

## The Purpose and the Power of Fasting

1. To realize that life is more spiritual than you think it is
2. To deepen our relationship with Jesus
3. To develop a more powerful prayer life

Isaiah 58:3-8 <sup>3</sup> ‘Why have we fasted,’ *they say*, ‘and You have not seen? *Why* have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?’ “In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers. <sup>4</sup> Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as *you do* this day, To make your voice heard on high. <sup>5</sup> Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? *Is it* to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the Lord? <sup>6</sup> “*Is* this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> *Is it* not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? <sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

*Fasting is a spiritual exercise, a voluntary restraint from food for the purpose of seeking God*

- *Fasting is mentioned or referred to over 70 times in the Bible*
- *Fasting is not required but it is expected*

Examples of fasting in the Bible

- Moses fasted for 40 days (Exodus 34)
- Jehoshaphat declared a fast throughout Judah (2 Chron. 20)
- Ester asks for a 3 day fast to go before the king (Ester 4)
- Anna fasted to see the redeemer (Luke 2)
- The Apostles fasted to hear the Holy Spirit (Acts 13)
- Paul fasted and appointed elders over the church (Acts 14)
- Jesus fasted and spoke about fasting on numerous occasions

*The purpose for fasting is to weaken the power of the flesh, and its hold on us, and to increase our awareness of the spiritual realm.*

**Romans 7:22-23** <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the **inward man**. <sup>23</sup> But I see another law in **my members**, warring against the law of **my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

**1 Corinthians 2:9-12** <sup>9</sup> But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” <sup>10</sup> But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

**Joel 1:14** <sup>14</sup> Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders *And* all the inhabitants of the land *Into* the house of the Lord your God, *And* cry out to the Lord.