



Firstfruit to Shavuot: Fasting for Breakthrough & Intimacy

I. A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY

- A. An Opportunity to Fast and Pray:** I want to invite you to join in a special time of consecration to pray and fast together. For those who want to participate (starting on first fruits and proceeding up to Shavuot), we are recommending folks to *make sweet resolutions* to fast the following things:
1. **Food** – Daniel Fast: In a nutshell, this partial fast involves abstaining from all meat and animal products, dairy products, sweeteners, refined/processed foods, deep-fried foods, as well as most all non-water drinks. Those participating will (in moderate quantities) eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes while drinking water. Others may wish to do a water/liquid fast for at least part of the time but the Daniel Fast will be the “bar” for those wanting to join in. To read about more of the specifics, you can access the following website: (<https://ultimatedanielfast.com/ultimate-daniel-fast-food-guidelines/>). We are not intending to exactly mimic Daniel’s fast as found in the book of Daniel but to emulate Daniel’s spirit and intention of pursuing YHWH and “spiritual food” more than physical food.
 2. **Time** – **At least** one hour daily in prayer: Yeshua stated to His disciples in the garden, “Could you not tarry with me one hour?” I believe He is saying that to us in this season as well. This consecrated time is not about just limiting our food intake but seeking God in a more concerted way.
 - a. *scheduled times*: the single most effective way to grow in prayer is to schedule times with God and then regularly honor those commitments. As you implement this aspect, I encourage those participating to be very intentional about planning these regular prayers times.
 - b. *prayer lists*: regularly using prayer lists or slowly pray-reading the Bible helps provide us with vocabulary to talk to God—this is particularly helpful when we don’t know what to pray.
 - c. *prayer model*: Dick Eastman developed a prayer model that helps a person effectively pray for a whole hour by dividing up the hour into twelve five-minute segments: 1. Praise & worship; 2. Waiting on the Lord; 3. Confession of guilt and sin; 4. Praying Scriptures; 5. Watching; 6. Intercession; 7. Petitions; 8. Thanksgiving; 9. Song; 10. Contemplation/ meditation; 11. Listening; 12. Praise. You may order free prayer guides from Every Home for Christ that contain more information on this model (<https://www.ehc.org/free-prayer-maps>) as well as accessing the following internet link: <http://www.jwipn.com/pdf/thehourthatchangestheworld.pdf>
 3. **Media** – Media fast: Our general recommendation is no facebook, Netflix, video games, secular internet surfing, watching/reading about sports, or non-religious books or movies. We encourage each person to pray to ultimately decide what this media fast looks like for them in this season.
 - a. *media inundation*: In the Western world, Satan’s tinkering has yielded a material-humanist-enlightened-postmodern society built upon the faithless, cynical assumption that the most superficial distractions of life are actually the sum total of our purpose. Thus, our days are spent overstimulated to the point of numbness. Irony of ironies: A gluttonous, indulgent, entertainment-addicted, Twitterized age filled with illicit desire has produced the most bored and boring people. This is why fasting matters now more than ever. When our days are marked by excess, we lack the pure passion of hunger (Engle, 42).
 - b. *out of shape*: “The slack decadence of culture-Christianity cannot produce athletes of the Spirit.” (Walter Wink as found in *The Jesus Fast*, 55)
 - c. *taking out what cannot ultimately satisfy*: Millions don’t defy God consciously; they default to cake and television. Except for the periodic rush of sex and sport and cinema, life yawns. There is no passion for significance. For many, no passion at all (John Piper as found in *The Jesus Fast*, 97).
 - d. *grace needed for restraint*: Does it take any grace to eat food or watch TV? Not really. On the other hand, grace is absolutely needed for restraint and prayer. The key, then, is not in the willpower but in the pleasure of the product as our heart opens further to His Spirit (Engle, 174).
 4. **Accountability**: We encourage those participating to make this commitment accountable to another person.

