



# Find Freedom Through Fasting

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## GROUP ICE BREAKER

Share one show, movie, book, or podcast you have enjoyed recently and why you enjoyed it.

## REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will surrender and say, "God, it's your kingdom."
- I will trust God's power to be realized in my life and circumstances.
- I will be intentional about giving God the glory he deserves this week.

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

In the Bible, fasting is associated with repentance from sin or with great breakthroughs in prayer and life. It is often a part of worship, and often accompanies requests for guidance. In the Bible, and particularly with Jesus, it becomes a way to experience and depend on the reality of the kingdom, the presence, and power of God.

Fasting is the practice of abstaining from food, possibly drink, possibly other things, for a period of time. Your desires need to be disciplined or they become your gods. Fasting is a little practice God gives that can help you be in charge of your body instead of the other way around.

There is a huge difference between trying to do something versus training to do something. To train means you arrange your life around activities that enable you to eventually do what you cannot now do. This is true in almost any field in life, and it is no less true of your spiritual life. Spiritual disciplines are practices or activities that train you or give you power to live in the goodness of the kingdom. Spiritual disciplines are a means to an end, and fasting is a means to an end.

Here are two formats for fasting that you can start as soon as this week. First, fasting as feasting on God. When you fast, make space to be nourished by God. Jesus once said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." In fasting, you strategically allocate your attention to God.

Second, fasting as caring. Fasting, when it's done for God, is the opposite of self-centered preoccupation. The temporary pain in your body speaks to you of the ongoing pain in others, and God begins to grow compassion in you.

So ask yourself, "God, how do you want to free me to live in your kingdom?"

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think or feel when you hear the word “fasting”? Is your response positive or negative?
2. Have you fasted from anything in the past? If so, what did you learn from the experience?
3. Read Isaiah 58:3-12. What do you learn about fasting from these verses? What stands out to you most?
4. Share about something you have trained for in your life and what that experience was like.
5. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. What are a few ways that we can train ourselves in order to win “the prize” of godliness?
6. What has been your experience with spiritual disciplines? What spiritual disciplines have you or do you practice? What disciplines would you like to develop in your life?
7. This week, are there any ways as a small group that you should fast together or encourage each other as you fast?

## NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will engage in fasting with humility and surrender for the purpose of freedom.
- I will fast from something in order to make space to be nourished by God.
- I will fast and reach out with compassion to those who are hungry.

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 6:16-18
- Jonah 3:5-8
- 1 Corinthians 9:25
- Matthew 4:3-4
- John 4:31-32
- Isaiah 58:3-7

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

- [A Deeper Look At the Sermon on the Mount: Living Out the Way of Jesus](#), John Stott
- [The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives](#), Dallas Willard
- [Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth](#), Richard Foster

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week:

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