings continually. Some of the greatest financial breakthroughs in the history of our church have come during a fast. We received our first one million dollar offering from a member when we were on a fast. Time and time again, God has moved in incredible ways on the church's finances and our personal finances during seasons of prayer and fasting.

God's desire is to bless you so you can be a blessing. He also loves to come to your rescue when there is true confession,



You miss the whole point if your fast is not turning your regular world completely away. Pull away and get alone with God. Talk to Him about your fears, your needs. Just talk to Him. Pray and fast.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

repentance, and a sincere desire to do what is right. I have seen more couples overcome financial ruin or major financial setbacks in seasons of fasting and praying than at any other time.

But let me also add this warning. God is not in the business of enabling you to continue to make the same financial mistakes over and over. When you set yourself apart to fast there will come moments of conviction where there needs to be change. When you are nearest to God, what you need to do will become very clear to you. It is from that point on that fasting will not bring the change you need...only obedience to what God revealed during the fast will result in the change and breakthrough you need. I believe that in those moments of revelation you will be challenged with these three questions: Are you tithing? Are you giving as God leads you above and beyond the tithe? Has your financial behavior and priorities changed? No change in behavior and decisions means no change in results.

Question 10: Should I fast in secret or is it OK to tell other people?

Answer: There are two parts to this answer:

Part 1 - Private fast: Sometimes you feel led to fast for something and when fasting is something that only involves you and your decision to fast, scripture is clear. Fasting is a private discipline. When you fast, you shouldn't draw attention to yourself. Matthew 6:16-18 (NKJV) says that fasting is to be seen only by God.

“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when

you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Part 2 – Corporate fast: Sometimes, your pastor or a leader in your faith calls for a corporate fast. If the leader of a congregation calls a public fast, and you sense God is speaking to you through that leader, then you should come under that God-given authority and commit to fasting with the others.

In our annual 21-day corporate fast we literally join with millions all over the world and fast together, setting apart the first part of the year to seek God as a congregation and as the body of Christ. It is a powerful time. When a corporate fast is called, it is very appropriate and even recommended to link arms with others in small groups, special services, or even in online or social media communities to encourage each other and provide accountability and encouragement. Even then, it is up to you to determine the type of fast you commit to based on your health situation and other factors.

Special Note of Warning:

Any time you decide to fast, privately or corporately, if you have any physical concerns or conditions, we always advise that you consult with your physician before you start any fast that involves food or liquid.

Question 11: Can you summarize the spiritual benefits of fasting?

Answer: Fasting is more about gaining a closer relationship with the Lord and pressing in for that breakthrough you need and less about what you're giving up, which is food.



The number one plague of many in the Body of Christ is “leanness of soul.” The inner man is starving to death. He’s lean, he’s dying; he’s emaciated. But when you fast, it totally reverses that. When you fast, you have more on the inside than you do on the outside. You have leanness of flesh, but fullness of soul.

EXPECT THIS WHEN YOU FAST

It is God's will to bless His people and He loves nothing more than helping you do what you cannot do without Him. His desire is for you to recognize your total dependency on Him for your everything. But more than all that, His desire is for you to recognize just how deep and how devoted His love is for you and when you set yourself apart from your normal routine just to spend more focused time with Him...it moves His heart...and His hand.

God wants to bring increase to your life. Fasting helps release the increase. When people in the Bible fasted, it not only brought deliverance from crisis and solutions to unsolvable problems, it also released financial resources and increase into the hands of God's people. God is your source for your joy, your finances, your business, your healing, your talents, and your gifts. He is the source for increase in all areas of your life. Fasting helps release that increase from the spiritual and into the physical world. He takes your extraordinary sacrifice and attention and releases supernatural revelation, intervention, and clarity.

Question 12: What if I try fasting and it doesn't do anything for me?

Answer: Any time we set ourselves apart to seek God, and especially when we fast, something shifts in the heavens and you have opened a door to revelation and breakthrough whether you feel it or not. But, that being said, there are still three things you need to keep in mind:

First: You need to understand that God is not a Genie in a bottle. He is not magic a person that can be summoned by a set of rituals to give you your three greatest wishes. True fasting requires humility and an extraordinary surrendering of a right to yourself or even your desires. It requires setting apart a day or two or even more and a complete desire to see God's

will be done, even if that means a different outcome than the one you were hoping for because true surrender always adds these words, *“Not my will but thine.”* It’s total trust and it’s a longing for the God of the miracle more than the miracle itself. It’s not just about the right physical sacrifice, it’s about the right heart and the right motives.

Second: Many times and in many of my own fasts, the specific things I fasted for did not come during the actual fast. In fact most often they came in the days and weeks and even months after the fast. I have even had specific things I fasted for come to fruition in the last month of the year. But always, God has been faithful with answers, revelation, direction, wisdom, and even in moving mountains that only He could move...and He will do the same for you.

Third: Feeling this way is not completely out of the ordinary. I will be the first to admit that there have been fasts I have participated in where there were days when all I could think about was food. On days like that, it can feel in the natural like nothing spiritual is happening. But I have learned that days like this were far more spiritual than I had imagined as they served as a test of my commitment. Sometimes obedience, whether you feel anything or not, is the test...and the victory. Your Savior knows what it means to be hungry. And He sees and rewards and advances whether you feel anything or not. Stay faithful to the fast and ask God to help you in your weakness. Our website and other social media feeds are flooded with millions all over the world that have experienced the trajectory of their life altered forever and for eternity. Be faithful and be obedient, and the feelings will follow. The victory will follow. The walls WILL come down.

Question 13: Is fasting required?

Answer: Fasting is not a salvation issue or even a requirement



When you feel disconnected from God — you find yourself disconnecting from Him in prayer, in the word, in worship, in seeking God and even church. Then what happens is you begin to get too connected to worldly things. When this happens — it's time to fast and pray.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

to be a Christian. I believe that there is so much more God has for our lives if we will just go deeper. Also, while Jesus didn't specifically say it is a "requirement," He did say in Matthew 6, "**When** you fast" (Matthew 6:16) and He also said in the same chapter, "**When** you pray." These practices were inherent parts of the faith from the beginning with Moses, lived out in the lives of many Bible characters, and then taught again by Jesus in Matthew. Should we pray? Absolutely we should pray. We should also fast.

Question 14: What does Jesus say about fasting?

Answer: In Matthew 6, Jesus talks about three duties of every Christian: giving, praying, and fasting. Notice in the scripture reference below he doesn't use the word "if." He uses the word "when" just like He does in the other parts of Matthew chapter 6 when He talks about praying and giving. These are three things Jesus teaches about early on in His ministry. They weren't even introduced here in chapter 6...they were assumed.

*Moreover, **when you fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, **when you fast**, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Matthew 6:16-18*

Christians should give as much attention to fasting as we do to giving and praying. When all three are a part of your life, it creates a three-fold cord, which is impossible to break. It is this three-fold cord of praying, fasting and giving that produces the kind of breakthrough that can be unleashed and can move mountains. Later, in Matthew 17, Jesus brings it up again. He told his disciples in Matthew 17:20-21,

“Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Question 15: Why did Jesus fast?

Answer: When Jesus was on earth, scripture tells us He was fully God AND fully man in one form. But even though he was God’s son and He and the Father were one, Jesus fasted. Jesus didn’t expect His followers to do something He hadn’t done as well, and He is our example in all things. He knew he would face every difficulty known to mankind and that He needed to fast to have the strength to overcome every situation. Fasting made Jesus stronger. Jesus fasted to show us that we didn’t have to be controlled by our appetites. He fasted to be our example of how to be an overcomer regardless of what we might face in life. Jesus fasted to show us that it is important for us to fast, too.

Question 16: When did Jesus fast?

Answer: Before Jesus began His ministry on earth, He fasted.

“After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.’ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights He fasted and became very hungry.” Matthew 3:16-4:2

God declared how pleased He was with Jesus, but instead of capitalizing on the publicity, Jesus went into total isolation



The wisest thing you can do is worship Jesus. Become a worshipper. You're never wasting time when you worship. You don't have anything more important to do than worshipping the Father.

DEVOTED TO PERSISTENT PRAYER

for 40 days, eating nothing, while being tempted by the devil. Jesus fasted in the desert before He preached a sermon, before He healed anyone, and before He called any of the disciples. When Jesus successfully completed His fast, He was prepared for the spiritual battles ahead as He stepped out into His destiny on earth.

Jesus fasted because He knew there were supernatural things that could only be released that way and out of obedience.

Question 17: How many times do I need to fast?

Answer: While there is no rule or even scripture that specifies how often you should fast, I have made it a part of my life to fast several times a year. I know some people who fast a specific day of the week every week for their children and their families. I know others who have major projects or even missionaries that they fast for weekly.

I will not make a major decision without first fasting for revelation and wisdom and when there is strife or conflict in my family or the ministry I will also fast for breakthrough. I have always made it my practice to set aside specific days to prepare my messages and often I fasted until I had a Word from God for that message. In fact, I believe it is because of the anointing that followed each of those fasts that led to the thousands we have seen in our altars over the years giving their lives to Christ.

Question 18: Would God be mad if I broke my fast?

Answer: How long you fast is between you and God. The goal of your fast is to seek the Lord and continually grow in His will. The moment you say you're going to fast you're going to get hungry. So decide the kind of fast you will do and how long you will fast before you start. But it is not uncommon

for people to get so hungry that they aren't strong enough in those moments and have something to eat. I know some that have committed to a liquid only fast for the entire 21 days, only to find on day 5, or even day 18, they simply cannot go another moment without food and eat something.

It is so important that you understand this: You are not a failure and you have not ruined your fast simply because you broke your fast. You did not sin by breaking your fast. If anything, you proved your humanity and frailty before a God that loves to show Himself strong in our frailty and at points of our weakest moments. He is nearer in those moments than you ever could have imagined.

God understands and sees your heart and knows what you are going through. Remember, He knows what it feels like to be without food for many days. HE UNDERSTANDS.