B. Additional Recommendations

1. Three Things: I encourage each of us to prayerfully pick three specific things that we are asking God for during this set-apart time. I also encourage each of us to continue praying (even if it's after this set apart prayer and fasting time) for these requests until we get the answer.
 - a. impossible situations: The greatest moments in life are the miraculous moments when human impotence and divine omnipotence intersect — and they intersect when we draw a circle around the impossible situations in our lives and invite God to intervene (Batterson, 13).
 - b. miraculous prayers: Miracles are the by-product of prayers that were prayed by you or for you. And that should be all the motivation you need to pray (Batterson, 16).
 - c. specific prayers: The more faith you have, the more specific your prayers will be. And the more specific your prayers are, the more glory God receives. Like Honi, who prayed for a specific type of rain, nuanced prayers give God an opportunity to reveal more shades of His sovereignty. If our prayers aren't specific, however, God gets robbed of the glory that He deserves because we second-guess whether or not He actually answered them. We never know if the answers were the result of specific prayer or general coincidences that would have happened anyway (Batterson, 26).
2. Accountability: Spouses & family to regularly pray together. Also consider partnering with a friend to pray together during this time.
3. Additional Personal Things: Ask God for specific things He would want you to do during this time to make this more special and set apart.
4. Family/Children: As parents talk together about this with your children to see what things they may desire to fast during this time and what their five things would be.
5. Take Communion: As a part of this increased time of consecration, I encourage each person to take communion every day.

D. Congregational Adjustments

1. United Prayer Points: We as an elder team will come up with a few major prayer points for us to be corporately praying for in this season. Please see one of us if you have input related to this.
2. Additional Prayer Times: We will have more set apart times to pray as a community.
3. Lifeboat Prayer Times: When we meet in our Lifeboats, we will have specific times for prayer as a community.
4. Congregational Simplification: Our intent will be to simplify things as much as possible so as to have more time to wholeheartedly seek YHWH.

E. Encouragement & Potential Responses

1. Prayer & Counsel: My pastoral encouragement is to pray about this. If you have health issues, check with your doctor before starting this.
2. Initial Irritation/Resistance: You might initially be irritated about this. Just pray and ask God what (if anything) He would have you to do. Remember, this is an opportunity and not an order.
 - a. give it time: the community has a couple of weeks to process and pray through this opportunity. Read through these notes, pray, and let it marinate in you for several days until you make your initial decision related to this.
3. If Not Called to Join: If ultimately you don't want to join the community in this time, we would only ask that you not discourage others from participating.

F. My Initiation Into Fasting: As a young man in college in my late teens years ago, I was challenged by Ted Haggard (and others) to enter into a life of prayer and fasting. He recommended the benefits of a once a week water fast in addition to a three-day water fast each month. I was inspired as I listened to the teachings and read about the physical and spiritual benefits of fasting. I was actually led to Colorado from Oklahoma during one of the three day water fasts at Praise Mountain in 1992 (a prayer and fasting retreat center west of Colorado Springs). I have had a growing conviction to speak more of the Scriptural call to fast and to the benefits that the Scriptures describes and that I've seen validated in my own life.

G. Opening Caveat: I wanted to express much appreciation for Mike Bickle’s encouragement to freely use and edit his resources. Much of the fasting specifics below is a recompilation of much of his excellent notes and teachings on fasting.

