

Victory Worship Center



Daniel Fast Guide

We are so glad you have decided to participate in an extended time of prayer, fasting and personal devotion. There really is no better way to reset our spiritual compass and bring about refreshing in every area of our lives than through prayer and fasting.

Fasting

**Important Note: Fasting requires reasonable precautions. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast, especially if you are taking any medication, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.*

As you prepare to fast, it is important to choose a fasting plan that works for you. While this section provides some general information about different types of fasts, as well as some suggestions on how to create your own fasting plan, it is important to mention that there is nothing more inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another.

These are simply guidelines and suggestions on different things you can do. Do not let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast. Keep the main thing the main thing, which is drawing closer to God. Remember, this is a time to disconnect enough from your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God. Here are a few tips to keep in mind before getting started:

The Daniel Fast

The Daniel fast is a great model to follow and one that is extremely effective for spiritual focus, bodily discipline, and purification of the body and soul. It is probably one of the most commonly referred-to fasts; however, within the Daniel fast there is room for broad interpretation. In the book of Daniel we find two different times where the prophet Daniel fasted.

Daniel 1 states that he only ate vegetables and water, and in Daniel 10, while the passage does not give a specific list of foods that Daniel ate, it does state that he ate no rich (or choice) foods, as well as no meat or wine. So based on these two verses, we can see that either of these, or combinations of the two, constitute a Daniel fast.

Again, it is important to mention that there is nothing inherently spiritual about one type of fast as opposed to another. The foundation of the Daniel fast is fruits and vegetables. Some starchy vegetables and dairy could be included, but that depends on the individual. Your goal should be to seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. Just remember: find your personal Fast Zone.

The Daniel Fast – Victory Worship Center Church

“But Daniel purposed in his heart...” (Daniel 1:8)

7-STEPS FOR THE DANIEL FAST

1) Be Specific

Daniel was not vague in his objection to the Babylonian diet. He defined the problem immediately.

- a. The king’s food was against Old Testament dietary laws
- b. Daniel and his friends had vowed against wine
- c. The king’s food had been offered up to idols/demons

2) Fast as a Spiritual Commitment

The Daniel fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself” (Daniel 1:8)

3) Reflect Inner Desire By Outer Discipline

Many people have a desire for better health, but they cannot discipline themselves to avoid unhealthy food choices. The physical health you seek from God may be more than an answer to prayer. Your physical health may be linked to any of the following factors:

- a. Your food choices
- b. The level of your spiritual commitment as reflected in constant prayer during the fast.
- c. Your time commitment. If you determine to fast for a certain time, keep it. For example, if you determine to fast for 10 days, don’t stop on Day 9 or if you determine to fast for 21 days, don’t stop on Day 20.
- d. Your testimony commitment. Your fast is a statement of faith to God that you want Him to heal your body.

Faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast.

4) Pray to Perceive Sin's Role in Poor Health

Reference James 5:13-20

- Sin is sometimes related to the cause of sickness
- Lack of health/healing may be the result of spiritual rebellion
- Lack of health/healing may be due to sin of wrong intake, i.e. drugs, pornography, etc.
- Repentance is linked to health according to James
- Elders have a role in healing both spiritual and physical health
- Sick people must desire to be well
- The anointing oil could mean:
 - o Medicine for healing
 - o Symbolic of the Holy Spirit, or
 - o It could be baptism
- Prayer alone may not gain healing, faith is the major factor
- In Greek there are several words for “sick”. James uses “Kanino”, which not only includes disease, but also means weak or weary.
- Attitude is important. James said, “Are there any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.”

5) Fast as a Statement of Faith to Others

Daniel was making a statement of faith when he asked for only vegetables to eat and water to drink, then dared the

overseer to compare the appearance of the sons of Israel with the young men who ate the king's food.

6) Learn the Effects of the Food You Eat

Why are some foods good for us, and other foods not? What does certain food do to your body? If we really knew, there would likely be some things we would never eat again.

7) Yield All Results to God

Daniel said, “As you see fit, deal with your servants” (Daniel 1:13).