My advice: jump back in. Get back in the game. It's a momentary set-back but it is not a fast killer. God sees your heart. Whatever time you committed to is still a ticking clock. You do not have to start over and you do not need to confess sin. Just look at your heavenly Father and say, "Help me Lord." He will.

Question 19: What does fasting have to do with getting my prayers answered? What's the connection?

Answer: Let's take a look at Ezra for an example. Ezra's assignment was rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. And there were moments when it felt overwhelming. So here's what he did: *"We fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer"* (Ezra 8:23). When you are willing to go without food and take the time to seek God with all your heart, He will respond to you. Let's observe three things Ezra fasted and prayed for:



Cast your cares on God. That's what the scriptures say. Instead of praying about problems — we talk more to people than we do to God about our problems. I wonder what would happen if we decided, for one week, to not discuss a problem with anybody but Jesus?

DEVOTED TO PERSISTENT PRAYER

First: “To seek from Him the right way for us” (Ezra 8:21 NKJV). Without God’s guidance you are left to the mercy of your own best thinking, and that can get you into trouble you may not get out of in a hurry. God doesn’t want you traveling blindly into the future, hoping for the best. His promise is *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”* (Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV).

Second: “And for our little ones” (Ezra 8:21 NKJV). Because God Himself is a father, this much is sure: when you petition Him on behalf of your children He gets involved in their lives! Samuel was molded into one of Israel’s greatest prophets by the prayers of a godly mother called Hannah.

Third: “And all our possessions” (Ezra 8:21 NKJV). If unemployment, the foreclosure rate or the stock market are anything to go by, you’d be wise to consult God before you make any financial decision. God has promised to bless you financially, if and when your heart is in harmony with His. If and when you are being obedient to the scriptural guidelines for giving, His will and your desire come together in an amazing way.

Question 20: Is it OK to fast for anything I want or should I focus on specific needs?

Answer: Seek the Lord in prayer and ask Him to guide you. Sometimes, circumstances in life present themselves and you will sense in your spirit that you need to set yourself apart for a season of prayer and fasting. Other times, you may just sense a dryness or a need to draw closer. Other times it will feel more like a hunger to be near Him and sense His presence. Let your decisions about your biblical fasting come from Him. Ask the Lord to show you areas to target during your time of fasting and prayer.

While it may sound selfish to fast and pray for something you desire, it is not wrong to have a business idea or an invention or some other risky kind of venture and to seek direction in a fast. In fact, I would say that before you take any step in a new direction, you should fast first for clarity and for God's direction. You will hear things from the Lord in a fast that you will never hear in a business meeting with the best business minds.

Question 21: What does it mean to “target” your fasting?

Answer: Just like it says in a previous question, many times the need to fast will present itself for a variety of reasons, and you will sense a desire to fast for specific things. This is what is meant by “targeting your fast.” When we fast corporately as a church or a ministry I will challenge people to be specific about what they are fasting for. All of us have things we are dealing with in our lives.

All of us have obstacles that arise. All of us have loved ones, even immediate family, who are not walking with the Lord. All of us desire to know God in a deeper way. Being specific, or “targeting” your fast, helps you to see, specifically, how God responded to your specific need or desire when it comes to pass. I recommend that you write those things down from the very beginning. In fact, some of the greatest praise reports I have heard have come from journals that record what God did during and after a fast.

So many times we pray to the Lord or target our fasts but never write anything down. Then, when it comes to pass, we do not link the blessing to that moment we came before the Lord and asked for it. What can happen is that we miss the blessing of seeing our prayers connected to God's answering of our prayers in our season of fasting. When we see God answering specific prayer requests it strengthens our faith



Dusty Bibles lead to dirty lives. It's a matter of time. You need the Word every day. You need to brush your teeth every day and you need the Word every day. You need a drink of water every day and you need the Word of God every day.

LESSONS FROM THE WISE MEN

and our belief in the power of prayer and fasting. When we make that connection it helps us give the credit and the glory where it is due...to the Lord. (Esther 4:16 and Jonah 3:5)

Question 22: How can I make my spiritual experience the best it can be while I am fasting?

Answer: What a great question and such an important topic to cover. And this question is closely related, yet very different, to another question below. To make your spiritual experience the best it can be, I recommend taking a break from the many diversions that compete for your attention. Taking a break from social media, talk radio, the television, and even from going to the movies or anything else that is your normal routine is a great way to eliminate distractions so that you can focus on the Lord.

Get your Bible out and spend time in the Word. Spend some time in worship. Spend time in prayer. We also have many resources to help you with your fast at jentezenfranklin.org such as blogs, devotionals, messages, and online courses.

In short, shift your focus. Separate yourself apart from your normal life, even from your friends, just for a season. Allow yourself time to press in but also allow yourself time to listen. Give the Lord permission to wake you up in the middle of the night or early in the morning, and when He does, even if it's 3am, get out of bed and start praying and interceding, and listening. Make yourself fully available to the Lord for this season of fasting. That is what is meant by "consecration." (Joshua 3:5)

Question 23: How can I prepare myself physically for the fast?

Answer: Decide what kind of fast you will undertake. Will it

be a full fast (no solid food and no sugar), Daniel fast (fruits, vegetables, water and juice only), or something in between. The type of fasting you choose is up to you unless you are taking part of a corporate fast. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.

When doing a private fast, decide how long to fast. You may fast as long as you like, or maybe your pastor has declared a corporate fast for a predetermined amount of time. Most can easily fast from one to three days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom and pray for guidance. Beginners are advised to start slow.

Do all you can to clear your calendar of distractions. Don't just fast food, fast from your normal routine and all things that normally occupy your time, other than what is required such as your job, school and church activities. The goal is to set yourself apart for a season so that you can fully focus on the Lord.

Lastly, remember, unless you are in a corporate fast, keep this private. This is between you and the Lord. Jesus spoke very clearly about this in Matthew six:

“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
Matthew 6:16-18

Special Note of warning if you have any physical concerns or conditions:



If you get serious about searching the scriptures and listening and leaning and being stirred by the Holy Spirit, then He will send help. He'll send something or someone to guide you and give you divine direction.

LESSONS FROM THE WISE MEN

We always advise that any time you decide to fast, privately or corporately, consult with your physician before you start any fast that involves food or liquid.

Question 24: How can I prepare myself spiritually for the fast?

Answer: Start with a clear goal. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray daily and read the Bible. Confess your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that try to hinder you (Romans 12:1-2).

Remember that a primary focus of fasting is to conquer “King Stomach.” We draw near to God through fasting when we deny the flesh. And our appetite for food is, by any definition, the throne of that power! Consider these examples:

- Isaac’s son, Esau, was in line for receiving the double blessing from his father yet gave it away to his younger brother, Jacob, in exchange for a bowl of stew. (Genesis 25:29-33)
- God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, among other things, because of their “fullness of food.” They had become guilty of gluttony. (Ezekiel 16:49)
- Even Adam and Eve brought sin into the world because of King Stomach – they ate of the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 3:6)

Clearly, getting our appetite in line is the chief way to put the flesh in its place. God honors our efforts to do so, making fasting a part of the three-fold cord of giving, praying, and fasting that is “not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12 NKJV)

Question 25: What if I can’t fast food because of medical reasons?

Answer: If there is a medical condition that will not allow you to abstain from eating, then there are other options to consider. God knows your situation and would never want you to risk your health or go against what your physician recommends. Some other fasting options to consider include desserts, breads, juices, coffee, soft drinks, and other kinds of sugar filled drinks. You may not be able to fast a meal, but there are food and drink options that may have become important to you.

The dictionary definition of “fasting” is:

Fast-verb

1. to abstain from all food.
2. to eat only sparingly or of certain kinds of food, especially as a religious observance. verb (used with object)
3. to cause to abstain entirely from or limit food; put on a fast

If a medical issue prevents you from fasting foods, there are still a number of items you could consider fasting. Whatever you decide to fast, God will honor your efforts.



A lot of people celebrate the cradle, but we need to celebrate the cross. He never said, “Remember me in my cradle,” but He did say, “Remember me when you take the bread and you take the wine. Remember me in my death until I come.” He chose to die. “No man takes my life. I lay it down myself.” When we fast, we are remembering His sacrifice.

LESSONS FROM THE WISE MEN

Question 26: What can I expect to experience physically when I fast?

Answer: When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort, especially the first three days, such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. Fasting brings about miraculous results. You are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to praise and worship. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

Water will be your best friend during this time and you should keep some with you at all times. Remember, despite how you feel physically, your body is rejoicing as it releases toxins and takes a rest from such a daily grind. Remember also that while you are fasting for spiritual reasons, fasting has many physical benefits as well. The most important thing to remember in any fast is the reason you are fasting. If you aren't careful, you can make this just a physical challenge...minute by minute, hour by hour as you strive to endure the physical challenge. But the fast you have chosen is not a physical challenge; it is a spiritual journey. You must replace the physical hunger with a spiritual infilling and allow Jesus to be the bread of life.

Question 27: Will fasting affect my energy level?

Answer: It's normal for any person to have withdrawals during the fast. Although fasting is not dieting, it still sometimes takes a toll on our bodies the same way people will have when they stop eating certain foods to get fit. A week after deciding that you'll fast sugar, your energy level may decrease because you lack the thing you've always had. Even if you're not fasting

food, it's still normal to have withdrawals from the things that you're giving up for a greater good.

Withdrawals of low energy don't usually last too long if you stick to the fast. Eventually, the body will start to realize that it can still live without sugar or soda in its system and therefore will adapt to other things.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:28-31

Question 28: How should I end my fast?

Answer: Be careful as you begin to put solid foods or meat back into your diet. Don't eat too much, too fast, or you could find yourself not feeling well. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions or snacks. Remember, this was never a physical challenge; it was a spiritual journey. Let this be a new beginning as opposed to the end of a season.