II. DIFFERENT CATEGORIES & TYPES OF FASTING

- A. Positioning Our Heart To Receive Greater Grace: The Fasted Lifestyle (Mt. 6:1–23)** The Sermon on the Mount describes God’s upside-down kingdom. It is a comprehensive teaching from Yeshua found in Matthew 5-7 which describes the “fasted lifestyle” of submitting to weakness in order to greater receive God’s strength and grace in our lives. The five grace-releasing activities described in this passage are listed below. Our heart receives more grace as we consistently and secretly:
1. Serve: Doing good works (5:13-16); others will see (5:16) and glorify God
 - a. Fasting (giving of) our time
 - b. Helping the needy (widows, orphans, foreigners, leaders in the Kingdom)
 - c. Preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, delivering the oppressed
 - d. There is also a false “justice movement” arising in the earth; “works” without repentance and Yeshua at the foundation
 2. Give: Giving alms (offerings) (6:1-4; 19-21)
 - a. Fasting (investing) our resources
 - b. Offerings consist of giving resources that are above our tithe to our local community
 - i. Missions: gospel going to the nations
 - ii. Benevolence: poor/need
 - iii. Ministries that are building up the kingdom
 3. Pray (6:5-13)
 - a. This is a fasting (giving of) our time
 - b. Song lyric: *“I take my cold, cold heart; I take my unrenewed mind; I take Your Word in my hand; And I give You time to come and melt me”*
 - c. For effective prayer:
 - i. knowledge of God: growing in a proper understanding of God
 - ii. time: scheduling the time and being consistent to keep the time to pray
 - iii. vocabulary: discovering words to say to Him by developing our own prayer list or pray-reading the Bible
 - iv. listening: asking God questions and discovering how to hear His voice
 4. Bless Adversaries (6:14-15; 5:44)
 - a. Fasting (not defending) our reputation
 - b. Forgiving and doing good to our enemies
 - c. Forgiveness is: Father, I don’t hold it against them; I release this into Your hands; It is a process
 - d. Forgiveness is not: condoning or forgetting; It is not necessarily reconciliation, and it is not a dismissal of justice in consequences
 5. Fasting Food (6:16-18)
 - a. Fasting (giving of) our physical strength
 - b. Declaring that God is our strength and we pursue Him more than our necessary food
- B. Proper Attitude Towards These Grace-Releasing Activities**
1. His Love For You is Already Supreme and Complete: *You are not striving for God—He is already yours!* Your consecration cannot change or improve your standing in the love of God. For example, you are not loved more when you fast, and you cannot be loved less if you do not fast. His love is supreme and complete and has nothing to do with your level of fervor or devotion. Ultimately, any effort you make toward a [consecrated] season or lifestyle is only sustainable because God’s love is at work within. It is His labor, not our own (Engle, 67).

- a. *My Beloved Son*: Please note what launched the fast of Jesus: the proclamation of His Father, “You are My beloved Son.” Timing is crucial. Jesus was proclaimed the beloved Son *before* He did anything noteworthy (Engle, 68).
 - b. *receiving more*: God gives more to our heart but does not love us more when we live in spiritual disciplines.
2. *Positions Our Heart to Receive More*: “grace-releasing activities” in our devotional life position our heart to receive more strength in the grace of God
 3. *Not “Earning” Anything*: Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, meditation on the Word, etc) are ordained by God as a necessary way to posture our heart to freely receive more grace. These activities do not earn us God’s favor. The power is in the “bonfire of God’s presence” not in the cold flesh positioned in front of it.
 4. *Submitting to “Voluntary Weakness”*: These five areas are expressions of “voluntary weakness” because we invest our natural strengths (time, money, energy, reputation, etc.) into Kingdom purposes. The normal use of our strengths is to increase our personal comfort, wealth and honor. In other words, by the fasted lifestyle we bring our natural strengths to God as we trust Him to “return” our strength back to us in a way that enriches our personal spheres of responsibility and transforms us with meekness.
 5. *Calling Us to the Process of Developing Spiritual Maturity*: God lives in our spirit but expresses His life in our soul progressively. God fully lives in us at the new birth, the measure that He expresses Himself in us is the measure of our maturity. A carnal believer has the life of God in their spirit but not expressed in their soul or heart.

C. Five different type of food fasts

1. The ***regular fast*** is going without food and drinking only water or that which has no calories.
2. The ***liquid fast*** is going without solid food and drinking only light liquids (like vegetable/fruit juices).
3. The ***partial fast***, or Daniel fast, abstains from tasty foods and eats only vegetables or nuts, etc.
4. The ***Benedict Fast*** established by Saint Benedict (525 AD), consists of only one meal a day.
5. The ***absolute fast*** or Esther fast, abstains from food and water (Esth. 4:16). Exercise caution! If wanting to proceed with this type of fast, get input from your pastors, doctor, etc. One can’t physically go for much more than three days without water.
 - a. *voluntary weakness*: Fasting embraces voluntary weakness in order to experience more of God’s power and presence. It is a paradox that we become weak in the natural in order to receive more strength from the Spirit. Yeshua revealed to Paul that the release of God’s power in his life was connected to his willingness to embrace weakness. This revelation is foundational to understanding fasting.

