



STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH THROUGH FASTING

Somebody said once, “If you aim at nothing, you can be pretty sure you’ll hit it.” I believe that God will reward us in fasting if we seek Him with faith and the right motives, so let’s look at the purpose of fasting.

Biblical reasons for fasting

If we go to the Bible and to the history of Israel and the early church, we find that fasting was a regular part of the life of God’s people. Under the Old Covenant, Israel was required by God to fast collectively at least once a year on the Day of Atonement and on other occasions. There are also records of individuals who fasted—Moses fasted, David fasted, Elijah fasted, and many of the kings of Israel led their people in fasting. In the book of Acts, we have records of the early church fasting together in groups for special needs. Reliable church tradition and recorded history also tell us that for several centuries the early church practised fasting regularly on Wednesday and Friday of each week. But what is the purpose of fasting?

Fasting is a way to humble yourself

First, one biblical purpose for fasting is to humble myself. David said, “*I humbled my soul with fasting.*”

(Psalm 35:13 NAS). We need to bear in mind that humility is not an emotion; not something vague; but rather it is specific. God will not humble us because He has told us to humble ourselves. I have proved by experience that if I fast with the right motives and in faith, I can humble myself. When I humble myself, God exalts me. That principle runs throughout the Bible. “*And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*” (Matthew 23:12). We have to make the choice. Do I want to be abased? Then I can exalt myself. Do I want to be exalted? Then I need to humble myself. I believe that the basic way for a believer to humble himself is by fasting.

Fasting helps you to come closer to God and His Word

Another motive for fasting is to come closer to God. The Scripture says that if you “*draw near to God...He will draw near to you.*” (James 4:8 NAS).

A third reason for fasting is to understand God's Word more clearly. I have learned by experience over the years that when I'm seeking God in times of fasting, He gives me further, deeper understanding of His Word.

Fasting is a way to find God's will and direction for your life

Another very important reason for fasting is to find God's will and to receive direction in your life. Ezra said, *"Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions."* (Ezra 8:21). Again, it has been my experience and my testimony that when I humble myself in fasting and seek Him for direction and guidance, He does lead me in the right way. I've proved this in many situations where we have had to move from country to country and when we have had to make decisions between going to one field or another to work, to one type of ministry or another. I've found that if we take time to fast and pray, in humility, seeking God's direction, we receive what we pray for.

Fasting enables you to seek healing

Another very common reason for fasting is to seek healing. Isaiah 58:8 says,

"Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily." This also applies to deliverance from evil spirits. Jesus said in one place about a certain type of evil spirit, *"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."* (Matthew 17:21). Before Jesus Himself entered into His ministry of healing and deliverance, He spent forty days fasting.