Day 1: Return to Me

“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” – Joel 2:12 NIV

Throughout the Old Testament, you find numerous models and examples of fasting. Just reading those examples, one could assume that fasting is for the purpose of gaining God’s forgiveness. Such was the case in this Scripture from Joel. God called them to repentance that was demonstrated through fasting, mourning, & weeping.

Although such a fast in the Old Testament is seen time & time again, under the New Covenant every one of our sins was paid for and atoned for through the finished work of Christ on the cross! Every wrong we’ve ever done, every sin we’ll ever commit, had been forgiven; when we accept Christ, we live in the New Covenant of grace & forgiveness.

First Thessalonians 5:9 tells us that, “God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (NIV). So then, why do we devote ourselves to fasting & prayer?

As we walk with God, there are times we can feel far from Him or disconnected. Even though we’ve been born again & walk in grace and forgiveness, Joel’s words resonate deep within us. There are times we realize that, even though we have chosen to follow Christ, the flame of our love for Him has begun to grow cold. We’ve lost the fire of devotion that used to burn so strong within me.

Times of fasting aren’t just about denying your flesh. It’s about pressing in to Christ & seeking after His face. These next twenty-one days can result in a new richness, a rewarding connection with the Father. No matter where you are in your walk with Jesus, you can always take a step closer to Jesus.

Bible Reading Plan: Psalms 1-2

Prayer Focus: As we begin this time of prayer & fasting, let’s turn our hearts toward God. Make a commitment to seek Him daily. Pray that your love for Christ will be increased and your passion for Him will be reignited over the next twenty-one days.

Day 2: HIS Voice

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” – John 10:27

John 10:27 provides us a promise that we can hear & know God’s voice. He is speaking. God never stops communicating to us, but sometimes with all the hustle & bustle of our daily lives, we stop being able to hear Him clearly. Between the cell calls, text messages, e-mails, FaceBook messages, Tweets, advertisements, and all the other things that bombard us & require our focus, it’s easy to let the white noise all around us bombard us and drown out the voice that’s most important – our Father’s. Although God never stopped speaking, we begin to feel confused & disconnected.

During this season of fasting & prayer, we become intentional about drowning out all the competing distractions & giving our focus and attention to seeking God, and becoming keenly aware of His voice. When we seek His voice, we have His promise that we will hear Him & know Him. If you want to tune out the white noise & hear God’s voice, you have to come to Him first & foremost with a heart willing to listen & obey what He says (Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 66:2). When you begin to seek Him you will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13).

The more we practice being in His presence, the clearer and more recognizable His voice becomes. It’s no different than in our natural relationships, where you begin to pick up the mannerisms of your friends or can complete their sentences. Spending time with God connects you with His heart & acquaints you with His voice.

Bible Reading: Luke 1

Prayer Focus: In this time of fasting, what is your mind tuned to? What distractions do you need to remove so that you can focus on God? Prepare your heart to hear the voice of God, and ask Him to help you remove distractions that keep you from focusing on Him & hearing His voice clearly.

Day 3: Living Sacrifice

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.” – Romans 12:1 (NIV)

Throughout the New Testament, there are several metaphors of what the Christian life looks like. Whether it’s crucifying your flesh (Galatians 5:24), carrying your cross (Luke 9:23), running a race (Hebrews 12:1), or becoming a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1), **they all indicate an element of sacrifice and self-denial.** *What’s obvious from these various comparisons is that you cannot live a life dedicated as a Christ-follower consumed with your flesh.*

As Christ-followers we have been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20) & therefore our life is not our own. This process of crucifying our flesh & allowing our Spirit to rule doesn’t happen overnight. Jesus told the disciples that their Spirit was willing but their flesh was weak (Matthew 26:41). Paul described his seemingly never-ending battle with the flesh in Romans 7:15, and Paul took great lengths to bring his flesh into submission.

Fasting is a powerful tool to help crucify your flesh & help you become less aware of the desires of your flesh and more conscious of the Holy Spirit’s voice.

Fasting Tip: On the third day of your fast, you may experience a headache, flu-like achiness, intense sugar or carb cravings, slight nausea, or fatigue. This is a normal response to detoxification, so make sure you allow yourself some time to rest and keep your fluid intake high. The fourth day is usually much better physically, so hang in there!