⁹ *My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. (2 Cor. 12:9)*
 - b. *strength made perfect in weakness*: The “strength made perfect” refers to Paul experiencing more of God’s power. Many desire to walk in “perfected power,” but do not want to embrace the necessary weakness. The most challenging issue in fasting is the physical weakness it produces.
 - c. *physically weak*: We become physically weak and can’t function in the way we usually do (Ps. 109:24).

III. SCRIPTURAL REASONS FOR/BENEFITS TO FASTING

A. Normal for Believers: Fasting is part of the normal Christian life. It is often thought of as an optional discipline. Yeshua said, “When you fast,” implying that fasting occurred in the regular course of a disciple’s life.

¹⁷ *When you fast...18 your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Mt. 6:17-18)*

1. *Fasting is for Everyone*: I want to dispel the notion that extended fasting and prayer is just for the few “spiritual” people. In actuality, fasting is one of three disciplines that Jesus called His own disciples to: He said, “When you pray,” “When you give alms” and “When you fast,” you will receive a reward from the Father (*The Jesus Fast*, 82).
2. *Rewards*: Yeshua emphasized that the Father ***will reward*** fasting. This proclamation makes fasting important. Yeshua called us to fast because He knows that its rewards will far outweigh its difficulties.

- a. *external & internal*: Some of the rewards are **external**, as our circumstances are touched by God's power. Some of our rewards are **internal**, as our hearts encounter Him. We fast both to walk in more of God's power to change the world, and to encounter more of His heart to change our heart!
3. *A Faith Releaser*: Reduced to its simplest formulation, fasting helps to bring us back to our senses, or rather, beyond our senses into the realm of faith. This is why fasting is for us, not God (Engle, 176).
4. *A Resetting Mechanism*: Prayer combined with fasting resets our rhythm to the cadence of the Spirit.
- B. For Power**: We fast to experience the **power of God in personal ministry**.
1. *Power to Set Others Free*: We pray for God's power to bring healing to family members, and in national and international crises. When the disciples could not set a demonized boy free, Yeshua told them that that kind of demon did not go out except by prayer and fasting (Mt. 17:21).
- ¹⁵Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic...¹⁶I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him. ¹⁹The disciples said, "Why could we not cast him out?" ...²⁰Jesus said, "Because of your unbelief..."²¹This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." (Mt. 17:15-21)
- a. *contending for others*: In fasting, we labor in secret with the Lord so that we might more effectively bring His heart of love to the broken and oppressed. We deliberately weaken the controlling power of our physical appetites and soften our spirits. We yield. We hunger. The cost is real (Engle, 137).
2. *John the Baptist's Power*: The power of John the Baptist's preaching was connected to his fasted lifestyle (Mt. 11:18).
3. *Able to Receive More*: In fasting, many would say you do not change God, you only change yourself. No doubt, this is mostly true. Fasting certainly does not gain you spiritual points with God or prove your maturity. Derek Prince notes that "fasting helps a Christian receive direction and power from the Holy Spirit." In other words, fasting does not win the battle, per se. Instead, rightly practiced, fasting brings both soul and body into subjection of the Holy Spirit. . . . By removing the carnal barriers, fasting makes a way for the Holy Spirit's omnipotence to work the "exceeding abundantly above" (Ephesians 3: 20) of God's promises. Fasting positions man in humility to better appropriate the fullness of God's will for our lives. Those aspects of God's will that we can achieve through prayer alone are like the tip of an iceberg, while the fullness lies deep below the surface, reserved not as a prize for the faster to win but as grace for the humbled faster to discover (Engle, 131).
- a. *personal anointing*: Fasting will be crucial to enlarging your life with God, forming your voice and adding gravity and weight to your soul (Engle, 79).
- C. For Grace to Understand**: We ask to receive more insight about God, His Word, and His plans (Dan. 1:17; 5:12-14; 8:16-17; 9:13; 10:11-12; Isa. 26:9; Jer. 5:4-5; 23:20; 30:24).
1. We fast for **prophetic revelation of the end times**.
- ²⁰The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed...the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly. (Jer. 23:20)
2. *Daniel's Quest for Understanding*: Daniel sought God with fasting and prayer and received revelation of Israel's end-time destiny (Dan. 9:1-3, 20-23; 10:1-3, 12-14). After fasting for 21 days, an angel told him that his prayers were heard because he set his heart to understand (Dan. 10:12). As he sought the Lord, the angel Gabriel gave him "skill to understand" (Dan. 9:20-23).
- ¹² Daniel...from the first day that you set your heart to understand...your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹⁴I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days... (Dan. 10:12-14)
- ³ I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer with fasting...²¹ While I was speaking...Gabriel...²² talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand...²³ understand the vision... (Dan. 9:3, 21-23)
3. *To Set Our Hearts to Seek God's Face*
- a. *To confess our sin*: To recommit our heart to 100-fold obedience and agreement with Yeshua.
- ²⁰I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin... (Dan. 9:20)
- ¹⁹Repent...that times of refreshing may come from God's presence (Acts 3:19)
- D. For the Fulfillment of God's Promises** (for ourselves, our city, or our nation)

