

Fasting For Breakthrough

Matthew 6:16-18 ¹⁶ “Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face ¹⁸ so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

Jesus expected that his disciples would fast. Fasting is a difficult discipline and He does not want the effort to be wasted!

First, we have to decide that fasting will be a fixture of our faith. So many things do not change without fasting!

Fasting gets God's attention, and when we are sacrificing, His eyes are fixed on us, and a breakthrough is coming.

2 Chronicles 16:9a ⁹ For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

Jeremiah 29:13 ¹³ You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart.

We have a decision to make: Will I fast to be noticed by men (as a righteous person), or will I fast to be noticed by God?

HOW we fast and WHY we fast matter more than WHAT we fast.

Strikingly similar passage

Isaiah 58:3-7 ³ ‘Why have we fasted and You do not see? *Why* have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?’ Behold, on the day of your fast you find *your* desire, And drive hard all your workers. ⁴ “Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist. You do not fast like *you do* today to make your voice heard on high. ⁵ “Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one’s head like a reed And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the Lord?

Religious vs spiritual fast

A religious fast (usually done to please men) can be done in the flesh and in anger, just to say we have fasted.

A spiritual fast is an offering to the Lord, and just like anything else, He only wants what we will give cheerfully.

⁶ “Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke?

Fasting for God’s eyes means cutting out anything unclean that may have become part of our life and routines.

⁷ “Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Fasting for God’s eyes means doing good for others while you are denying yourself, concealing the fast if you can.

Ask God to CHOOSE your fast for you! Ask God, “What should I fast? How long should I fast? What should I be doing while I fast?”

Isaiah 58:6-12 ⁸ “Then your light will break out like the dawn, And your recovery will speedily spring forth; And your righteousness will go before you; The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

Fasting causes Christ to shine through us more clearly, begins the healing of what is broken, and moves us forward in spiritual growth.

⁹ “Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; You will cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you remove the yoke from you midst, The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, ¹⁰ And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom *will become* like midday.

Fasting accelerates answers to prayer, sharpens our ear to the voice of God, and helps us to find Him in our seeking!

Fasting puts our bodies and spirits into mourning, but secures the help we need to come out of a dark place into light!

¹¹ “And the Lord will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.

Fasting brings guidance where we have lacked direction, strengthens us, and makes us a source of refreshment to others!

¹² “Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.

Fasting strengthens us to face the things that have been ruined by sin and to begin to rebuild until all is restored.