When you begin eating again at the end of a fast, make it count. Keep in mind, depending on how long you've fasted, the body's digestive and elimination systems have been inactive and need to re-acclimate to full function. The first foods you consume should be nourishing and easy to digest. Start with small glasses of vegetable or fruit juices then move into foods that are easy to digest such as fruit and cooked vegetables. Melons, grapes, apples, and pears are easy to digest and



He's King and my wealth belongs to Him. He's God and my worship belongs to Him. He's Lord and my witness belongs to Him. The way I live, the way I act, the way I do life is my witness and it belongs to Him. I no longer live for myself. I am His.

LESSONS FROM THE WISE MEN

contain lots of water. Likewise, vegetables and salad greens are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.

Clear broths and yogurt are also good choices until you're able to tolerate more solid food. Avoid citrus fruits and juices at first, since they might feel too acidic for your stomach. And, of course, before, during and after every fast, drink plenty of water. Just remember to ease in to eating again, and put the pizza on hold.



As you are “hungering” physically,
God will link your physical “hunger”
to your spiritual “hunger.”

MAKING THE PRAYER CONNECTION

SECTION / III

TYPES
OF
FASTS

***Fasting is not an end in itself;
it is a means by which we can
worship the Lord and submit ourselves in
humility to Him. We don't make
God love us any more than He already
does if we fast, or if we fast longer.
Fasting invites God into the problem.
Then in the strength of God, victory
is possible. — Elmer L. Towns***

Types of Fasts

Let me be clear from the outset, it is best to consult with your physician prior to starting a food fast of any kind, and especially if you are taking medication or under the care of a doctor for any kind of ailment.

The Bible describes several approaches to fasting that are generally defined by the length of time endured and the degree to which food and liquids are restricted. To aid in our understanding, we might categorize these fasts as any one of three basic types: normal, partial, and absolute. The two most common types of fasts are a Full (Food) Fast and a Daniel Fast.

Question 29: What is a Full Fast?

Answer: A full fast is restricted to a certain number of days with no solid food intake. How many days? That varies with every person and every situation. The answer lies in what you believe the Holy Spirit has led you to do, or if you are in corporate or ministry-wide fast they will tell you the expectation. During any normal fast, you should drink plenty of water. It's permissible to add broth or juice if you're doing a food fast for any length of time. This was the most common type of fast in scriptures. This was the kind of fast Moses did on the mountain with God (Exodus 34:28).

Question 30: What is an Absolute Fast?

Answer: An absolute fast is an extreme form of fasting where no food or water is taken. This type of fast should only be done for a very short period of time and only with medical supervision if there are health concerns involved. This is what Jesus did, and it is a very difficult undertaking. Again, this kind of fast should only be done over a relatively short period of time.

We first learn of an absolute fast in the book of Esther.

*"Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."
Esther 4:15-16 KJV*

Esther needed a breakthrough and a type of strength that only God could provide. By giving up all she had control over and taking a leap of faith, God stepped in and was with her



Fasting is looking for God. Everybody, at some point in their life, reaches a point where they hit rock bottom; They don't know what it takes for them to get to the light. But I'm convinced at some point everybody looks up at the ceiling and says, "Lord, if You're out there — HELP!"

MAKING THE PRAYER CONNECTION

when she needed Him most. In an absolute fast, all foods and drinks are omitted. Some people only fast like this from sun up to sundown.

Another example of an absolute fast is done by Saul (later called Paul). Saul fasted food and water for three days after meeting Jesus and losing his sight. *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.* Acts 9:8-9 KJV

Question 31: What is a “Day Fast?”

Answer: A day fast is a fast that is done from the time the sun rises until it goes down at the end of the day. A less restricted partial fast can be done from sun up to sundown, much like the Jews did in observance of the Sabbath on a regular basis. Food intake can be fully or partially restricted, such as giving up only certain foods or can go unrestricted after dark and before first light.

Question 32: What is a Daniel Fast?

Answer: The Daniel Fast is based on verses found in a few different locations in the book of Daniel, but the most famous is found in Daniel chapter one. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, several Israelites, including Daniel, were asked to join the king’s service. They were offered royal food and wine that was also offered to Babylonian idols.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Daniel 1:8 KJV

Then, in verse 11, Daniel takes it a step further with a challenge:

So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants." So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

*As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.
Daniel 1:11-15*

Daniel proved that this was not just a fancy way to fast; this was a way of eating that led to greater health. The Daniel Fast is a biblically based partial fast that omits any type of meats, sugars, and processed foods; you eat only fruits, vegetables, and water for a predetermined season of time. In short, if it comes out of the ground, it can be eaten in a Daniel Fast.

Special Note: Most people doing the Daniel Fast will omit processed foods; that being said, you may want to add protein packed foods like almonds and tofu. Also, legumes are a great source of fiber, and fruits and vegetables are a good source of vitamins and minerals.



When you're praying consistently, your persistence breaks resistance. Whatever forces have been coming against you, your persistence is breaking that resistance. Daniel discovered it. That's why he prayed and fasted twenty—one days. His persistence broke through the enemy's resistance — and yours shall too.

MAKING THE PRAYER CONNECTION

Daniel Fast Specifics

Many of the questions we receive each year are about the Daniel Fast, especially as it relates to spices, dairy, coffee, and supplements. While there are areas of technicality, and we will unpack a few of those here, I want to caution you to not make a spiritual pursuit of God into a legalistic set of strict rules and regulations. There is the letter of the law and there is the spirit of the law. None of the things mentioned are fasting disqualifiers, and in fact, a critical and judgmental spirit is a far greater danger. So if you must err, err to the side of grace.

Spices and Dressings

Question 33: If I am on a Daniel Fast, am I allowed to have salt, salad dressing, or other spices on my vegetables?

Answer: The technical answer is that the Daniel Fast implies only food that comes from the ground, and especially focuses on fruits, vegetables and water. But since salt and most spices also comes from the ground or plants, then technically these fall into that category. Salt has other health risks, and if you plan on using it be sure your physician agrees and is on board. Salad dressings are trickier. My recommendation is oil and vinegar, but this is another area where you can get caught up with a critical eye and a condemning spirit.

Keep the main thing the main thing. If a little sugar free ranch dressing helps you stay with the main thing, which is salads, fruits, and vegetables, then don't judge or be judged. Moderation and wisdom and right motives are the key here. Don't "strain at a gnat" and miss out on the greater purpose of the fast. Here is another rule of thumb for what to eat and not eat on a fast: When in doubt...don't. (Matthew 23:24)

Dairy

Question 34: If I am on a Daniel Fast am I allowed to have butter or other types of dairy?

Answer: This is one of our most-asked questions and for good reason. In this category are types of milk, butter and sour cream. The technical answer to this question would be no because these come from an animal and are not plant based. That being said, there are numerous plant based substitutes such as soy or almond that you can use that may help add that flavor or texture you need to make the food more palatable or that drink a bit less bland. Again, err to the side of grace. We all know there is a big difference between a baked potato with butter and without butter. No condemnation allowed in the dairy zone.

Coffee and Tea and Artificial Sweeteners

Question 35: What about tea and coffee and artificial sweeteners? Are these allowed on the fast?

Answer: Technically speaking, coffee comes from a bean and tea is plant based as well, but you need to be aware that when you drink any beverage, hot or cold, with caffeine there is a risk when it accompanies a change in diet. Caffeine is a stimulant and may have a different effect with a more plant based diet. On the other hand, many people who fast insist on eliminating their favorite drink as part of the sacrifice, be that coffee, tea, or a diet soda. I believe that in their strictest understanding of a Daniel Fast, if Daniel didn't eat or drink it, then we shouldn't either. Again, no judgment, and do what you feel is the right thing for you. Special warning here: any time you stop drinking caffeine, expect a pretty strong headache for the first three days as your body taste buds cry out for caffeine and your body sheds itself of the toxins you have ingested and held



Don't ever think that it's your fasting that made you worthy. Don't ever think it's something you did or you didn't do. No! It is His grace, and mercy, and it is His cross that makes you able to get up and to live and not die, and to declare the works of the Lord.

EXPECT THIS WHEN YOU FAST

onto over time.

Artificial sweeteners may help make food or a drink more palatable, but if there is anything medical science agrees to when it comes to the foods we eat, it's that most artificial sweeteners are not only unhealthy, but many times they can be worse than actual sugar. Be wise here and don't allow yourself to become legalistic. Let your heart be your guide and let the Holy Spirit do the tugging one way or the other... not man. My best counsel is to stay away from them on a fast, but you haven't technically broken any rules by using them either.

Diet Soda

Question 36: What about diet sodas? They are sugar free, so are they allowed on the Daniel Fast?

Answer: As stated in the previous question, while sugar free soda contains no sugar, it most certainly wasn't a part of the fast that Daniel talked about. This is where you will need to exercise your free will mixed with some wisdom. If the goal is to deprive "King Stomach" and to deny the flesh, then soda would seem to do the opposite. My recommendation is to stick to water and some real fruit juice as much as possible. Denying yourself is part of the process. You can look for and find a number of technical exceptions, but that would be missing the spirit of the fast and could bring greater attention to the enjoyment of soda than the presence of God. My advice on this one? Ditch the soda for your fast.

Protein

Question 37: I am concerned that on a Daniel Fast I will not get enough protein. How will I get enough protein on the Daniel Fast?

Answer: Most people doing the Daniel Fast will omit processed foods; that being said you may want to add protein packed foods like almonds, tofu and beans. Also, legumes are a great source of fiber and fruits and vegetables are a good source of vitamins and minerals. Eggs are a no-no as is any other food source that comes from an animal.

Supplements

Question 38: Can I take supplements or vitamins or medication while fasting?

Answer: This is a great question that we get asked quite a bit, and all I can tell you is that there is no one answer that fits every person. When it comes to vitamins and other supplements, different people have more sensitive stomachs than others; it's the way God made us. I could never be a medical examiner or a nurse. My stomach simply could not take it, while others are completely un-phased by the sights and smells of those occupations. Let your stomach be your guide and take it slow. Never take medication or vitamins on an empty stomach.