1. *Nehemiah's Fast*: God answered Nehemiah after he fasted and prayed for God's promises to his generation (Neh. 1:3-11; 9:32-38).
2. *Cornelius' Fast*: After Cornelius fasted and prayed, his whole house was saved and a door of grace was opened for the Gentiles to be saved (Acts 10:1-4, 30-31).
3. *For Personal Promises*: God has prophetic plans and promises for each person, family, city, and nation. God's prophetic promises are invitations, not guarantees. We must actively seek the Lord for their fulfillment. Daniel prayed and fasted for the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel (Dan. 9:1-3; 10:1-4).

E. To Stop a Crisis (individual or national)

1. *The Ninevites Fast*: Jonah warned the wicked city of Nineveh that God was going to destroy them. When Nineveh repented with fasting, God showed mercy and spared the city (Jon. 3:3-9).
2. *Hannah's Fast*: Fasting to seek God for mercy during a personal or national crisis is biblical. Hannah, Samuel's mother, distressed by her barrenness, prayed and fasted. God answered her and gave her a son who became a prophet (1 Sam. 1:7).
3. *Joel's Call to Fast*: Many times, God reversed Israel's desperate situation when they turned to Him in corporate prayer and fasting. Joel prophesied that God would judge Israel using locusts, and then later by a Babylonian invasion (Joel 1:2-18; 2:1-9). On both occasions, Joel called Israel to turn to God in prayer and fasting (Joel 1:13-14; 2:12-15).
4. *When No Human Remedy Exists*: When there is no human remedy for a nation, we must call a fast. Jonah warned the wicked city of Nineveh that God was going to destroy them. When Nineveh repented with fasting, the Lord spared the city (Jon. 3:3-9). God delivered Jehoshaphat in a military crisis (2 Chr. 20).

F. For Protection

1. *Ezra's Fast*: Before Ezra led a group of Jews from Babylon back to Israel to help rebuild their nation, he fasted and prayed to God for protection on the journey because it was so dangerous (Ezra 8:21-23). Travel was dangerous in the ancient world because bands of thieves often attacked groups to take money and supplies.
2. *Esther's Fast*: Esther called the Jews in Persia to fast for three days after Haman set into motion a plan to kill all the Jews (Esth. 3:13; 4:7). Esther first needed protection because she was going to approach King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) without a royal summons (the penalty was death). Many cried out in prayer and fasting (Esth. 4:3, 16; 5:1-6). The Lord spared Esther's life and then reversed the situation among the Jews concerning Haman's evil plans (Esth 9:1).

G. For Direction

1. *Personal Direction*: Throughout the apostolic scriptures, the church fasted for supernatural direction. We fast for direction for our personal life, family, ministry or our assignment in the marketplace, etc.
2. *Fasting in Acts*: Paul and others fasted and prayed for direction for their ministry (Acts 13:1-2) and before selecting and commissioning elders of the new churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (Acts 14:23).