Prayer Focus: Are there areas in your life where you’ve been allowing your flesh to be dominant? What areas do you need to crucify the flesh in?

Day 4: Fasting Removes Unbelief

“Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” – Matthew 17:18-21

When we pray and fast, we don’t do so to change God or His will; by praying and fasting, we are the ones changed. Coming into alignment with God helps us curb our doubts and fears. When we pray and fast, the thing that leaves- the thing that goes out-is our unbelief. It is when we have faith to believe that we can pray with confidence and know that “nothing will be impossible.”

As God to strengthen your heart to fully believe Him and His Word. It is okay to recognize and acknowledge if you struggle with unbelief. That’s the first step in allowing God to strengthen your faith and bring you into alignment with His plan for your life.

Bible Reading Plan: Luke 2

Prayer Focus: What do you need faith to believe for? Align yourself with God’s Word and will during the fast. Release your unbelief. Pray with confidence, knowing “nothing will be impossible” for you.

Day 5: Fasting for Purpose

“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”
– Jeremiah 33:3

Some people live their entire lives unsure or unaware of what God has destined & planned for them. They walk through life in this cloud of uncertainty, not completely sure what God placed them on this earth to do. What I know to be true is that, regardless of whether you're seeking the overall plan and purpose of God for your life or seeking direction on specific decisions or opportunities, God has the answers. As Jeremiah 33:3 promises, if we call out to God, He will answer us & tell us things we do not know!

Periods of fasting & prayer allow us to call out to God & allow Him to speak to us. If Jesus, the Son of God, needed to open His earthly ministry through a period of fasting & prayer, how much more should we set time apart to seek God regarding His purposes & plans for our lives?

During this time of fasting & prayer, God will begin to reveal His destiny & plan for your life if you'll choose to seek after Him and let His plan become the focus of your life. We have His Word on it!

Prayer Focus: What has called you to do? What are the next steps God is calling you to take in your life?

Day 6: Fervent Prayer

“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” – James 5:16

Fervency speaks to our level of intensity, passion, and persistence. Many times, we can lose our passion in prayer or stop praying for certain things altogether because we lose heart or give up. But God invites us to keep them before Him and trust Him for an answer in His time (Matthew 7:7-11).

The Old Testament prophet Elijah practiced a lifestyle of fervent, intense prayer and witnessed incredible miracles in his lifetime. In the book of Kings, the story is told of a woman whose only son became ill and died (1 Kings 17:17-24). When Elijah heard the news, he quickly took action and did what he knew best – he fervently cried out to God. Elijah fully believed that God could bring the boy back to life, and he prayed not just once but three times that the boy’s soul would return to him. He prayed fervently and repeatedly, and he wasn’t going to give up. This was the result: “Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived” (verse 22).

Elijah’s prayer was answered through his persistence and fervency. God hears your prayers as well and will bring an answer in His perfect timing. But don’t be discouraged or disheartened if the answer takes time to arrive or is not exactly what you expected. Commit to praying to God with passion and persistence, trusting the answer will come in God’s perfect way at the perfect time.

Bible Reading Plan: Psalm 3-5

Prayer Focus: As you come to the end of this first week, continue to pray fervently for the main areas of concern in your life. Trust God to bring an answer as you journal your thoughts and inspirations through this time.

Day 7: – Relationships are Two-Way Street

‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’ – Jeremiah 33:3

We have a promise in Scripture that teaches us that when we call out to God, he will answer us. Sometimes, in our fervency of prayer, we forget that relationships are always a two-way street. If you think about it in purely natural terms, you generally don’t gravitate toward friends who dominate the conversation & won’t let you get a word in edgewise.

The same thing applies in our relationship with God. We sometimes forget that our relationship with God was never intended to be a monologue, but rather a constant state of communion & relationship. We ask God to forgive our sin (and we know by Scripture He will), but we don’t pause to let Him communicate His forgiveness back to us. We tell God we’re confused about the direction we’re supposed to take, but then we don’t stop & get His direction.

Much like a natural relationship will be skewed if you fail to make it a two-way street, your relationship with God will be lacking if you don’t pause & let Him speak back to you. Call to Him & He will answer.