When it comes to medication, please consult your physician before you start your fast and follow their direction specifically. I will tell you this, especially as it relates to a Daniel Fast, you will find that you are getting more vitamins and minerals the way God intended, through the healthy foods you eat and that is better than any man-made supplement. Be wise and when in doubt, consult your physician if you have any questions related to your specific body.

Question 39: How much water can I drink while eating no food on the fast?

Answer: Lots of it! In fact, you should begin your fast with a full gallon of filtered or purified water the first day then drink



Prayer is what Jesus lived by. Prayer is what we're told in the scriptures to never stop doing. It is what the writers of the Bible told us to engage in all the time. Prayer drives back the devil and brings peace to our souls. Prayer moves the heart of God.

DEVOTED TO PERSISTENT PRAYER

plenty throughout the duration of the fast. Why? Water can be your best friend, so to speak. Not only does it make you feel full, but it helps flush the toxins out of your body that have accumulated over the years. But be sure to stick with water that's been filtered or purified in some way and steer clear of tap water; in many locations, it's loaded with impurities that can cancel out positive benefits.

Question 40: Can I fast something other than food?

Answer: The technical answer is found in the dictionary definition of a “fast.” The dictionary definition of “fasting” is: 1. to abstain from all food.

2. to eat only sparingly or of certain kinds of food, especially as a religious observance. verb (used with object)

3. to cause to abstain entirely from or limit food; put on a fast

This is a very strict definition and would apply to every fast that happened in the Bible. Those with medical situations are addressed in a previous question and answer in Section I. For others with a myriad of other issues related to food, I would say that there are still ways you can participate. The common thread for all Biblical fasts was going without food or types of food. Some other fasting options for you to consider include fasting desserts, breads, juices, coffee, soft drinks, pastas, dairy, and all kinds of sugar filled drinks. You may not be able to fast food altogether, but there are food and drink options that may have become important to you that you can fast. Whatever you decide to fast, God will honor your efforts.

Question 41: I have heard that there is a fast in the Bible that is a fasting from sex between a husband and wife. Is

this true?

Answer: While there is no biblical mandate for abstaining from sexual relations with your spouse during a fast, there is a specific example found in the Bible where abstaining from sexual relations during a fast was permitted.

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.¹
Corinthians 7:3-5 KJV

Notice the two key phrases that are critical to this kind of fast. First: *except it be with consent for a time*. This implies a mutual agreement and for a spiritual or relational renewal of some kind. *Second: and come together again*. This was in no ways a reason to abstain indefinitely, but rather for a mutually agreeable season and a specific purpose of prayer and fasting.

Question 42: How long do I fast?

Answer: There are no clear-cut rules here. The answer should always depend on what you feel the Holy Spirit is guiding you to do unless it is part of a corporate fast. You should always seek the Spirit, not a formula. As you determine what's best for you and your purpose and circumstance, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Don't get bogged down in details. Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance and follow His lead.



Worship is not just an act I do when I'm singing. Worship is the way I live. It is the truth I tell. When I tell the truth instead of making up a lie and covering myself, I worship God. Worship is the thoughts that I think, and the deeds that I do.

EXPECT THIS WHEN YOU FAST

- Don't bite off more than you can handle. If you've never fasted before, you may want to start small and work your way into more extended or restricted fasts. Remember, God honors the heart – not your heroics!
- Connect with an accountability partner.
- Consider starting with a one-day fast, from sunrise to sunset. You'll be amazed at the difference even a one-day partial or normal fast will make in your life.
- Drink LOTS of water.
- If you have any questions about your physical readiness, always consult a physician before starting.

It doesn't matter where you start – just do it.

Question 43: What if I eat food by accident during the fast?

Answer: This happens more than you might think! Habits are hard to break and done without thinking. The temptation during any fast is to run to the legalistic side of every issue and it becomes more about what you can't have or weren't supposed to do food-wise, and the spiritual purpose and motive to fast gets lost in the dotting of Is and crossing of the Ts.

If you forget and eat by accident, get back on that horse. God knows your heart and God sees every minute when you didn't slip up or forget. No one is keeping score, so be encouraged, laugh it off. Get back on and keep moving toward the Lord. He hasn't gone anywhere!

Question 44: What kind of fast should I do if I work a physically demanding job all day long?

Answer: If you're worried about the effects of fasting because of a labor-intensive job, maybe a full fast over an extended period of time is something you'll have to work your way up to. But you can still fast. Consider a partial fast for one or more days and maybe do a heavier fast on your days off. Focus on getting needed nutrients from vegetables and fruit juices. And, as always, stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

Question 45: What can help motivate me to not give up during my fast?

Answer: Even purely from a physical standpoint, fasting does a body good. It's like spring cleaning for the system, and depending on how long you stick with it, you can experience anything from weight loss to more profound health benefits. This can be a good reminder when you feel like giving up. Perhaps the best motivation to complete a fast is to set your sights on the promised end result of this special time between you and God. Fasting is like a tune-up for your spiritual senses, giving you ears to hear and eyes to see God's perfect will for this time or season in your life. Fasting prepares you for a new anointing or a new direction. It's like flipping the "On" switch, releasing God's power in a way that wouldn't happen with the switch turned off.

Question 46: What might that promised "end result" look like?

Answer: Jesus gives us a clue in an exchange with his disciples in Matthew 17: 20-21. Frustrated that they couldn't cast out demons from a little boy, when they had been doing that very thing all along, they asked Jesus: "Why didn't it work this time?" Jesus said in answer, "Because of your unbelief; for



And God said through the Prophet Joshua, “Sanctify yourself today” because “tomorrow God’s going to do wonders among you.” Sanctify yourself and start looking for your miracle.

GO FOR IT

assuredly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Jesus knew that there were supernatural things that could only be released by fasting. But that when fasting was added, "nothing will be impossible unto you." Now that's food for thought!

Question 47: What is the best type of fast for me?

Answer: Fasting is meant to be a way to connect with God, a way to show spiritual discipline. Pray and seek God and ask Him for direction when choosing a fast. Also, if you have any type of medical condition that would require a special diet, seek medical advice along with prayer.

How you fast is completely up to you. Some people decide to fast alone while others do so collectively. Some people choose to fast for three days while others decide to fast for 40 days. How you fast should be between you and God, and make sure you are doing it with a cheerful heart, for God sees not only your heart, but your effort

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. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; 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. Matthew 6:16-18 KJV

Question 48: What effects on my body should I expect?

Answer: Effects from fasting vary from person to person. Remember, your body is detoxing and change is very likely to occur. At the beginning, some may experience headaches, nausea, irritability, and extreme hunger. Some complain of bad breath, a brown tinted tongue, and vivid dreams. The brown tinted tongue means that your body has entered a state of ketosis.

Also, expect to use the bathroom often, for you will be drinking a lot of water. It is also not uncommon to be cold during a fast. Keep a sweater or a jacket handy when you go to work. After a couple of days, most describe an inner peace and sense of control. Plus, you may even lose a couple of pounds!

Question 49: What is Ketosis and is it safe?

Answer: Ketosis is a normal process the body goes through when there is an absence of carbohydrates in your diet for an extended period of time.

ke·to·sis

Ketosis is a normal metabolic process, something your body does to keep working. When it doesn't have enough carbohydrates from food for your cells to burn for energy, it burns fat instead. As part of this process, it makes ketones.

In short, ketosis is just the medical definition for when your body doesn't burn carbohydrates and sugar for energy but instead burns stored fat. And who isn't for burning stored fat?! You will know you are in ketosis when your tongue has a brown coating, especially the back of your tongue. This is also partly the cause for your bad breath, another common side-effect of fasting. Just be sure to carry some sugar-free gum and you are free from the ill-effects of bad breath...and your friends and



Every time you fast, every time you pray, every time you do something for Jesus, there's always a reward.

EXPECT THIS WHEN YOU FAST

co-workers will thank you as well.

Question 51: Isn't fasting just like dieting?

Answer: Fasting and dieting are not one and the same. Yes, the change in your diet may help you lose some pounds and aid your overall health, but fasting is simply not a form of a diet. First of all, when you diet you are committing to a short or long term lifestyle change for the purpose of either losing weight or becoming healthier.

In a fast, losing weight is not a priority. A fast is a form of spiritual discipline; a way to let God know that he is in control... that your hunger for more of Him is more important than your hunger for anything else...even food. Giving up food requires self-control and perseverance, and God sees our sacrifice and our hearts. Many fast to become closer to God and to present their petitions for health, finances, direction, a marriage or simply to feel His presence.



Getting plugged into a church is important when you are on a fast. We think church is about us getting a lesson. It's about seeking God. It's about purifying our lives and cleansing our hands. We need to be ready for the trumpet to sound, and Jesus to come. And ready to heed the call!

EXPECT THIS WHEN YOU FAST

SECTION / III

FAMILY
FASTS

TEENS
AND
CHILDREN:

Question 52: Can my child fast?

Answer: The answer is simple, YES! But it must be emphasized that fasting is linked to prayer, and you will need to walk with your child through this process. Simply put, fasting means giving up food or types of food and spending more time with God. If you give up food but don't pray - that's not fasting. The point of fasting is to give up that time to spend more of it with God.

Regardless of age, all Christians should fast, just like they should pray and tithe. Jesus fasted several times when faced with a time of intense spiritual need, and he is the son of God. It is a good idea to have conversations with your child/teen about fasting and sacrifice. Make sure your child is a willing participant, seeking a relationship with the Lord, and understands what he/she is signing up for...fasting should not be approached lightly. Have them understand that as they get older and are in need of a miracle during a tough time that fasting should be something they always go to.

Question 53: What are some questions I could/should ask my child before/during/after the fast?

Answer:

BEFORE

What do you know about fasting?

What are some concerns you have about fasting?

What does the Bible say about fasting?