H. Internal Heart Benefits

1. Fasting leads to ***tenderizing our hearts*** so that we feel loved and God's presence more.
2. Fasting leads to ***changing our desires*** and enlarging our desire for righteousness (Heb. 1:9).
3. Fasting leads to ***increasing our understanding*** of the Word and the spirit of revelation operating in our life (including receiving prophetic dreams).
4. Fasting leads to ***making our body healthier*** and changes what we desire to eat and drink. It helps free us from overindulgence in legitimate physical activities that dull us.
5. Fasting leads to ***strengthening our sense of identity*** as sons of God before the Father and as a bride before the Son. Our identity is rooted in the knowledge of God's affection for us.
 - a. Circumstances, promotion, & demotion are responded to the same
6. Fasting leads to ***enhancing our spiritual pleasure***: Fasting restrains our physical pleasure, but it enhances our spiritual pleasure. Our greatest pleasure comes by feasting on the person of Yeshua. Fasting is an exchange where we abstain from certain things to "feast" on God's word and prayer, whereby we experience more of His grace.

I. Fasting's Outward Trajectory (Isaiah 58:7-8)

6 "No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. 7 Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. Isaiah 58:7-8

1. Summation: In Isaiah 58, fasting is 1) to loose the bonds of wickedness; 2) to undo heavy burdens; 3) to help the oppressed go free; 4) to give bread to the hungry; 5) to receive the light of revelation in God's Word; 6) for emotional and physical health; and 7) for righteousness to break forth.
2. Into the Fray: God wants us to prayerfully become involved in the lives of people that are challenging, time-consuming, and messy. As fasting Believers we are called into the mess. What mess is before you right now that you have been avoiding where you as a Believer can (potentially) bring change? What about adding fasting food and praying to God in the midst of this endeavor.

IV. THE YESHUA/JESUS FAST (OR BRIDEGROOM FAST)

- A. Discontent & Hungry for God:** A mourning heart is fiercely discontent and desperately hungry for God—this is the Bridegroom fast. We refuse to accept the current state of our spiritual barrenness and dullness.
- B. Desiring God:** The Bridegroom fast is primarily centered on desire—both understanding God's desire for us and awakening our own desire back toward Him. God imparts new desires to us. Once we taste the nearness of God's presence, we cannot live without more of Him.
- C. Positioning Our Heart:** Fasting positions our hearts to be expanded as we encounter Yeshua as our Bridegroom God. Our spiritual capacity to receive from God increases. Fasting before our Bridegroom God is a catalyst to speed up the depth and the measure in which we receive from the Lord. We receive greater measures of revelation at an accelerated pace, and with a deeper impact upon our hearts.
- D. Tenderizing Our Hearts:** The idea that fasting changes us internally is a new idea to some. Fasting results in tenderizing our hearts. When this occurs, we make different choices, which lead to different outcomes in the places we go and the people we meet. When our values are different, it affects who we marry, how we raise children, how we spend our money, and what focus we have in ministry.
- E. Spiritual Hunger:** Our desire for God is His gift to us, both the sweet and painful sides of our desire. Our craving for Yeshua causes joy and pain in our hearts. We are exhilarated and wounded in our love for Him. The painful longing has a divine purpose: spiritual hunger is a divine agent that leads us to greater love. It results in making room for love and purity to have their full way in our hearts.
- F. God's Rewards:** God rewards those who hunger for righteousness (Mt. 6:17). One of the rewards of fasting is a breakthrough of new desires in our heart as the bonds of wickedness are broken in our lives.
- G. Renewed in Love:** Like the original, a radical new Jesus movement will operate by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit taken to extraordinary measure. It will be a movement purged of unbelief, daring to believe God's truth rather than dilute it. It will embrace extended fasting in response to love, not to prove our worth, but for the sake of gaining a right mind. Fasting is spiritual fuel not because days of hunger somehow satisfy a requirement but because impediments are removed and spirit life soars. Rather than straining for a proper penance, we are renewed in the effervescence of love (Engle, 168).
- H. Probed & Strengthened by God:** The test of hunger exposes one's inner house of cards, which is why extended fasting is critical if we want to progress into more mature levels of sonship. Fasting is a wedge to maximize the exposure of our unbelieving hearts to the probing, healing, strengthening work of God (Engle, 172).
- I. God's Victory:** The victory is always in the cross, not the fast; yet in the wisdom of God you are sure to traverse most deeply into particular aspects of this wisdom through fasting more than in any other experience. Fasting is war, because the cross is all about victory. We must gain (and regain) this revelation so that we can continually release it in prayer. On the 31st day, I was not roaring my victory in the fast but His victory (Engle, 173).
- J. Anchored to Christ:** This is why we study the Jesus fast, because it gives us an anchor for our own submission to Christ. We must live experientially in Christ even as we exist positionally in Christ. The