Prayer Focus: As you close out this first week, continue to pray fervently for the main areas of concern in your life. Trust God to bring an answer as you journal your thoughts and inspirations through this time.

Day 8 – What About Your Isaac?

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.” – Genesis 22:15-18

God came to Abraham & gave him a promise. God would give him a son. Even at an old age (where it would naturally be impossible), God had given him a vision for generations to come. It was an exciting time for him & God delivered on that promise, and he had a son named Isaac. It wouldn't be long after that God gave Abraham a command that seemed almost counter-intuitive.

He was told to take his son Isaac and to sacrifice him to God. Abraham completely obeyed, taking Isaac to be sacrificed. It wasn't until the moment he was about to lower the knife & sacrifice everything that God spoke & told him to put his knife aside. Scripture records that Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his dream & lay everything down in obedience to Christ was the key that allowed his destiny to unfold.

As you spend time fasting & seeking God, God will begin to speak to you about your destiny, His specific plans for your life, and may make some promises to you. Each of us will face a test in light of God's promise – would we be willing to sacrifice every dream & every promise out of simple obedience to our Father? How you answer that question determines the extent to which God can use you.

Prayer Focus: It's so easy to put our dreams or promises from God on a pedestal & make them an idol in our lives. Ask yourself this question: if _____ didn't happen, would it negatively impact my relationship with God? If I never saw _____ dream come to pass, would I still love God with the same passion I do today?

Day 9 – Are You Listening?

But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” – Genesis 22:11-12

Like we mentioned yesterday, God had brought a dream to fruition in Abraham’s life. Yet, despite it all, God sent him out to sacrifice his dream. God told him to take his son up to the mountain and to make him a sacrifice to God. He had made a seemingly impossible request – lay down the life of your son simply because you love God. Abraham went to do as he was told, gathered his supplies and set out in obedience to God’s instruction.

Abraham took Isaac to the altar, bound him and laid him on the altar. Abraham raised the knife, firmly cemented in his heart that he would obey God no matter the cost, no matter the sacrifice. Then, God called out to him – don’t do it! God had led him to that altar, God had allowed him to prove his devotion. Yet, in the final moment, God spoke & spared him from going through with one of the most painful things he’d ever faced.

What would have happened if Abraham had stopped listening? If Abraham decided he already had the complete revelation of God’s will for his life?

Sometimes we get an instruction & we proceed to obey, but it is important that we be constantly open to God giving us the next step in our lives. Not just during times of fasting, but throughout our lives, God is constantly speaking. Don’t ever get so caught up in yesterday’s revelation or yesterday’s instruction that you don’t seek His face over today.

Prayer Focus: What is God saying to you TODAY?

Day 10 – Forgiveness, Part 1 Mark 11:25-26

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. –

Virtually every time Jesus taught His followers to pray, He instructed them to forgive. It's even modeled in the Lord's prayer (forgive us AS we forgive others). One cannot separate prayer & forgiveness. As we are in this season of fasting & prayer, it's important that we take time to make sure we've forgiven those who have hurt us or wronged us in some way.

Although I think we all know that we are compelled by Christ to forgive, I think few of us have a proper understanding of what that actually means. In fact, oftentimes, our flawed beliefs about what forgiveness is, actually hinders us from stepping into it. Forgiveness is not denial. It doesn't convince you that you this situation didn't really happen. Forgiveness is not repression or burying your anger. Forgiveness is not even forgetting or letting people walk all over you.

What forgiveness really means is that we release their control over our heart. It means we choose not to hold those things against people that we were holding against them. It means we release our right for revenge or retribution. It means that, the things that they have done to us cannot control what is in our heart. Forgiveness is a conduit for God's grace to work in those areas where you've been wronged. Forgiveness allows you to release this situation into God's hands & trust Him more completely.

Prayer Focus: As you're spending time with God today, is there anyone you've realized that you need to forgive? Ask God to help you to release the hold they have on your heart.

Day 11 – Forgiveness, pt 2

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. – Mark 11:25-26

We know that Jesus teaches that if we don't forgive, we won't be forgiven. Most of us assume that God is petty (like we are), thinking it's God saying, "Well then, if you won't forgive them, then I know how to fix you – I won't forgive you." That's not what Jesus was saying at all. What He's saying is much more profound.

