



## **A Closer Look at Fasting - Pt 3**

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### **What is Fasting?**

“Biblical fasting is a conscious, intentional decision to abstain from eating and other fleshly pleasures for a time to gain vital spiritual and physical benefits.”

Prayer and fasting must always go together.

Remember that we are fasting not to change God, but to seek His face, which will further our transformation more into the likeness of Christ, to be used more by God, and blessed more by God.

### **Key Figures Who Fasted in the Old Testament**

- 1. \*\*Daniel's Fasts\*\*:** Daniel practiced both total and partial fasts.,
- 2. \*\*Purpose of Fasting\*\*:** In Daniel 9, he fasted and prayed for Israel's restoration after reading God's judgment, showing that fasting seeks God's promises and interventions.
- 3. \*\*Revelation and Opposition\*\*:** In Daniel 10, his 21-day partial fast was in response to a vision. During this time, God sent an angel with an answer; however, the angel faced opposition from demonic forces, requiring Daniel to continue praying and fasting.
- 4. \*\*Beloved by God\*\*:** Daniel is described as “greatly beloved” by God, and this special relationship stemmed from his commitment to prayer and seeking God regularly.
- 5. \*\*Persistence in Prayer\*\*:** The angel emphasized the importance of Daniel’s persistence, revealing that despite delays caused by spiritual opposition, continued prayer and fasting are crucial for receiving answers from God.
- 6. \*\*Encouragement in Trials\*\*:** Believers are encouraged to remain steadfast in prayer and fasting, even when immediate answers are not evident, as results are on the way.
- 7. \*\*Spiritual Opposition\*\*:** There can be significant spiritual barriers that hinder answers to prayers, but perseverance when fasting by faith is essential.
- 8. \*\*Noble Act of Fasting\*\*:** Fasting is viewed as a noble act by God, and He will respond favorably to it.

### **King Ahab**

The books of 1 Kings and 2 Kings consistently describe Ahab's reign as particularly evil. **1 Kings 16:33, Ahab "more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him".**



The Bible describes Ahab as a notorious king, yet his sincere prayers, fasting, and repentance moved God's heart. God showed him mercy instead of punishment for his wrongs against Nabal, illustrating the power of genuine repentance.

### **Ahab's Repentance**

**Sin:** Ahab, influenced by his wife Jezebel, orchestrated the murder of Naboth to seize his vineyard, committing a great evil in God's eyes.

**Prophecy of Judgment:** God sent Elijah to tell Ahab that judgment would come upon his house.

**Ahab's Reaction:** Upon hearing this, Ahab tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his flesh, fasted, and went about in deep mourning.

No matter your past actions, don't let them diminish your hopes for what God can do in your life. If your desires align with His promises, remember you have every right to confess your sins, repent, and seek His guidance through fasting. While God may shape your expectations, rest assured that He will respond to your prayers with grace and favor. Keep your faith strong—wonderful things await you!

### **God's Response**

*God acknowledged Ahab's humility, stating, 1 Kings 21:29 "See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house.*

### **Esther**

**Esther 4:15-17** Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: **16** "Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die." **17** So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Esther called for a three-day absolute fast (no food or water) for all Jews in Susa before she risked her life to approach the king.

Esther needed uncommon favor to approach the king at an improper time. Through fasting, God showed favor to her with the king, and he honored her request.

### **Results from Esther's fast**

**Esther 5:1-3** Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. **2** So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. **3** And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you — up to half the kingdom!"



Engaging in fasting can be a powerful spiritual practice, and as one continues this journey, it is important to maintain the expectation that God will grant favorable outcomes in our circumstances

Often, Fasting will involve taking corresponding actions alongside your fasting and prayer to see the results come to pass.

Fasting for favor with mankind.

**David** Fasted and wept in a plea for the life of his sick child after his sin with Bathsheba. He also described humbling his soul with fasting during times of grief.

David was engaging in a period of fasting, motivated by the consequences of a sin he had committed. During this time, he implored God to spare the life of his child. When he ultimately received the answer that his prayer would not be granted, David was able to move forward and continue with his life, demonstrating resilience despite the profound loss he experienced.

In our time of loss, grief, and disappointment, fasting is one of the ways that will help us keep our peace, restore our joy, and give us the opportunity to continue with the right attitude.

*References that pertain to David's fast: 2 Samuel 12:15-23, Psalm 35:13, Psalm 69:10.*

**Nehemiah** Fasted and prayed for days upon hearing that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins.

*When a sense of urgency or responsibility arises in your heart regarding a need for change, it can be beneficial to engage in fasting. Fasting may help clarify how you can be part of the solution to the issues that require attention. Fasting can provide insights and guidance on how to respond effectively to the burden you feel.*