purpose is to yield no part of ourselves on earth that is not yielded in heaven. In that place the authority of Christ through us is unhindered, complete (Engle, 174).

K. In Summation: the Jesus fast is a “chosen fast” in that it is greatly desired by the Holy Spirit (Engle, 175).

1. It is not a routine fast but a call to sonship;
2. It is grounded in the unconditional love and approval of the Father. Love forms identity, but the Jesus fast establishes it;
3. It centers the hearing ear of the disciple upon the Father’s voice;
4. It produces inner authority by virtue of surrender to God and restraint of human appetites, purging the soul of unbelief by trusting in the timing and promises of God;
5. It defeats the strongman in personal measure;
6. It inaugurates war in the heavens between angels and principalities;
7. It paves the way for mass evangelism, signs and wonders to follow.

L. Yeshua Fasting Through Us: We do not achieve the items listed above, we believe in the One who achieved it for us. The Jesus fast is really about Jesus fasting through us! Does this make it easy? Hardly. We will be tested, too (Engle, 175).

M. Breaking Up the Fallow Ground: this is hard, unfruitful ground where “weeds” are prevalent *I said, ‘Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love. Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek YHWH, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you.’*
Hosea 10:12

1. Confession of Sins: The past must be clear; all sins confessed; make things right to others
2. Doubtful Things Removed: Every doubtful thing removed from our lives; everything is permissible but not all things are beneficial; revival is not owed to us
 - a. Where have I become hardened?
 - b. Where have the weeds of worldliness grown in my heart?
 - c. Where have I become unfruitful, idle?
 - d. Where are the present-tense testimonies?
3. Quick Obedience: Prompt, implicit, and unreserved obedience to the Spirit of God; what if I miss Him—it’s better than what you’ve got now
4. Public Confession of Christ: share with others what He’s done for you

N. Big Picture Prayer Points: To fulfill the Great Commission, I suggest the following focal points for agreement in prayer and fasting (Engle, 203):

1. Unity according to John 17
2. Global outpouring of the Holy Spirit
3. Family and friends by name
4. Laborers for the harvest
5. Unreached people groups
6. Fullness of Israel

V. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Submitting to Weakness:** During a fast time I am usually more spacey, physically weaker, more easily agitated or frustrated. In short I am much more conscious of my weakness and need before God.
- B. Not a Weight Loss Program:** You will lose weight as you fast initially but fasting is not a wise long-range weight loss plan.
- C. Regular Fasting:** I encourage people who are healthy to fast one day a week. Those with a leadership calling should seek to fast two days a week. The Early Church fasted twice a week (Wednesdays and Fridays). Fasting was a regular part of Paul’s life (2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27; Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:17-18).
- D. Fasting is Always Voluntary.** Though leaders may invite others to join in corporate fasting with a specific goal in mind and for a specific time, fasting can never be forced or mandated. In light of this, fasting is not a mandatory requirement for being a part of the leadership teams.

- E. Presupposes A Healthy Lifestyle:** Participation in regular fasting as a lifestyle necessitates a healthy lifestyle on non-food fasting days and should include exercise and a proper diet. A “fasted lifestyle” is a disciplined lifestyle, in which we steward our bodies and time with wisdom and diligence.
- F. In Consultation with Physician:** The level at which a person engages in fasting from food should be determined according to age and with regard to any physical limitations. Those with a known or suspected physical disability or illness, or with any history of an eating disorder should *never* fast except in consultation with, and under the supervision of, a qualified physician.
- G. Children?** Minors are discouraged from fasting food and should *never* engage in even a partial fast without express parental consent and oversight. Minors who desire to fast are encouraged to consider non-food abstentions, such as TV, movies, internet surfing, video games and other entertainment. The Bible *never* speaks of or calls children to engage in fasting.