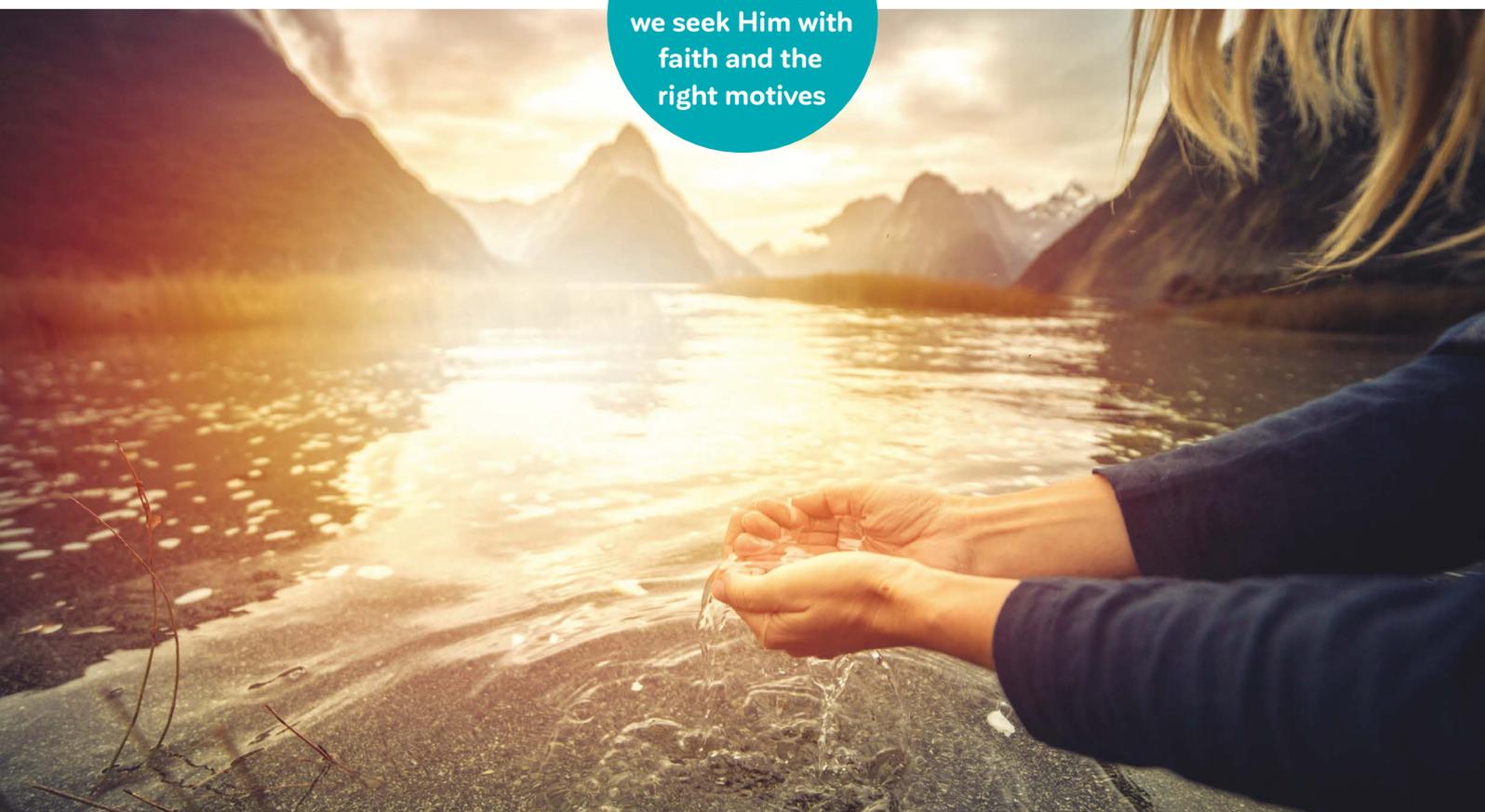
Fasting shows you're seeking God's special intervention

We also can fast when we need God's intervention in some particular crisis, or when some tremendous problem has arisen which we can't handle by ordinary means. There are many examples of this in the Bible. In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah found that they were facing an invading army which they could not meet with normal military methods. They humbled themselves before God, gathered together, fasted, and prayed. God dealt with the invading army. They didn't have to use a single weapon. God totally defeated their enemies for them and I don't believe God has any favorites. I believe He's just as willing to intervene on our behalf when we seek Him in the same way.

Fasting is a way of intercession

A final reason for fasting is to intercede

God will reward us in fasting if we seek Him with faith and the right motives



and pray on behalf of others. Many, many people come to me about their unsaved relatives and they ask, “What can I do to get my relatives saved?” I often ask them, “Have you ever fasted and prayed for your unsaved husband or for your unsaved son or daughter? Are you willing to make a personal sacrifice—do something that will cost you—on behalf of your loved one?” There are many testimonies from believers of how God has answered the prayer that is accompanied by fasting on behalf of unsaved relatives.

An act of faith

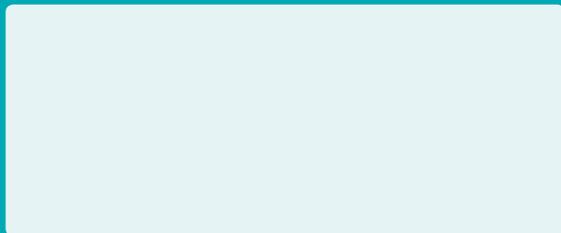
I believe we should approach fasting with an attitude of positive faith: It is God’s will for me to fast, and God will bless me when I do fast in accordance with His will. I believe it is God’s will because Scripture reveals that it is. We do not need some special feeling or revelation about the fact that fasting is the will of God, because the Bible clearly indicates that it is. We do not need some special revelation that it is God’s will for us to pray because it is plainly taught in the Bible. People who wait for a special revelation for something that is definitely stated in the Bible seldom get that special revelation and therefore miss the purpose of God.

