



ASK YOURSELF THIS:

- Can I use some time away from the worldliness around me to better hear God's voice?
- Am I aware of and genuinely broken over worldliness entering the church, and the brazen sin in the world?
- Do I set my heart to understand God's Word and humble myself before Him enough?

Joel 1:12-14 - *The grapevines have dried up, and the fig trees have withered. The pomegranate trees, palm trees, and apple trees—all the fruit trees—have dried up. And the people's joy has dried up with them.* ¹³ *Dress yourselves in burlap and weep, you priests! Wail, you who serve before the altar! Come, spend the night in burlap, you ministers of my God. For there is no grain or wine to offer at the Temple of your God.* ¹⁴ *Announce a time of fasting; call the people together for a solemn meeting. Bring the leaders and all the people of the land into the Temple of the Lord your God, and cry out to him there.*

When things are tough, when you're not experiencing a breakthrough, or nothing seems to be happening in your life, God might be saying, "stop everything and consecrate yourself."

Esther and Daniel both fasted in times of great crisis. While Daniel's fast was more personal, Esther's involved her community. Both experienced a time of crisis and pursued God's presence and power.

Biblical Worship In Times Of Crisis Involves Prayer And Fasting.

Traditional Fasting Is The Deliberate Self-Denial From Food And Drink (other than water). (How that looks is between you and God)

FASTING WITH PURPOSE MEANS:

- 1. Putting God First.** It means focusing all your attention on Him alone and not just His gifts or blessings.
- 2. Creating an Environment for Prayer.**
- 3. Interceding For Others**

Isaiah 58:6-7 - *this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people.* ⁷ *Share your food*

with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

We're Not Strengthening Our Willpower; We're Becoming More Dependent On God's Power

DYING TO SELF

Galatians 5:24 - *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.*

Romans 6:13 - *Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.*

- **Crucifying The Flesh Is Not Something Done To Us, But Done By Us.**

Following Jesus involves:

1. **A Willingness To Deny Self.**
2. **A Willingness To Take Up Our Cross.**

Godliness Is Not Appearing Outwardly Righteous, But Being Sensitive To God's Promptings.

HOW DO I BEHAVE WHEN FASTING?

Matthew 6:5-6 - *When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. ⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

Matthew 6:16-17 - *And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷ But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face.*

LASTLY,

Fasting From Food Is Not Necessarily For Everyone.

Fasting is not limited to abstaining from food. Some health conditions can keep us from the traditional way of fasting. If you have never fasted food before, you might consider fasting a daily meal or two. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, "Fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose."

Other things you can fast from is television, computer, social media, sports, hobbies, sweets, meat/poultry/fish, or some other regular enjoyment that would lend your heart toward greater times of Jesus. The apostle Paul even talks about married couples fasting from sex "for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer" (**1 Cor. 7:5**).

The key is not to get caught up in the legalism of the fast, but in the sincerity of making room for God to be experienced in your life and life of others!