

MATTHEW



Jewish Fasting

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee was standing and praying like this about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I’m not like other people—greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth, of everything I get.’

Luke 18:10-12

Performative Fasting

How to Practice Fasting

Fasting Then & Now

Let us, therefore, say something about fasting, since very many, while they do not understand how useful it is, regard it as not very necessary; others also, considering it superfluous, completely reject it. And since its use is not well understood, it can easily lapse into superstition.

John Calvin

I fear there are now thousands of Methodists, so called, both in England and Ireland, who, following the same bad example, have entirely left off fasting; who are so far from fasting twice a week... that they do not fast twice in the month!

John Wesley

What is Fasting?

Types of Fasting

- Absolute Fast: no food or water
- Partial Fast: abstinence
- Normal Fast: no food

Rhythm & Response

Sacred Moments

- Repentance & renewal
- Sickness, grief, and death
- Infertility
- National injustice or crisis
- Famine
- Personal moral failure
- Military defeat
- Discernment

Why Fast?

Health Benefits

- It can cleanse your body of toxins.
- Increase your metabolism.
- Reduce your weight.
- It can lower your insulin levels, inflammation, and blood pressure.
- Strengthen your immune system.
- Reduce your heart rate.
- Slow aging.
- Protect against and possibly reverse many diseases
- Increases the blood flow to your brain, causing you to be more alert and aware
- Increases neuroplasticity, the ability for your brain to make new neural connections.
- Decreases the neurotransmitters that signal anxiety and depression, and increase those that elevate calm and a sense of well-being.
- Increases what doctors call “interoception”; which is your ability to accurately notice what’s happening inside your body and mind.

In our own day, fasting seems to have lost something of its spiritual meaning and has taken on, in a culture characterized by the search for material well-being, a therapeutic value for the care of one's body. Fasting certainly brings benefits to physical well-being, but for believers, it is, in the first place, a "therapy" to heal all that prevents them from conformity to the will of God.

Pope Benedict

Why Fast?

- To offer ourselves more fully to Jesus
- To grow in holiness
- To release spiritual breakthrough
- To stand with the poor

I'm able to gain perspective on how unbalanced is the amount of time, energy and effort that I put into my body and into my Spirit. ...

When we choose to sacrifice a need of a body to place more importance on a need of the spirit, God himself sits up and takes notice. The heavens are opened to us in a way that might not have otherwise been.

Priscilla Shirer

Theology of the Body

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires. And do not offer any parts of it to sin as weapons for unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness.

Romans 6:12-13

Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.

Romans 12:1

**Fasting reveals what
controls us**

More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus. We cover up what is inside of us with food and other things.

Richard Foster

Fasting reorients our
hunger from other things
to God

Invitation

Fasting Experiment

Weekly Rhythms



FASTING

Abstain from lunch one day a week, if you are able. Don't just work through lunch or fill the time. Take the opportunity to pray (alone or with others), or to spend time in solitude and silence. If fasting from food isn't possible, what other good thing could you refrain from for a short time, in order to become more aware of your desire for God?

Fasting gives birth to prophets, she strengthens the powerful. Fasting makes lawmakers wise. She is a safeguard of a soul, a stabilizing companion to the body, a weapon for the brave, a discipline for champions. Fasting knocks over temptations, anoints for godliness. She is a companion for sobriety, the crafter of a sound mind. In wars she fights bravely, in peace she teaches tranquility. She sanctifies the Nazirite, and she perfects the priest.

Basil

HOUR (OF) PRAYER



spend **5 minutes** at each step

- 1 PRAISE** Begin prayer by praising God for who He is. Praise His character, His Words and His Works. Psalms 63:3
- 2 WAITING** Wait on God. Quiet your heart & mind on God. "Be still and know that I am God" Psalms 46:10.
- 3 CONFESSION** Confess your sins to God "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9
- 4 PRAYING THE WORD** Take scripture and begin to speak them as personal prayers. Psalms and proverbs are great places to start (Psalm 119:38-46)
- 5 WATCHING** Be alert, present and intentional in your prayers. aware of what God is doing and saying. Colossians 4:2
- 6 INTERCESSION** Pray for yourself, family, friends, co-workers, leaders, circumstances and whatever else the Lord puts on your heart. 1st Timothy 2:1-2
- 7 PETITION** Bring your needs, wants and desires for yourself and others before God. Matthew 7:7, Philippians 4: 6
- 8 THANKSGIVING** Give thanks to God for what he has done in your life, what He is doing and what He is going to do. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
- 9 SING TO GOD** Sing songs of worship to God. "Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. Psalms 30:4
- 10 FOCUS ON GOD** Meditate on God. Meditate on a verse in scripture, an attribute of God or on something He has done. Jobs 1:8
- 11 LISTENING** Wait on God with an expectation that He will speak. Listen for his still small voice. Psalms 25:3,5
- 12 PRAISE** End by praising God for Who He is. Praise His character, His words and His works.

"I read *God's Chosen Fast* when I was eighteen, and forty years later
I'm still practicing what Arthur Wallis taught me."
—Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*

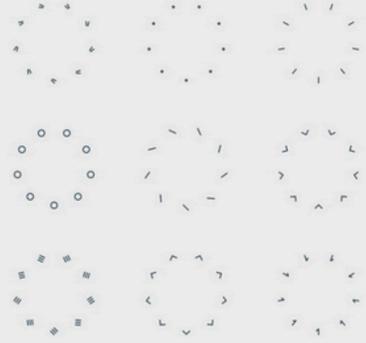
GOD'S CHOSEN FAST



A Spiritual and Practical Guide to Fasting

ARTHUR WALLIS

Foreword by Susan Gregory, author of *The Daniel Fast*



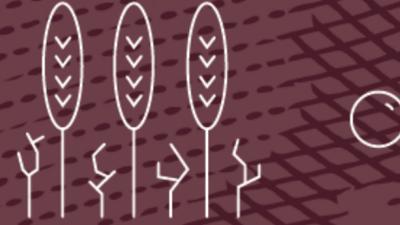
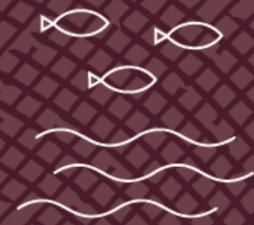
Rule of Life
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Podcast Episode

Luminary Interview: Dr. Alison Cook

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