

The IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

by

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I wonder if you realize the importance of FASTING? Very few do today. We have drifted SO FAR from God, and His ways as revealed in the Bible, and are so entwined in these modern paganized ways!

You know, of course, that Jesus fasted. Peter and Paul fasted. So did Moses, Daniel, the prophets of old. But have most of you not thought that was just some ceremonial custom for them way back there, and not for us today? Have we not forgotten that those men lived by God's laws and rules, while we lived without realizing by the rules and traditions of this paganized society we call civilization? Jesus said we should actually LIVE BY every Word of God. He set us an example that we should follow His steps. Jesus and the men of God mentioned in the Bible fasted FOR A PURPOSE -- in fact, there are two vital reasons for occasional fasting. One is for health and physical fitness. The other is for spiritual reviving. Fasting and prayer together is the most effective means of drawing closer to God, re-establishing the vital contact and close communion most of us have drifted away from.

I could write a whole book on the subject of fasting. But let me just briefly condense some vital truths on the subject which may help you greatly.

First, its connection with PHYSICAL HEALTH. Most people have come to believe today that it is NATURAL for people to be sick. THAT IS NOT TRUE! Sickness and disease is not natural, or accidental, but caused in every case by destructive habits. Sickness and disease cannot be eradicated until good habits -- living according to NATURE'S LAWS as set in motion by Creator -- are substituted for bad ones. Bad habits of thought may be a contributing cause to sickness and disease or impaired health. Insufficient exercise, lack of drinking enough pure water, lack of deep breathing of fresh air, lack of sunshine, lack of sleep, faulty elimination, often contribute to poor health. But above all WRONG FOOD is the great outstanding cause. Few people realize this. Doctors seldom tell people this vital truth. Yet the nation's most famous physicians and surgeons -- men like Dr. McCollum of Johns Hopkins, the famous Mayo brothers, Dr. Sherman -- later Senator Sherman of New York, Dr. Kellogg and others -- estimate that from 90% to 95% of all sickness and disease are caused by faulty diet. Dietitians have exclaimed that the average American table is a dietetic horror! People eat things they would never think of feeding their cows or their dogs. God has revealed to us which animal meats He created to be properly digestible in the human stomach, Leviticus 11. Some day we will learn to our astonishment that the eating of filthy swine's flesh has been a major cause of cancer, fast becoming the nation's number one killer! I want, as soon as we can enlarge The PLAIN TRUTH to 16 pages or more, to have an interesting, vigorous article every month on FOOD, and on sickness, disease, and the laws of health. We can SIN physically as well as spiritually. We sin physically by breaking nature's laws -- the laws of God established for physical health. The penalty of this physical sinning is sickness, suffering, pain, and often the first death. The penalty for spiritual sin -- the transgression of God's great spiritual Law, summed up in the Ten Commandments -- is ETERNAL death -- the second death. Jesus continually HEALED THE SICK. When He healed, He said "Go and SIN NO MORE." He was speaking of violating the physical laws of health. Just as the repentant sinner who is converted thru Christ is commanded to turn away from sin and quit sinning (transgressing God's Law), so if we look to God for healing we should try to learn in what

manner we have been violating God's physical health laws, and CORRECT OUR LIVING! It is BECAUSE men for untold generations have been living incorrectly, violating these precious health laws. And increasingly so these past four or five generations, that we are a degenerate generation today -- so much so WE DON'T REALIZE IT!

But my space is short, so now about fasting for health. Voluntary abstinence from food for physical benefit or the cure of disease is as old as life upon this earth. Animals and birds instinctively fast as a means of restoring themselves to normal health whenever necessary. There is no such thing as a cure-all pill, drug, or medicine. But there is one thing that comes close to being a cure-all. And that is FASTING. Especially is it the cure for such things as stomach disorders, constipation, rheumatic diseases, and the greatest help and often the cure for such things as kidney diseases, heart ailments, high blood pressure, skin diseases, asthma, anemia, and it is ALWAYS the thing to do in case of colds and fevers.

It was Benjamin Franklin who said "Feed a cold and starve a fever." But he did not mean one ought to feed a cold. He meant that IF one feeds a cold he soon will be starving a fever! The way to put out a fire is not to pile on more fuel. When you have a fever the body is on fire, and food is the fuel that makes it burn. If any member of your family has a cold or a fever, TAKE ALL FOOD AWAY at once! Give plenty of water. Give enemas twice daily, and warm sponge-baths (not soaking in a tub) in a warm room twice daily. If you can give orange-juice, or some other similar juice which agrees with them -- grape fruit, lemon, or tomato juice -- that will do more good than harm. Give a glass of orange juice at a time, every two to four hours. I would not advise people inexperienced with fasting to go on a long fast of more than three, five, or seven days, unless they are under the care of a physician who understands and believes in fasting. And always remember this -- if you have fasted two days or longer: This is IMPORTANT: In breaking a fast, do not start out with a full meal at once. Break it with two small pieces of buttered toast, toasted in the oven, HARD clear thru, and a dish of about five stewed prunes. These should be soaked overnight before cooking, and then cook by just simmering, UNDER THE BOILING POINT, or steamed. If they are not boiled they will be plenty sweet, so add no sugar. Or, as an alternate, a dish of milk toast, but be sure the toast is toasted hard clear thru. Second meal, two non-starchy vegetables such as spinach, carrots, etc. -- not potatoes or peas -- along with a slice or two of hard toast and a little fruit (not rich canned fruit in syrup or canned with sugar). Then normal eating may be resumed by the third meal. I have been on a much longer fast, but I have studied fasting and spent a year, about 18 years ago, lecturing on diseases, diets, and fasting, and have had considerable experience putting many people thru fasts. And I have never known one case where full results were not achieved!

FASTING AND PRAYER: There is, as I said above, NOTHING like fasting and prayer for drawing close to God, re-establishing contact, being filled with His Spirit. For this purpose it is better to fast completely -- no fruit-juice of any kind. In Bible times they sometimes fasted without even water, but sometimes water was used. Personally I think results will be obtained if one drinks water, but nothing else. For purely spiritual purposes a fast of from one to three days is usually sufficient. You may expect headaches, and a very thick-headed feeling the first few days. It is not pleasant. It is, in Bible language, AFFLICTING THE SOUL. It takes courage and will-power, and self-denial. I recommend, for this purpose, dividing your time three ways: about one third in studying the subject of fasting in the Bible, and other Bible study. Use a good concordance, and your marginal references if your Bible has them. If not you should get one which has. Look up all you can find under fasting. Then about a third of your time in meditation -- turning over in your own mind by yourself WHY you have not been closer to God, thinking out just HOW you have been letting the worldly things creep in, meditating on what you have read in the Bible, applying it to yourself and your spiritual condition. Then, spend one full third of your time in earnest PRAYER. Did you ever spend one solid HOUR in prayer, alone with God in some private room, on your knees? Very few ever have. If you haven't, the first time you do it you'll find it will take as much will-power and self-denial as forcing yourself to stay on a fast and resisting that gnawing

hunger feeling. In five or ten minutes, or less, every excuse in the world will come into your mind. You aren't in the mood now -- why not do it later? You just think of something that ought to be done, and you think you must go do it right now. Yes, I know what will come to your mind, for I have done it and I know by experience. But if you will resist every temptation, and STAY on your knees, even though you think your prayer isn't going as high as the ceiling, in at least 30 or 40 minutes the devil will probably give up and let you alone and you'll find you are establishing contact with God, and you'll find you are beginning to really ENJOY talking to Him -- just pouring out your soul to Him -- telling him all about it. Pause, once awhile, and meditate, and let God talk to you.