What are some things you plan on fasting?

What are some things you are planning on asking God for during this time of fasting and prayer?

How do you want to share that you are fasting with others?
(school, family, friends)

Do you have questions for me?

DURING

What are some things you are thankful for?

What is the hardest part of fasting so far?

How are you doing with your fast?

What is your greatest temptation?

Who are some leaders you are praying for and why? (Pastors, Teachers, Government officials)

Are you praying for people who don't know Jesus?

What are their names? How can we share God's love?

What kind of music are you going to listen to during the fast?

What shows are you going to watch?

Do these things glorify God?

What can you do in your everyday life to glorify God?

AFTER

In what ways can you be a light in a world of darkness?

What has God shown and/or taught you while you have fasted?

Did this time of fasting and seeking God bring you joy?

What are some praises you have to share?

Where does your help come from?

Question 54: Are there options other than food that I can suggest for my teen to fast?

Answer: Being the parent of five children who have all lived through many years of fasting, I have watched my children get just as excited about the annual 21-day fast as most adults. But like many teens and children, my kids were also very physically active. I also knew that a fast looks easier when imagining it than it does when it actually starts.

Some other fasting options to consider include desserts, breads, juices, coffee, soft drinks, and other kinds of sugar filled drinks. You may not be able to fast a meal, but there are food and drink options that may have become important



Every now and then, you have to take inventory of your spirit, your walk with God and ask yourself if you are just going through ritual and routine, or is there supposed to be more? Is something missing?

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

to you. As discussed in previous questions, the technical definition of a biblical fast is:

1. to abstain from all food.
2. to eat only sparingly or of certain kinds of food, especially as a religious observance. verb (used with object).
3. to cause to abstain entirely from or limit food; put on a fast

So while my children, and then later when they became teens, wanted to participate fully, it was more difficult practically. We have thousands of children and youth in our ministry, and many of them want to participate in the fast. We have never taken that lightly or been dismissive because of their age. Scripture warns against despising one because of their youth (1 Timothy 4:12), so many will actually do the Daniel Fast, and many will do it the entire 21 days. But for most children and teens this is too much physically, especially those involved in sports or other physical activities. And for these courageous dedicated young people we have chosen not to take the route of legalism and technicality, and have encouraged them to fast something other than just food.

Below is a list of sacrifices these kids can participate in to develop an understanding for what it means to put down things of this world that hold their attention. We do not consider these sacrifices any less spiritual or less meaningful because these are children and teens that just want more of Jesus. Many are just as in need of breakthrough and desire the presence of God as much as any adult who is fasting food.

If food is not an option, give your child options such as the ones mentioned below. Here is a list of options to “sacrifice” or do without for a season that do not include food:

FAMILY FASTS

- Television - All shows or specific channels
- Social Media
- Radio/Pandora/iTunes - All music or just secular
- Cell phone usage - Texting and photos included
- Internet sites and Apps (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat)
- Video games - Console games, Online platforms, iPads/Kindles, and computers
- Extracurricular events (school football games, dances, etc.)
- Books/Magazines/Internet articles - All secular or specific material
- Hobbies - All or specific hobbies
- Candy/Sweets/Junk Food
- FAST FOOD!!
- Favorite food (such as cheeseburgers)
- Dessert
- Soda

WARNING: They will often request to fast homework. Don't fall for it!



Fasting disconnects us from the world. We're not just fasting and praying for what we can get from God. We fast and we pray because it blesses God. It pleases God because we express a heart of worship and gratitude. Fasting is about going into the presence of God with our lives and saying, "Lord, we long for you."

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

Question 55: When should I start challenging my children/teens to fast?

Answer: Fasting, just like accepting Jesus into one's heart, is a personal decision that helps us grow closer to the Lord. If your child does not actively seek God by means of prayer, studying the Bible, tithing, and a general want to be in church, you might want to focus on these aspects of Christian living with your child/teen before moving to a fast.

The best way to challenge your child/teen to want to fast is to be an example. As you fast food and types of beverages, allow your child to see your sacrifice and devotion to God. Don't be afraid to allow your child a view to your fast. Show joy in the face of your hunger and pain. Share scriptures and prayers with your child/teen. Show them that a fast is a powerful tool for Christians to use. But above all, pray. Pray for guidance in motivating your children to spiritual growth.

Probably the greatest way to know if your child is ready is when they come to you and tell you that they want to fast with you. If your church does not have any kind of corporate fast, then consider participating with a ministry such as ours. We have an annual 21-day fast every year in January that involves literally millions of people from all over the world. Jump in and join us by going to our website: jentezenfranklin.org and click on "fast" to participate. You will find devotions, blogs, online courses and Bible Studies to help guide and target your fast in community with other believers that are going through the same challenges you face when fasting.

Question 56: What are the most common fasts for my child or teenager?

Answer:

Teens

With most teens, the most common fast is the Daniel Fast, especially for those who are used to eating salads all the time anyway. The second most popular is to pick one kind of food, such as cheeseburgers, and abstain from that one food. There are also different alternative fasts of belongings or the activities they enjoy doing such as being on the phone or watching TV that can be traded for devotional time.

Children

Food fasts are much trickier with children, and we try to answer several questions related to children in the questions that follow. The most common is video games or a specific toy or even one particular food or drink such as fast food or soda. Pray about it and think it through the routines of your many days.

Question 57: What are some conversations I can have with my children to motivate/encourage them?

Answer: Encourage journaling, prayer lists, books to read, scriptures to reflect on, and videos to watch with your child/teen during the family's fast. Let them talk to you about what they are learning during their time with the Lord and their feelings/worries as the days progress. You are stronger together. Remind them that the church, the Pastor, their friends, and the family are all fasting together to get closer to God.



We show our sincerity to God during a fast by pushing away from the things of the world, and even the flesh for a season. We can't live here but we CAN set ourselves apart for a season. Fasting is rearranging everything for a few days, and going after God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

Here is a list of scriptures that can be daily discussion-starters for you and your child during the fast:

Encouragement:

Matthew 6:33-34 - But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 11:28 - Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Luke 11:9- So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

John 1:12- Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

Confidence:

Psalms 139:14- I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Matthew 5:16- In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

John 15:5- I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

2 Corinthians 5:17- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!

Lead by example is an important part of your child's/teen's success during a fast.

Matthew 6:16-18 “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.”

A fast of any kind is a personal decision. Talk to your child/teen about what they feel comfortable fasting. Keep in mind that your child may want to fast something other than food. Fasting is about sacrificing something important to you, studying God's Word, and praying in order to become closer to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Question 58: Can children fast multiple meals a day?

Answer: Your fast and your teen's fast may all look different, and that's fine. Some people may need to be stricter than others in their food choices so that their fast is a sacrifice for them.

The typical duration of the Daniel Fast is ten days or twenty-one days. Daniel 1 and Daniel 10. That is every meal at all points of the day, but you and your child's fast may be different. Your family will have to determine what you need in order to get closer with Jesus.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of



I believe in fasting and prayer because I have seen first-hand what happens when the church congregation begins to fast and begins to pray. We have seen miraculous answers to prayer and seen God do amazing things.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Romans 12:1).

Question 59: Should I share that my child is fasting with their school?

Answer: It is always a good idea to keep your child’s teachers in the loop, but fasting is a tricky topic. It says in Matthew 6:18 *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.*

You will still want to let the school know in some way shape or form (note, conference, email or phone call). It is important to communicate with your child/teen and see how they want to share that they are fasting with the school; it is their fast after all. It is also important that your child understands that fasting is a private matter and should only be shared to bring glory to the Lord and not to one’s self.

But it is better to be safe than sorry. Please understand that if a ten year-old goes to school and says they haven’t eaten in three days, you may receive a call from social services.

Special Note: *Children’s and teen’s bodies function like a clock and their biology establishes routines and regularity based on their daily patterns of eating. Please consult a physician before starting any kind of food-restrictive fasting for a child or teen.*

Question 60: Should I share that my child is fasting with their youth or children’s pastor at church?

Answer:

CHILDREN

If you attend a church that doesn't participate in a corporate fast then absolutely yes. I think it is very important to clue your children's pastor in so they can pray and be sensitive to this in their meetings and in their interactions.

TEENS

If you attend a church that doesn't participate in a corporate fast, or if your teen chooses to fast on their own, I would leave this to the discretion of the teen to decide what they share and what they don't share. This is a time when they are forging identities and paths to God where you are not necessarily present. Allow them the space to forge their own relationship with Jesus. After all, our ultimate goal is that they would love and follow Jesus all the days of their life WITHOUT US THERE TO MAKE THEM DO IT.

Question 61: Will fasting interfere with my child's sleep?

Answer:

"When you lie down, you will not be afraid, when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet." (Proverbs 3:24)

Changes in a person's diet can cause issues with sleep patterns. Caffeine and sugars are major sleep robbers, but if you are following the Daniel Fast, these items will have been removed from your diet. This means you and your child will probably sleep better. Some other foods that might affect your child's sleep patterns are spicy and acidic foods.

You will still want to make sure your child is getting plenty of exercise during the day leading up to bedtime. Also, talk to your child/teen about their sleep patterns and any problems they might have.



When you fast, you are saying to God that you want to separate yourself from the clutches and the lust of the world. You're saying, "Clean me up. Bring me back to purity. I'm coming before you Lord. Give me a clean slate.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

Question 62: Will fasting affect my child's energy level?

Answer: It's normal for any person to have withdrawals and cravings during the fast. This is probably magnified in a child, which is why you need to be very careful when allowing your child to fast, and some will really want to participate. All of my children always wanted to participate in the fast at some level when they were growing up. But as a parent, you have to exercise wisdom.

Although fasting is not dieting, it still sometimes takes a toll on their bodies in the same way it does on your adult body. A week after deciding that they want to fast sugar, their energy level may decrease because they lack the thing they've always had. Even if they're not fasting food, and even if it's good for them, it's still normal for them to have withdrawals from the things they've given up for a greater good.

