



## #3 Incognito Fasting

**Matthew 6:16** “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. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> 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.”

### DID JESUS TEACH THAT HIS FOLLOWERS WOULD PRACTICE FASTING?

**Matthew 9:14** Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” <sup>15</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and **then they will fast.**”

### DID THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH PRACTICE FASTING?

**Acts 13:2** 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.” <sup>3</sup> Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

**Acts 14:23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

**Acts 9:8** Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

### ARE THERE INDICATIONS THAT BELIEVERS DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES FASTED?

### BIBLICAL REASONS FOR FASTING...

- Know God deeply and experience Him more fully *Psalm 42,63*
- Seek and obtain God’s direction *Judges 20:26-29*
- Call out for God's protection for His people *Ezra 8:21-23*
- Express remorse over the condition of God’s people and remind God of His covenant with them *Nehemiah 1:4*
- Seek God’s favor with authorities *Nehemiah 1:11; Esther 4:16*
- Mourn with another who is suffering *Psalm 35:12-14*
- Humble themselves before God *Psalm 69:10*
- Set others free who are oppressed *Isaiah 58:6-14*
- Gain supernatural understanding from God *Daniel 10:2-3*
- Return to God with all their hearts *Joel 2:12*
- Mourn Christ’s absence and prepare for His return *Luke 5:33-35*
- Confess sin, evidence true repentance, and plead for deliverance from judgment *Jonah 3:5-9*
- Receive sufficient strength to resist temptation *Luke 4:1-4*
- Discern God’s will for selecting spiritual leaders *Acts 13:1-4*
- Identify and commission new elders for service *Acts 14:23*
- Give themselves to a special season of prayer *1 Corinthians 7:3-5*
- Hold back God's judgment on a nation *Deuteronomy 9:18-26*

#### Practical Considerations When Fasting

- 1) For those with physical ailments or on medications, seek a doctor’s counsel before fasting
- 2) Prepare for a fast by reducing portions in the days leading up to it
- 3) Make sure to drink a lot of liquids while fasting
- 4) Count on frequent restroom trips
- 5) Expect discomfort, including hunger pangs and headaches
- 6) For support, consider asking others to join you and pray for you
- 7) If you find yourself becoming ill, end the fast

***Fasting keeps us from turning gifts into gods – John Piper***

#### BIBLE READING PLAN

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday: 2 John 1    | <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday: Psalms 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monday: 3 John 1    | <input type="checkbox"/> Friday: Psalms 3   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday: Jude 1     | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday: Psalms 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday: Psalms 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday: Psalms 5   |

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