If you’re going to have a special period of fasting—more than a day or so—or you have some special purpose for fasting, sometimes it is good to make a written list of what you are fasting about and date it. I’m glad that many years ago in the early 1950s I did that on several occasions. I still have the lists. In looking back over them, I see with amazement how many of the things that I fasted for God answered—and some of them were great things.

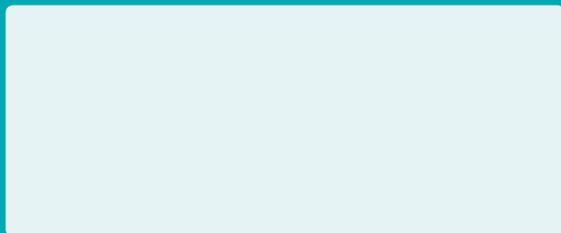
To give you one example, I fasted and prayed for the salvation of my mother, and though it took many years, God saved her very definitely and very dramatically almost at the last moment. At about the last time I could be reassured she really understood the Gospel, she had a tremendous experience of salvation, so it pays to pray and to fast. When I look back on those lists now, I praise God for the marvelous answers to prayer. A prayer list might be a good idea in your ordinary prayer life. That’s not to say that everybody needs to do it, but if you do, one day you’ll praise God for the way He’s answered your prayers.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1 How do you feel about fasting? Did you (or someone you know) ever fast?



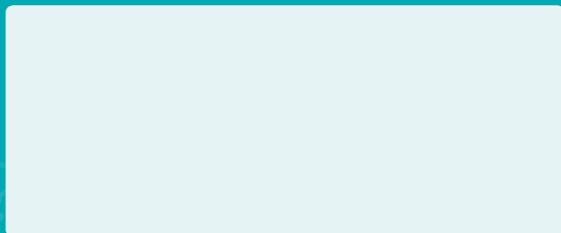
2 Derek Prince lists some reasons for fasting. If you were to fast, for what purpose would you do it? What outcome would you seek? Pray about it.



3 How will you respond to Derek’s statement: “We do not need some special feeling or revelation about the fact that fasting is the will of God, because the Bible clearly indicates that it is.”



4 Fasting is a step of faith. Consider ways you could make fasting a part of your life.



I humble myself before God

A PROCLAMATION ABOUT HUMILITY

O Lord, who could stand
if You kept a record of sins? **1**
As far as the east is from the west
so far have You removed
our transgressions from us. **2**

I humble myself under Your mighty hand
that You may lift me up in due time. **3**
Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. **4**

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me. **5**
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, You will not despise. **6**

Keep me from willful sins,
may they not rule over me.
Then will I be blameless,
innocent of great transgressions. **7**

Search me, O God and know my heart;
Test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting. **8**

BIBLE REFERENCES:

- 1** Psalm 130:3 **2** Psalm 103:12 **3** 1 Peter 5:6
4 Psalm 51:7 **5** Psalm 51:10 **6** Psalm 51:17
7 Psalm 19:13 **8** Psalm 139:23-24



BUILD UP YOUR FAITH



For a donation of any amount, we'll send you a copy of this book:

How to Fast Successfully

Request a copy of this book today by filling in your details in the response form. Your donation for receiving this message will be used to feed spiritually hungry believers worldwide. Offer valid until 28 February 2017. This title is also available in ebook – just ask!

OTHER RESOURCES YOU MIGHT LIKE:



Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting

Paperback - **£7.99** ebook - **£4.00**



Seven Steps to Revival

7 messages: DVD - **£14.50** (was £28.98)
CD - **£9.00** (was £17.98) MP3 - **£4.48**



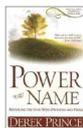
Will You Intercede

Paperback - **£3.99** ebook - **£2.00**



If You Want to Hear from God

CD - **£2** (was £3.99) MP3 - **99p**



Power in the Name

Book - **£7.99**



I Humble Myself

Proclamation card - **80p**

Order now: www.dpmuk.org/shop
01462 492100



www.dpmuk.org

twitter.com/derek_prince

facebook.com/dpmuk

+ 44 (0) 1462 492100 enquiries@dpmuk.org

PO Box 393, Hitchin, SG5 9EU, United Kingdom

A Company Limited By Guarantee | Registered in England and Wales No. 6489116
Registered Charity No. 1123283 | VAT No. GB 553 8244 33

BUY PROCLAMATION
CARDS AT:
WWW.DPMUK.ORG/SHOP