VI. NEGATIVES OF FASTING

The following negative aspects of fasting are common but each person’s experience will be unique with not all of these aspects are necessarily experienced during a fast time.

A. Physical Weakness & Symptoms

1. Headaches (related to the body eliminating toxins)
2. Dizziness & Inner Trembling
3. Weak Legs and Grip; Numbness in fingers and toes
4. Cluttery Noise
5. Metabolism Changes: will lose weight initially but consistently walking in a fasted lifestyle brings body metabolism changes which leads to a need to change one’s diet
6. Digestion Interrupted
7. Sleeping Patterns are Interrupted
 - a. sometimes need less sleep
 - b. sleep is not as sound

B. Mental Weakness

1. Memory Loss
2. Harder to Focus & Concentrate
3. Difficult to Communicate
4. "You Look Really Tired"

C. Emotional Stress

1. Easily Annoyed But with Spiritual Feelings; irritated yet also more tender
2. Noise, Touch Can Bug You More
3. Less Energy (but fiery resolve in spirit)
4. Removes Our Natural Physical Strength
 - a. we can generally cover things and "act properly"—less so when we are fasting
 - b. our props are removed
5. Net Result is That We Often Feel Like Hypocrites

D. Spiritual Pride (2 Cor 7:1): The danger of [a fasted] consecration is to be holy on the outside, but inwardly carry a hard and self-righteous heart that hides behind the mask of righteousness, and impressive outward actions that disguise a bankrupt soul. Only the fire of inward intimacy, the filling of the Holy Spirit along with continuously receiving God’s mercy and delight for us, even when we fall can deliver us from the Pharisaical heart (Mike Bickle as found in *The Jesus Fast*, 70)

1. Place of Superiority
2. Elitism—hidden feelings of superiority over others
3. Confidence in the Flesh
4. Unholy Confidence to Judge Others

E. Propensity for Spiritual Deception: In light of this, it is important to do the following when on a spiritual fast:

1. Focus on Intimacy with God/abide in the Vine (John 15)
2. Saturate Self in the Word
3. Remain Consistent in Community/Godly Fellowship
4. Solid Teachings: Only listen to healthy teachers/teachings

F. The Inability to Accomplish as Much: with a deep commitment to a fasted lifestyle within a ministry leadership role, a person will initially accomplish far less in the short term (1-5 year periods) but with greater fruit and depth over the long haul.

1. Strategic time delays come through fasting in order to produce greater humility with spiritual depth
2. Western mind looks at success differently than God

G. Relational Difficulties/Social Pressures: people want you happy with what makes them happy

VII. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, & TOOLS

A. Final Thoughts

1. Yeshua to Be Preeminent: He is our salvation; He is our atonement; He is beautiful; He is the only means for us to be righteous and to grow in sanctification.
2. Our Sins to Be Secondary: Even though our sins are to be a secondary focus, we can grieve the Holy Spirit, as we grow in holiness the Bible promises we will see God and God promises that times of refreshing follow our getting things right with Him and others.
3. Hit the Heart: God's purpose for our lives is to internalize His truths: personally to walk in holiness and exercise justice.

B. Spiritual Tools: We can use these and other tools to dig in our lives, exposing our sin, and helping us to repent and to cry out for Yeshua to change us. The following are documents that can be helpful.

1. *Consumed: Forty Days of Fasting, Repentance, & Rebirth.* Dean Briggs. Champion Press. 2015.
2. *Month of Elul Personal Spiritual Application* sheet
3. *Breaking Strongholds & Finding Freedom in Messiah* handout
4. *How To Take Authority Over Your Mind, Congregation, & Country* prayer list
5. *Breaking the Stronghold of Food* by Michael Brown. 2017.

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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