**Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough**

1. **What is Fasting?**

* Biblical Fasting refers to abstaining from food for spiritual purposes.
* Fasting is a call to voluntary weakness.
  1. Fasting is a Spiritual Discipline

1. Spiritual Disciplines are overt and willful exercises and actions of the mind and body that facilitate cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

**“discipline** yourself to be godly” – 1 Tim 4:7

The word ‘discipline or train’ yourself means to strip down, like a runner getting ready for a race. Remove the hindrances, weights, strip away any unnecessary resistance.

2. Fasting is for the purpose of godliness

3. Fasting is for us not for God. Fasting puts us in a place where we can receive what God wants to give us.

4. Fasting is not to impress God or win his favor

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 17But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” – Matthew 6:16-18

5. Fasting is willful cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

* 1. What kinds of fasts are revealed in Scripture
     1. 7 types of Biblical Fasts.

1. Avert Crisis-national, individual, corporate ministry(Nehemiah 1:4)
2. Increase Power in Ministry-Matthew 17:21
3. Corporate Revival or Breakthrough-Joel 1:14, 2:15, Luke 2:37
4. Express Mourning and Repentance
   1. Corporate sin-Zechariah 8, I Samuel 7:6, Nehemiah 9:1-2
   2. Personal sin-Psalm 38
   3. Personal loss-Jonathan-2 Sam 1:12, Abner-2 Sam 3:35
5. Preparation for Divine Assignment or Calling(New Season)
   1. journey-Neh 1:4, Ezra 8:21,
   2. elders-Acts 14:23
   3. mission-Acts 13:1-2
6. To receive God’s secrets, or new revelation, Daniel 10:2-3, Acts 13:1,2
7. Bridegroom Fast-seek God’s presence longing for his return; Matthew 9:14, 15
   1. Length of Fasts
      1. 3 day fast-Ester 4:16
      2. 21 day fast-Daniel 10:3
      3. 40 day fast-Moses, Elijah and Jesus, Matt 4:1-11
      4. Regular fasts; Zechariah 8:19/Luke 18:12
   2. What happens in the natural when you fast…

* You slow down…

“Most people are busy people. Godly people are busy people. Not all busy people are godly people. Fasting can help make a godly person out of a busy person”

* + 1. Physical Weakness
    2. Mental Weakness
    3. Emotional Stress

1. **Why should I fast?**
   1. Increased Desire for Jesus and His Presence

**“**Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast” – Matt. 9

* The purpose of the Bridegroom Fast is to increase our spiritual capacities to experience more of Jesus in our hearts. It enhances our intimacy with God, and gives us deeper revelation of God’s beauty!
  1. Humility and Cleansing.
* "Even now," declares the LORD , "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."   
  13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity” – Joel 2:12-13

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” – 2 Chron 7:14

* 1. Fasting helps break the idolatry we all have for food and instant gratification.
  2. Call to Weakness and Power

“But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me” – 2 Cor 12:9

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry…When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. 14Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside” – Luke 4:1-2, 13-14

* 1. Breakthrough in Spiritual Warfare

“Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." – Matt 17:19-21

* 1. Hear from God

**“**While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off” – Acts 13:2-3

1. **What do I do when I fast?**
   1. Rest and slow down!
   2. Seek God in His Word, try the Psalms or Revelation 1-6

* Take smaller chunks and meditate on them! Joshua 1:8
* Focus on the throne, Isaiah 6, or Revelation 4 and 5
  1. Pray the Bible out loud to God all day!
* Prayer is about getting in agreement with what God wants to do on the earth!
* Pray for justice to be loosed! Luke 18:1-8, Luke 2:36-38
* Pray the Bible prayers over your home, kids, spouse, church, city, etc.
* Pray for the Lost

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-- 2for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” – 1 Tim. 2:1-4

* Pray for workers to be sent into the harvest fields.

“Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” – Matthew 9:37-38

* 1. Sing the Bible

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord…” – Eph 5:18-19

1. **Perils of Fasting**
   1. Works Righteousness

“Law-bound disciplines breathe death.”-Richard Foster

* 1. Spiritual Pride,

“I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get” – Luke 18:12

* 1. Forget the mission, Isaiah 58:3-9

1. **Fasting Tips**

With a call to enter into extended fasts, we must prepare ourselves adequately so that the fast can honor God and fulfill its purpose.   
  
1. Seek advice and permission before the fast. Seek medical advice before the fast, especially if you have any existing medical concerns or conditions. If you are under 18 years of age, discuss your desire to fast with your parents. Spiritual covering, submission and unity are important factors when fasting. Discuss your plans with your youth leader and/or church leaders. Remember, fasting is an attitude of the heart! Ask them if they would consider fasting with you!  
  
