

## THE PURPOSE OF FASTING

**Deut 8:3** *And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.*

Moses stated that God humbled Israel through hunger. This is the first purpose of fasting in the Bible. What is the origin of pride? It is from a corrupt spirit, but the corrupt spirit is fed by the flesh, and the strength of the flesh is food. No wonder people say, “You are what you eat”. Remember the children of Israel had been slaves in Egypt for 430 years. If you read about the autobiography of slaves such as Frederick Douglass in the USA, you will understand how the lack of food and constant hunger was uppermost in the mind of slaves. Now, after 430 years of a terrible diet, it is understandable the children of Israel expected a feast every day on the way to the Land flowing with milk and honey. They forgot, however, that the kingdom of God is about about food. “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17). God was testing Israel. Were they able to subordinate the desires of the flesh in order to appreciate the God who delivered them from such misery for 430 years? Fasting will reveal whether this is true or not.

**Mat 4:2** *And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.*

**Mat 4:3** *And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

You see it is this simple: humans were made of the earth. Our bodies crave for the earth and its products – i.e. food and drink. On the other hand, our spirit is from God. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). Because of this twofold origin, there is a war raging in the human condition. The flesh longs for the earth and its comforts while the spirit yearns for God who is its source. Fasting is the practice which trains the flesh to submit to the spirit. This is why the Devil waited until the Lord fasted for forty days. The Devil made a big mistake though. The flesh of our Lord Jesus was not from the earth hence the earth had no power over the flesh of the Lord.

**John 8:23** *And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.*

**John 8:24** *I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

In other words, when we fast, the hunger is intended to remind us that we have determined the earth will not be our master, but Jesus, the God of the Spirit. “Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” (Hebrews 12:9). God is not the God of the flesh, but of the Spirit. The father of the flesh is the earth. What happened to Judas? Well, because he worshipped his stomach, which is basically the earth, his bowels burst open and he returned prematurely to his father, the earth. “Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood” (Acts 1:18,19).

Now, notice the next part of the scripture in Deut 8:3. “... by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live”. This points back to what was said earlier about our origin. A person who fasts pleases God because in this way you show that you are aware of your origin. We were made by the word of God. “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). In fasting, we demonstrate our awareness of this fact – that we were made by the word of God. There are parents who sacrifice food so their children will be filled. God wanted the children of Israel to eat manna so their children enjoy milk and honey in the promised land. Sadly, the parents were selfish: “And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick” (Numbers 11:4,5). Excuse the analogy but it is like us today crying and complaining because we miss the McDonald’s menus we loved as children but are only eating manna every day. Fasting is a sign of spiritual maturity. It is proof that a Christian believes and invests in a better spiritual tomorrow.

**Mark 2:19** *And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.*

**Mark 2:20** *But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.*