Withdrawals that cause low energy don't usually last too long if your child sticks to the fast. Eventually, their body will start to realize that it can still live without sugar or soda in their system and therefore will adapt to other things. In the long run, it is a healthier lifestyle by far.

Question 63: Will fasting affect my child's school work?

Answer: If your child or teen is doing a food fast, then you have to remember that any food change can have an effect on their energy level or attention span. This is why you want to really use wisdom when helping them select the fast that is best for them. Encourage your child to pray and seek God first before the day starts for them and if they find it hard to concentrate on school work, tell them to give it to God and seek Him for focus.

Question 64: What if my child/young adult plays a physical sport during the fast?

Answer: There are cases where your child plays a sport and needs the nutrients in order to play well; it is fine to find a different thing to fast. There are many other things that your child can choose to fast that doesn't have to be food. Please refer to the list in the previous question for other options to fast other than food.

Question 65: What if my child does not want to fast?

Answer: If your child doesn't want to fast, you can encourage them to see if they'll fast something that isn't food for a few days. That way, they can at least give fasting a try. But the rule of thumb for children of all ages is to make your child or teen aware of the fast and then pray for them. If they come to you then begin the discussion. Make your child aware of the options, the motives, and the scriptural reasoning behind fasting and allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them when they are ready.

Question 66: What if my child wants to quit during the fast?

Answer: Fasting was not made to be easy, but it was still made to be possible. Try to remind your child how strong he/she is and that they shouldn't give up when things are hard. Putting all your faith in God is the key to finishing strong in the fast and even in life. But in the end, celebrate how far they came and try not to focus on coming up short. Any level of fasting for a child or teen is a good thing and you need to remind them and be proud of how far they went.



“Anything, Holy Spirit, that’s been grieving you, take from me. Go through me, and check me, and convict me, and fix me, and clean me, and anoint me, and use me.”

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

Question 67: Should my child fast if he or she is on medication?

Answer: Always consult a physician if your child is on medication or if there are any other physical concerns prior to starting the fast. And remember, there are plenty of non-food items to consider fasting. Please refer to the list in previous questions.

Question 68: What if my child eats food by accident during the fast?

Answer: This is a great question for adults too, which is why it is asked and answered in the first section of the book. The temptation during any fast is to run to the legalistic side of every issue and it becomes more about what you can't have or weren't supposed to do food-wise, and the spiritual purpose and motive to fast gets lost in the dotting of Is and crossing of the Ts.

If your child forgets and eats on accident, take Taylor Swift's advice and "Shake It Off!" Get back on that horse. God knows the heart and God sees every minute when you didn't slip up or forget. No one is keeping score, so encourage, encourage, encourage and shake it off. Get back on and keep moving toward the Lord. He hasn't gone anywhere!

SECTION/IV

OTHER
FASTING
ISSUES
AND
ANSWERS

Question 69: How should I deal with people who don't understand why I am fasting?

Answer: Many people do not understand biblical fasting at all and do not really want to. One of the best ways to handle them is to simply not advertise that you are fasting in the first place. Fasting is between God and us. It is about drawing closer to Him. If we can fast with total focus on Christ and new revelation we can obtain by doing so without anyone else even being aware that we are fasting or then the experience is even richer. Fast with total focus on Christ and new revelation.

*Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
Matthew 6: 16-16 NKJV*

Question 70: What other things should I do during the fast?

Answer: Desire God's presence. Take extra time to spend with God in prayer and read the Word. Clear your schedule of unnecessary events. Ask others to pray in agreement with you. Listen and wait for God to communicate. Journal your thoughts. Expect God to move. Respond accordingly to His will.

Allow the Lord to wake you up to spend time with him or to intercede for a person or a situation.

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. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Psalms 61:1-2 NKJV

Question 71: How do I explain what fasting is to my friends?

Answer: This book was created with you and your friends in mind. This book should contain nearly every question you could be asked so that you can have a good answer for yourself and for your friends, should you be asked.

Fasting is a main line “plug in” to the power source of God, intended for us to be able to use and live by on a consistent basis. Fasting is the extension cord of our faith plugged in by the effort of prayer to the nuclear power plant source of God.

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Romans 8:11 NKJV

Do you have strongholds threatening you and yours? Is there evil in your world that you long to see destroyed? Do you need God's direction, protection, healing, and provision? Then get plugged in. Fast.

Question 72: Should I find an accountability partner to fast with?



When it feels like the heavens are closed, and your prayers keep bouncing off the ceiling, but you still need an answer, that's when it's time to get serious and fast and pray.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

Answer: Unless you feel led to a private fast (no one knows but you and God), the answer is yes. There is power in agreement. There is discipline in accountability. There is strength in the encouragement of a friend. When we join together and agree with God on what HE already has said and seek to find out what new and specific things HE might say to us now, anything is possible.

For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not. Isaiah 30:15 NKJV

Find someone else who truly believes in the power to be found by fasting, make a pre-fast list of your combined fasting goals to pray over and hang on! God will show up in that agreement in a big way and you will be amazed at the repentance, rest, quietness, trust and strength that will embrace you.

Question 73: Should I encourage others to fast too?

Answer: Yes, and use this book to answer any questions they might have. Fasting gets God's attention. Asking others to fast with you employs an exponential expectation. The saying "there is strength in numbers" definitely applies in the case of fasting. It is a biblical principle used throughout history to initiate revelation.

Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish! Esther 4:16 NKJV

Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to

seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him." So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer. Ezra 8:21-23 NJKV

Question 74: Can I expect greater revelation of the Bible when I fast?

Answer: Absolutely, positively, yes. But not for the reasons you might think. The primary reason you can expect greater revelation from God's Word is because you have set yourself apart and made space for it. We would be amazed at all the ways the Lord wants to speak to us through His Word and through revelation and prayer if we just set aside the time to go there. Illumination comes through concentration and when you set aside the distractions of the world, suddenly it comes to life as the Holy Spirit ministers to you. When you fast, you leave behind the normal, the ordinary, so that you can experience the extraordinary and the supernatural.

Question 75: How does denying my flesh help me grow spiritually?

Answer: Our very nature, the flesh, is constantly at war with the things of the Spirit. Flesh cannot kill the flesh, and flesh alone cannot overcome your spiritual obstacles or sin or temptation or bring revelation to solve a problem. Our thought life can run rampant at times with thoughts that do not lead to any place good or that do not honor God. When we fast, our focus shifts to our basic physical needs and our dependency on God for all things. Fasting helps us overcome external forces and



There's nothing that satisfies like Jesus, the living bread and the living water. Nothing.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

temptations that seek to pull us away from the presence of God. Our physical hunger causes us to draw near to the throne of God to satisfy an entirely different kind of hunger. A hunger for the touch of God.

Question 76: I've grown weary of my normal church routine. Will fasting change the way I feel about my church experience?

Answer: The answer once again is yes, and like a previous question, the reason why may surprise you. Abraham Lincoln is known for making the statement, "Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the ax." When life becomes dull and boring and when adventure is something you only see in a movie, then the problem isn't your life. The problem is you. You have become dull and listless. You have stopped taking risks. You have stopped drawing near to God, reading your Bible, and praying. You have probably even stopped giving. Fasting sharpens the ax by sharpening your focus and dependency on God. It forces you out of the boat and onto the dangerous waves. Fasting and prayer show you the life you have been missing because of the relationship you have been neglecting. Lincoln was an experienced and skilled woodsman and he knew the value of a sharp ax. Draw near to the Lord through fasting and prayer and you will soon see yourself sharpening in ways you may have forgotten were possible.

Question 77: I am starting to ask, "Is this all there is?" Life is losing meaning. This can't be God's plan for my life. Will fasting change that?

Answer: Every believer loses the edge in his or her life from time to time. Trudging on in our own strength through our daily routines can make us increasingly dull, ineffective, and even dangerous. Individuals, ministries, and entire churches

can lose the edge. Fasting helps you to regain the edge on life by stopping what you are doing and carefully applying the right tools. Declaring a spiritual fast is a means of interrupting the dulling effects of life's routines. Fasting is taking the time to regain the edge, preparing the way for you to accomplish so much more through the power of the Holy Spirit than you ever could accomplish through your own limited strength.

Question 78: I am a pastor considering a call to fast in my own church. What can you tell me to convince me that this is right for MY church?

Answer: For over 15 years we have set out to seek the Lord at the beginning of every year in a corporate fast and throughout the year with shorter fasts as needed. We have also encouraged individuals to fast on their own throughout the year as they feel led to do so. God is a rewarder! Over the years we have miraculous testimonies of God's healing power, mended marriages, and deliverance from devastating addictions of all kinds in individual lives. Our people have also seen extraordinary financial breakthrough.

But God's blessings always overflow the cup. We must never stay focused on our own needs so much that we neglect the needs of others. When you make fasting a part of your lifestyle, you begin to hear His heart to release the captives and meet the needs beyond your own borders in ever-increasing measure.

This is right for EVERY church because there is a biblical mandate and the results speak for themselves. The world needs a people of God who walk in the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit that pulls down strongholds and sets captives free.



When you fast, you begin to refocus on eternal things. You think about the rapture. The fear of God returns. You think about Heaven. You think about Hell. You think about your children. You think about the need for revival in your own household.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

Question 79: Will fasting help me in seasons of change and transition?

Answer: Sometimes it seems as though life is nothing but one big transition after another. Just about the time you get good at something you've been doing for a while, a shift takes place, and suddenly you are facing brand-new territory and uncharted waters. Life can throw scenarios at you that you could never plan for or dream up. There will never be a better time for you to fast and pray and seek God's mind than in seasons of change.

Change is a difficult process. Transitional storms in life test and strengthen your root system. Without spending time waiting on God when the skies are cloudless, many are completely unprepared to handle the storms of life. The key to navigating these seasons is to learn to worship, to humble yourself with fasting and prayer, and to seek God's face no matter the transition.