2. Fast and pray in order to humble yourself and purify your worship. In fasting we are not trying to get something from God, but rather seeking to realign our hearts' affections with His. In fasting we can more readily say, "We love you Lord, more than anything in the world." Lust of any kind is perverted worship, but fasting enables us to cleanse the sanctuary of our hearts from every other rival.  
  
3. Don't boast about your fast. Let people know you won't be eating, if you need to. (Matthew 6:16-18).  
  
4. Do the fast with someone else. Two are better than one! We encourage parents and kids to consider fasting together. Several generations fasting together has a powerful impact!  
  
5. Have a clear target for prayer focus. Without a vision (a clear, prophetic prayer goal) the people perish. During a fast, I have four or five prayer goals that are clearly articulated. Write down your vision, so you can run with it. (Habukkuk 2:2)  
  
6. Make your commitment and determine the length. You can fast in many different ways...a media fast from TV, movies, and video games. You may want to fast from one meal a day, one whole day, three days or more. Fast Forward is modeled on the 40 day fast. Pray and ask God what He will give you faith for as far as the length of time. He is the author and finisher of your faith and faith is what makes it possible to please him.  
  
\* A Daniel fast, with vegetables and water, is good for those carrying a heavy workload (like moms and students). Fasting "meats and sweets" can be done by athletes who can get protein from other food sources.  
  
\* A fruit or vegetable juice fast allows you to enter into fasting but still gives enough energy to function. Many people have done a 40-day juice fast. Out of consideration for their health and metabolism, I would encourage teenagers to use juice and protein drinks to sustain them. If you have sugar sensitivities or problems, consult your physician before attempting this fast.  
  
\* A water-only fast has been done by many people. We would not encourage this without strong medical supervision, particulary for youth. This is a very difficult fast, but very effective. Depending on your weight and metabolism, you can go forty days on water alone.  
  
\* A total fast is without water. Do Not go beyond three days without water. Discuss your plans with your doctor, youth leader and/or church leaders and parents. We do not encourage this type of fast without specific confirmation from the Lord through your parents and church leadership.  
  
7. Prepare physically. Two days before you fast, limit your intake of food to fruit and vegetables. Fruit is a natural cleanser and easy to digest. Stop drinking coffee before the fast. Drink lots of water to help your body detoxify. Prepare yourself for mental discomforts such as impatience, crankiness and anxiety. Expect physical discomforts. You may experience dizziness, headaches and different kinds of pains. The headaches are not a sign to stop fasting. Your body is working to cleanse itself of impurities.  
  
8. Take time to pray and read the Word. This may seem obvious, but busyness and distractions can keep you from devotions. Reading books with testimonies of victories gained through fasting will encourage you. Changing History through Prayer and Fasting by Derek Prince, Fast Forward by Lou Engle and God's Chosen Fast by Author Wallis.  
  
9. Expect to hear God's voice in the Word, dreams, visions and revelations. Daniel prepared himself to receive revelation through fasting (Daniel10:1,2). There is a fasting reward (Matt. 6:18) Some time ago, a Malaysian brother shared how during a forty day fast he was "caught up into the heavens." After the fast, he took a team into the interior of Borneo and saw a dead woman raised and revival broke out in the village.  
  
10. Prepare for opposition. On the day of your fast you can bet donuts will be at the office or in class. Your spouse (or your mom) will suddenly be inspired to cook your favorite meals. Press through. Many times you may feel more tension build at home. My fasts are just as difficult for my wife as for me. Satan tempted Jesus on the fast, and we must expect the same. Discouragement may come in like a flood, but recognize the source and take your stand on the victory of Christ.  
  
11. If you fail, don't give in to condemnation. The "to fast or not to fast" dilemma can be a major tool of the enemy. Even though you may fail several times, God always extends grace. Once, I gave up on a fast and snuck some yogurt and chips. The next day an intercessor came to me and said, "I saw you in a dream and you were supposed to be fasting, but you were eating yogurt and chips." It was pretty good motivation to start again!  
  
12. Feel free to rest a lot and to continue to exercise with supervision.  
  
13. Breakthroughs often come after a fast, not during it. Do not listen to the lie that nothing is happening. It is my conviction that every fast done in faith will be rewarded.  
  
14. Break the fast slowly, over several days with fruit juice or light soups. On a light juice fast or a water fast your digestive system shuts down. This can be dangerous if you eat too much too soon. Break the fast with several days of diluted, non-acidic juice, then regular juice, followed by fruit and vegetables. On one of my early water fasts, I broke it too quickly and almost needed hospitalization. Be careful! May thousands of young men and women fast as God leads them. May they find a greater intimacy with God the Father. May they be used in the greatest revival we have ever seen. Let two generations arise and fulfill this divine mandate! We have taught our children how to feast and play. Now it is time to teach them how to fast and pray!