God is the author of forgiveness, He demonstrated the most significant and amazing act of mercy & forgiveness by Christ's death on the cross! God is attempting to do a work of forgiveness in you & through you toward the person who offended you. When you resist that work & choose not to forgive, you are resisting the very work God is trying to do in your own heart. It's that resistance that makes it impossible for you to receive and benefit from God's move in your own life.

Choosing to forgive is an uphill battle, because it defies everything your flesh & emotions crave. Forgiveness requires that you make a choice to live with the consequences of their behavior without holding it against them. Although it's far from easy, forgiveness is partnering together with God to allow Him to work in your heart & theirs.

Choose to partner together with God & release any bitterness or resentment toward anyone. You'll find increased power in your prayer when you approach your Father with a heart free from offense.

Prayer Focus: Think back to those people you realized yesterday you needed to forgive & take time to pray for them, asking God to bless them and their families.

Day 12 – What if I Stumble? Proverbs 24:16 (Last Day)

“For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity.” –

Inevitably during a time of fasting & prayer, people start to wonder, “What if I just can’t go without my coffee like I thought I could?” or, “I just couldn’t resist that brownie, is God mad at me?” So often, especially in certain backgrounds or traditions, that if you break a fast it would have been better you had never started at all. While the idea of holding true to your fast is important, the idea that if you fail or if you neglect an element of your fast, you’ve somehow angered or disappointed God is dangerous.

A fast is a challenging process. It’s a time you’ve set aside to lay down things you enjoy (it’s not really a fast if you decide to fast something you don’t like and don’t consume anyway). God sees that act of sacrifice & devotion. If you do fall during your fast, Proverbs 24:16 provides us with great advice & instruction – get back up!

It’s not how many times you fall, it’s how many times you get back up! True failure only occurs when you choose not to get back up. Don’t allow Satan to turn your time of fasting into some form of condemnation because you fall short. Instead, take comfort that, when you draw near to God, He draws near to you (James 4:8).

Prayer Focus: Ask God to make His grace more real to you today, that you would experience and walk in greater revelations of His grace than ever before.

Day 13 Day of Prayer – Declutter

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” -Romans 8:5-6

Clutter happens naturally. If you have an empty space in your house, it typically won't stay empty long. It's almost like an empty space is a magnet for clutter. Unless we want our entire home to be overwhelmed with clutter, we have to be intentional about decluttering & deep cleaning.

The same thing has a way of happening spiritually. Even sometimes when we're praying daily, reading our Bibles, and going to church, the pressures & temptations of our day to day life build up until eventually they almost consume our lives.

Fasting helps us to declutter our lives & create space for God. We can cast off the old habits, mindsets, and attitudes to bring them into alignment with the truth of God's Word. Fasting helps restore the passion that has a tendency to turn into duties.

Bible Reading Plan: Luke 6

Prayer Focus: Ask God if there are any old habits, mindsets, or attitudes that He'd like to help you declutter from your life. Pray as David did in Psalm 51:10-12 that God will cleanse your heart, renew your spirit, and restore the joy of your salvation.

Day 14 – Day of Prayer Bold Prayer

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” – Hebrews 4:16

Oftentimes as believers, we have a very timid approach to our prayer. Maybe that’s because it sounds humble. Or, maybe it’s because we believe God to be angry. Even though this timidity seems spiritual or holy, the instruction in Scripture is to come boldly before God’s throne. This attitude of timidity is a stark contrast to Scripture teaching us that, upon Christ’s death on the cross, the veil in the temple separated, removing the barrier between God & man.

As believers, our communion with God has been restored, and as such, we are able to boldly & confidently approach God. You don’t need to be timid or shy when you begin to pray & seek God. God not only knows your requests before you ask, but He desires the relationship with you where you bring those requests to Him confidently in prayer.

As we continue this time of prayer; pray confidently & boldly, knowing that God is for you & desires that relationship with you.

Prayer Focus: Are there specific requests or breakthroughs you need in your life? Take time to boldly bring those requests before God.