Question 80: How can I maintain nutritional balance when fasting without food while drinking only water and juices?

Answer: The prospect of going without food for an extended period of time may be a cause for concern for many people. But there are ways to ensure that your body is getting the nutrients it needs so you can remain safe and healthy during your fast.

I recommend water, fruit juices, and vegetable juices. The natural sugars in juices provide energy, and the taste and strength are motivational to continue your fast. It is always better to drink fresh juices, if possible, and to avoid drinking packaged juices with all their artificial sweeteners (sugar). Look for labels that say *100% juice with no sugar or other additives*.

In any liquid fast, there are certain juices you should avoid and certain ones that are more beneficial. Because of their acid content, most nutritionists do not advise orange or tomato juice. The best juices are fresh carrot, grape, celery, apple, cabbage or beet and from the actual fruit right there in your own juicer. Also recommended are “green drinks” made from green leafy vegetables. These are excellent “detoxifiers.”

Remember this rule of thumb when consuming fruit or vegetable juices: Fruit juices are “cleansers” and are best taken in the morning. Since vegetable juices are “restorers” and “builders,” they are best taken in the afternoon.

Question 81: Is there anyone who should NOT fast food or liquids?

Answer: In spite of the safety and benefits of fasting, there are certain persons who should NEVER fast without professional permission or supervision. These would include:

- Persons who are physically underweight or emaciated.
- Persons who are prone to anorexia, bulimia or other behavioral eating disorders. Those who suffer weakness or anemia.
- Persons who have tumors, bleeding ulcers, cancer, blood diseases or who have heart disease.
- Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart or other vital organs.
- Individuals who take insulin for diabetes or suffer any other blood sugar problem such as hyperglycemia.



Quit focusing on the food you're not eating. Quit talking about it. Focus on the God you're longing to be with.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

- Women who are pregnant or nursing.

If you consider yourself to be in one of the categories above, please do not start a fast without seeing your physician first. When you are assured that you are in good enough health by your physician, you are ready to begin your fast.

Question 82: What should I say if asked by friends or relatives?

Answer: Many people are reluctant to tell others that they are fasting so they will avoid the sin of the Pharisees, which was fasting just to gain attention and recognition for themselves. But be that as it may, eventually, people may notice you are not eating.

If friends and family express concern for your health, ease their fears by telling them that you will stop fasting the moment you feel you are harming your body or if the Lord leads you to end your fast, and that you have done your homework.

There is usually no reason for telling strangers or casual acquaintances that you are fasting. If you do, they may subject you to a lot of questions that you may not want to answer. But in any case, use your best judgment and the Lord's leading in telling people about your fast. For some, it may be a chance to take them deeper in their own walk.

Question 83: I'm going through a very difficult time right now. Is it wise to go without food when I am experiencing pain and sorrow?

Answer: Fasting may be incredibly beneficial in times of personal sorrow. The Lord is near to the broken-hearted. That is a promise found in scripture (Psalm 34:18). But I have learned that just because the Lord is near doesn't mean I am paying

attention enough to notice. Our tendency when we go through difficult times is one of two different directions. We either shut down completely and dwell on the situation or we go to the other extreme and fill our life with work, work, work to keep our mind off of our circumstance. In the Old Testament, David and his men mourned and fasted upon hearing of the death of Saul (2 Samuel 1:12), and Nehemiah did the same thing when he was informed of Jerusalem's decimated condition (Nehemiah 1:4).

It is never a bad or wrong thing to draw near to God, and especially in the hard times. I know of no other discipline that brings God into fuller focus than fasting. Fasting in times of sorrow or pain is like falling helplessly into the hands of a mighty God who stands ready to be your shelter and your strong tower. The things of earth truly do grow strangely dim, in the light of His beauty and grace. He sees and He knows and He is so much closer than you might have imagined.

Question 84: Why is fasting referred to as a “spiritual makeover?”

Answer: God said to Samuel, “For the Lord does not see as a man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7) It doesn't matter to God how good things appear to be going on the outside if we remain empty and void of His presence on the inside. Fasting cuts through all the junk. Fasting opens the door for the Holy Spirit to come in and do surgery on those weak, withered areas of your spiritual life, replacing them with life and power.

Question 85: Is it ok to fast for abundance? We seem to never have enough, living paycheck to paycheck, and barely getting by. Is it ok to fast for financial increase?

Answer: In short ... YES! In a previous question we talked about targeting our fast for specific things. To target your fast



Your body feeds off of what you want, but your spirit is the other part of you, and it feeds off of God. Here's the key, the part of you that will be strongest — body, soul or spirit — will be the part you feed. Feed your spirit.

FASTING — CLEAN SLATE

to ask the Lord to bless you so you can be a blessing to others is a great area to target with your fast. But you will have to overcome a few wrong mind-sets from the very beginning before the Lord can answer that prayer for abundance.

First, you have to reject smallness. Enlargement requires us to get out of our small boxes, our small routines, our small thinking, and our limited view of God. We think way too small for God's economy and ability. We need to advance and not shrink back, always thankful, but always believing God for more.

When you get God's vision for enlarging your tent, you get tired of talking about small stuff and you get fed up with what CAN'T be done. Enlarging your tent and your possibilities will require fasting, praying, and making room for some new people in your life.

Question 86: Can God honor my fast and help someone I love be delivered from drugs and alcohol even if they are not a Christian?

Answer: Yes, that is very possible and it has happened many times during a fast. If you know someone who is hooked on drugs, alcohol, some other kind of vice, I urge you to set aside the burger and fries and cry out to God on their behalf instead. Gather up the fragments of that person's fractured, wasted life as you fast and pray for his or her deliverance. God wants NOTHING wasted! Take that someone you love to the Lord and lay that person at Jesus' feet through prayer and fasting. Let Him restore and rebuild and fill them.

Question 87: Can fasting help me with my relationship with my grown children?

Answer: If you are a parent and the enemy has convinced you

that you never had a good relationship with your children and you never will or that it's a waste of time, then you have been fed a steady stream of lies. Maybe the enemy has whispered in your ear that too much stuff has happened and too many things have been said and done to ever repair the relationship. More lies! I believe that when you fast according to what God calls a fast you will "not hide yourself from your own flesh" (Isaiah 58:7). In other words, the walls that have divided you will crumble as every wall of resistance begins to weaken.

While you fast and pray, ask God to restore what the enemy has taken from your family. Pray that lines of communication that have been destroyed between your own flesh-and-blood relatives will be restored. In seasons of prayer and fasting we have seen miracles of restoration take place in families all over the world.

Question 88: What do I do when I am offered a meal in a social setting? How can I respond without being rude?

Answer: This happens, especially if you are on a fast that is longer than a few days. Our church does a 21-day fast each year so this is bound to come up at least once or twice. First things first, try to schedule your life without these kinds of events or settings as much as possible. Second, if you have a meeting during a fast, schedule it at a time that is not during a meal time and preferably at your office or someplace that isn't a restaurant. For those times when you are offered or presented a meal, politely decline with as little explanation as possible. The goal is to keep your fast private so as not to bring attention to your sacrifice...BUT...if they insist, then see this as an invitation from the Lord to share with them that you are fasting. Who knows what kinds of conversations might come from that kind of discussion. Perhaps you can share your faith.



Fasting is choosing to put yourself through a trial. It really is a choice. It is a statement that, by your own decision, says, “I want you so badly, Lord. I want to draw closer to you so much that I’ll go to this extreme to be with you.” His presence will find you wherever you are and speak to you.

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Question 89: Why does it feel like I face more mountains of opposition and trials when I am fasting? Am I the only one that experiences this?

Answer: No! Not by a long-shot. You experience opposition for two simple reasons...you are hungry, and there is an enemy that is going to go to great lengths to get you to quit. Don't give in. See it for what it is and pray right through it. The hunger is real. The enemy is real. But greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. You will sense and feel opposition from the powers of darkness when you fast. But this is a good thing. It means your passion for Jesus has caught the attention of the enemy. But the enemy has a problem...you are protected from the fiery darts of the enemy. That doesn't mean he won't shoot them anyway...it just means that they have no power.

Remain secure in your identity and the security of being a child of God. When Satan tested Jesus, the first thing he said was, "If you are the son of God..." "IF." Stand strong in the face of opposition knowing you have a heavenly Father who sees all and is nearer than you could ever imagine. No reason to fear. Fasting breaks off fear from you and places it on the shoulders of the enemy.

Question 89: If I have been struggling with sin or a particular sin, will God still honor my fast and hear my prayers?

Answer: The short answer is no, but with a very strong word of encouragement to go along with the "no." It is true that God may not hear or respond to our prayers when there are sin barriers in our lives. Psalm 66:18 says, If I regard iniquity (sin) in my heart, the Lord will not hear. Isaiah says that sin blocks God's hearing (Isaiah 59:1-2). But the good news is this: a fast will make you very aware of exactly where there is sin and what you need to do about it. There is always the offer

of forgiveness where there is confession, repentance, and a sincere effort to correct the wrong.

Fasting brings clarity in all areas and it is a light that shines in the dark places where hidden or unknown sin lives. Praise God for the cross and for His promises. *For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins* (1 John 1:9).

Question 91: We have continual money problems. How can I target my fast to address this issue?

Answer: Some people have money problems because they've gone their own selfish way and have refused the counsel of God's Word regarding financial matters. Others refuse to tithe and find themselves in a perpetual cycle of lack. Others have never asked God, in prayer, for His help with their financial difficulties. "You do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2). We must place our financial problems at the top of our prayer list, and then begin to fast and pray for Divine assistance be that wisdom, a breakthrough, or even a miracle. Make this area a target for your fast. Good money management will not make you spiritual. But if we are rightly related to Christ and growing in Him, it only makes sense that we will properly manage our money (Matthew 25:21). Begin to pray about every spending decision. Ask God for self-control and His provision.

Question 92: What if our money problems are due to unforeseeable circumstances and unfortunate events? How can fasting help us?

Answer: Some believers have financial problems through no fault of their own. Businesses collapse, accidents occur, illnesses attack in life-changing ways. Sometimes the affected folks can't handle the financial fallout. And many times they are



Fasting is like getting a magnifying glass and putting it on God. He was there all the time, but now you really see Him.

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left wondering, “What am I to do?” God still answers prayer to meet the needs, all needs, including the financial needs of His children. Fast and pray for a breakthrough. Bring your request before the throne of God with fasting and prayer with great faith in a God who will not let you down.

Question 93: What does it mean to “wait on the Lord?”

Answer: Too many times we get the impression that waiting on the Lord means that the Lord goes off and gets busy with the concerns of the world and forgets about us until He needs us for something. But that is not the case. Scripture says that He is always at work in us and through us.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to will and to act on His behalf of His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13

He also says that we are being built into a spiritual house:

You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:5

God is always at work on your behalf, building you into all you will need to be when He moves you into your assignment. So there is no wasted time. Waiting on God is more about our response to His working in us and through us. Like a great waiter or waitress, they just seem to be waiting for our eye to lift in their direction so they can move to serve us. We go about our lives and we do what God gives us to do, with a constant and watchful eye for the nod or whisper or movement of the

Lord, beckoning us to draw near.

Question 95: What kind of fast do you (Jentezen Franklin) do?

Answer: I have heard that this is one of the most asked questions our customer service team receives so I will attempt to answer it the best that I can. There is not a simple “cookie-cutter” response I can give because no two fasts are ever the same. Also, in different years either we may be going through something very difficult or there is an answer for direction I may need. So it varies.

I typically start a week or so before the corporate fast begins so I can speak into the heart and passion of a fast. There have been times when I have done the entire 21 days with liquids only, and there have been other years when I have started with a full fast for the first week or so and then switch to the Daniel fast for the rest of the time. There have been times when I will continue to fast after the official corporate fast has ended. I try to be led by the Spirit while working with the different travel obligations I have.

Most years, Cherise and I will agree on what we do and do it together. There is great power and strength in knowing your best friend is right there with you in the process. You have to be led of the Spirit on the type of fast you undertake and when you plan to change it up. My suggestion is that you try to do a minimum of three days full fast, or more if you feel led, and then switch to Daniel. Pray about it and let the Holy Spirit show you what is right for you.



If I could say one thing to young people who are seeking and searching, I would say: If you will seek Him, you will find Him. If you will knock, He will open. If you will call, He will answer.

A VOW TO GOD THROUGH FASTING

Question 96: Do you (Jentezen Franklin) only fast during your annual fast or do you fast at different times of the year as well?

Answer: I don't believe that scripture teaches anywhere that we are to fast only once each year. To the contrary, I believe it was intended to be a lifestyle. Whenever I am faced with a major decision for our family or for the ministry, I will rarely respond or act until I have fasted and prayed. Many Saturdays, I will fast until the Lord has given me a word for that Sunday's message. When one of our kids is going through something difficult, Cherise and I will fast. I have just seen the power and the anointing that comes with fasting. I want more of the Lord, not less. I want more of His presence, not less. There are mountains I cannot move, and some that can only be moved by prayer and fasting. I believe that if you will make this a lifestyle all year long, you will see the Lord move in ways you have never experienced.

Question 97: Why don't more churches and ministries endorse or emphasize fasting?

Answer: I can't speak for other ministries, and in fact, when I am fasting I am often prompted to pray for other churches and ministries. We pray for the other churches in our town during a fast. We pray that God will bless the voices of Christ that go out on the airwaves.

I have seen an increase, especially in the last five years, of mainline churches and denominations beginning to embrace the scriptural teaching of fasting. Perhaps the desperate dangers in our nation and world have caused people to take greater steps of faith and recognize that if God doesn't move, we are in trouble. It is always exciting to receive that phone call from a pastor that says, "We took the leap and did our first corporate (church-wide) fast!" There is such excitement in

their voice as they tell me testimony after testimony about the way God moved in their midst and the excitement it generated.

I think the notion of not eating food for extended periods of time is such a radical thought, especially to the western, three-meal-a-day culture where so much of our social life revolves around sharing food with a friend. But when churches or individuals do take that first leap into the unknown and try their first fast, they are never disappointed.

Question 98: What would you say to a pastor or church leader that wants to do their first church-wide fast?

Answer: I would say go for it, but I would also say that you need some time to work up and prepare for it. I believe that January is the best time to do it because we offer it as a first fruits of our year. January is also a good time because so many people have made new year's resolutions and are ready for change and the new and the next. I think the best plan would be to start talking to your staff and leadership team about fasting when you get them all back just prior to the start of the church new year which is fall, or when schools start again and families are back from summer vacations.

Having churches on the east coast and one on the west coast, I have learned that "fall" means August on the east coast and September on the west coast. Whenever they are all back and you are kicking off your new year, teach your leaders and staff from the scripture about fasting and plant your vision first in the leaders and staff. If their questions are answered early on, then the people they serve will have their questions answered as well.

Next, I would start talking about it to the entire congregation in October or November so it doesn't get lost in all of the holiday focus and preparation. I would also empower a team



God respects vows. When you make a vow to God and keep it, He will entrust great power to you. Sometimes the only thing that will keep you on a fast is the fact that you made a vow.

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of leaders to gather all the resources you might need, such as information sheets, and a question and answer guide similar to this book. But more important than anything else, help them understand the “why” behind the fast. Show them in scripture and tell them why you believe it’s the right thing to do for your church.

I do want to finish this answer with a special word. I just talked about a timeline and about planning way out ahead, but this is in no way etched in stone. In fact, nearly every fast mentioned in the Bible sprang out of an urgent need or desire for God to move or protect or when a breakthrough was needed RIGHT NOW. If God impresses upon you to call a fast, do it no matter the time of year. If it’s the Holy Spirit doing the calling, your people will sense it too and follow.

Question 99: Will fasting help me with unforgiveness that I can’t seem to get past?

Answer: The Bible says that wickedness is manifested in unforgiveness. Scripture is so clear that if you want the Lord to forgive you your sins, then you need to forgive others their offenses toward you (Matthew 6:15). It also says that he who has been forgiven little, loves little (Luke 7:47). Forgive. Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting it to affect the one you are angry with.

When you fast and pray, give God the person who has wronged you. Release them from your angry grip and ask the Lord to heal you of your unforgiveness. Jesus himself, when telling us how we ought to pray included these words, “*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others their trespasses.*” (Matthew 6:9-13)

Fasting will bring you to a place of humility and forgiveness like no other spiritual discipline I know. And to go on to your

next level with God, you must pass the test of forgiveness first.

Question 100: What can I expect to happen after the fast is over?

Answer: As I stated in a previous question, many times, what we have fasted for does not happen during the actual fast. Sometimes it does and it is amazing and sudden and even miraculous, because there will be no other explanation. But more often than not, God responds over the weeks and months that follow. All of the miracles in Jesus' life took place in the three years following the fast. Most of the books of the New Testament and the entire expansion of the early church came in the years that followed Paul's initial three day fast. The wonderful news you have to take with you following a fast is that you can live with great expectation and with the knowledge that you are different because you have been in the presence of the Lord. He has heard your prayers and petitions and is working all things together for your good! (Romans 8:28)

Question 101: Where can I find resources to help me get started and stay on track with my fast?

Answer: While there are many places on the internet with resources to offer, I believe we have the best resources you can find. If you will go to Jentezenfranklin.org, you will find devotions, blogs, message notes from my messages on fasting as well as Small Group Connection Notes and Questions. Additionally, you will find the books I have written on fasting and many other fasting resources.

FINAL WORDS

As we come to the last few paragraphs of this informational book, there are a few final words I would like to share with you.



There's no greater time to fast than at the beginning of a year. If I pray in the morning, it sets the course for the rest of the day. If I read my Bible in the morning, it sets the course for the rest of the day. If I go to church on Sunday, it sets the course for the rest of the week. And if I fast at the beginning of a year, it sets the course for the rest of the year.

A VOW TO GOD THROUGH FASTING

Friend, you do not have to fast alone. Our daily blogs will help you feel connected to so many other believers who are going through the same exact things you are during our annual 21-day fast in January.

I believe with all my heart that the Lord wants to speak to you and do an amazing thing in your life...right now. Until you have fasted and prayed you have only scratched the surface of a deeper communion with your Savior. I believe with all my heart that this ministry would not be anywhere near where it is had we never fasted. I have seen the results with my own eyes and want the same thing for you. I pray we have been able to answer YOUR questions about fasting. I also pray that you experience depths you have never known and breakthroughs around every corner. An amazing adventure is there to be experienced if you will make the commitment and begin.

As always, we would love to hear from you and share in your victories. Your victories are our victories! Your breakthroughs are our breakthroughs! A rising tide raises all ships and you are about to experience wave upon wave of God's blessing and presence. Please do not hesitate to write us and tell us about your fasting experience. Fasting has changed my life, and it will change yours too!

Until you have **fasted** and **prayed**, you have only scratched the surface of a deeper more intimate relationship with God. In this book, New York Times Best-selling author, Jentezen Franklin explains the spiritual power of fasting and answers the 101 most asked questions submitted to *jentezenfranklin.org* year after year.

Full of all new principles gleaned from decades of fasting experience, this teaching offers a deeper understanding of God's plan for fasting and the benefits available to those who participate. If you want to regain your spiritual edge and move into victory this book has the answers you need to help you take your next step of faith!



Jentezen Franklin is the Senior Pastor of Free Chapel, a multi campus church. Each week his television program *Kingdom Connection* is broadcast on major networks all over the world. A *New York Times* best-selling author, Jentezen has written eight books including the groundbreaking *Fasting and Right People-Right Place-Right Plan*.

Jentezen and his wife Cherise have been married 30 years, have five children and two grandchildren, and make their home in Gainesville, Georgia.



BKFAST101