PRAYER + FASTING

We encourage all of Grace to embrace fasting as an act of obedience and spiritual focus—seeking the Lord in this day and positioning our lives for His purposes. Although it may be challenging initially, the spiritual benefits of fasting are immense, leading to personal growth, spiritual discernment, a stronger church community, and supernatural breakthrough, all for the glory of God.

God clearly says that there are fasts that He wills – that He intends to be observed with spiritual understanding. As fasting purges the physical body of impurities, it also purifies the spiritual man rooting out what has been tolerated that is in opposition to the way of the Lord, casting down everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

God calling us to seasons of fasting is clearly seen in the Word:

> **By the direct teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ…**
> His example (Matthew 4:2), His explanation (Matthew 6:16), His exhortation (Mark 2:20)
>
> **By the practice of the Early Church…**
> Acts 13:2, 14:23; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 6:5, 11:27

WHAT DOES IT DO?

It accomplishes something that brings liberty from spiritual bondage and oppression.
Jesus taught that certain spiritual strongholds are broken through prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29 NKJV). (Though some ancient manuscripts omit the word *fasting*, Dr. Morison notes in *Expositors' Greek Testament* (Vol. 1, p. 404) that even if omitted, fasting is inherently implied in the nature of the spiritual authority described. See also Dan. 10:3, 12–13.)
Fasting doesn't earn God's favor—it positions us in obedience and spiritual focus for what He has promised to empower.

WHAT DOES ONE EXPERIENCE THROUGH FASTING?

a) **PRACTICALLY**
Fasting is not a mystical, ascetic exercise of piety. It is a normal and powerful participation point in seeing the release of God's purposes and benevolent intent toward mankind.
Isaiah 58:7-11…

- Food made available to the needy (v7)
- Genuine service and concern for those without (v7b)
- Life/Health-giving ministry begins to flow from you (v8)
- Personal answers to prayer begin to be released (v9)
- A removal of the spirit of criticism/accusation (v9b)
- A Holy Spirit-enlightened perspective on life (v10)
- Holy Spirit-directed, fruitful living ensues (v11)

b) **SPIRITUALLY**

Isaiah 58:6...

- Loose bonds of wickedness
- Undo heavy burdens
- Oppressed go free
- Break every yoke

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THE FAST IN LIGHT OF LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES

Each has a "NOW" application for us corporately and individually...

- At a time of transition in national government (2 Samuel 1:12)
- At a time God's people faced a deadly satanic attack (Esther 4:16)
- At a time when a great project was being undertaken (Ezra 8:21)
- At a time prophetic promise was due to be activated (Daniel 9:3)

THE RESULTS

a) **BUILD THE OLD WASTE PLACES**

Because of sin, brokenness comes, and over time ruins begin to feel normal. But when God's people fast, He rebuilds what was broken and restores the beauty of what was lost.

b) **RAISE UP THE FOUNDATIONS OF MANY GENERATIONS**

Foundations don't disappear—they simply get buried beneath neglect and debris. Through fasting, God uncovers and raises up those foundations so something enduring can be built for generations to come.

c) **CALLED THE REPAIRER OF THE BREACH**

When penetration has come from an enemy / usurper / intruder who now has access, repairs need to be made so that the purpose of the wall might be realized. Fasting leads to repentance and alignment, and God repairs the breach—closing what was opened and restoring protection, purpose, and order.

d) **THE RESTORER OF STREETS TO DWELL IN**

Early church leader **Jerome** renders this phrase as *"turning your paths into rest."* The image is of roads left in long desolation—overgrown with thorns, brambles, and trees, made impassable by neglect. But the promise is restoration. What blocked the way is cleared. What was broken is repaired. The paths are opened again. And these are not just roads—they are the ways that lead you home. Home is where you belong, where identity is restored, and where hopes and dreams find their fulfillment.

Watch Pastor Steve's Message:
A Biblical Approach To Fasting

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are different types of fasts. Some examples are...

- **Complete Fast:** In this type of fast, you drink only liquids; typically water with light juices as an option.
- **Selective Fast:** This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the *Daniel Fast* (Daniel 10 describes 'no pleasant food,' no meat, and no wine), during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and consume water and juice for fluids and fruits, vegetables, and whole grains for food.
- **Partial Fast:** This fast involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00am to 3:00pm, or from sunup to sundown.
- **Soul Fast**: This fast is a good option if you have health issues that prevent you from fasting food or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. This can also be combined with a common food fast for a comprehensive time of fasting from the routines and habits of life. For example, you might choose to stop using social media or watching television for the duration of the fast and then carefully bring that element back into your life in healthy doses at the conclusion of the fast.

The observance of a fast varies with each participant. When deciding on a particular type of fast, we encourage you to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

Note: Practical considerations about a change in diet should be kept in view when fasting. Personal health and safety should be taken into consideration, so if you have questions about how to properly fast for your health specifics, consult your physician. The following guidelines are offered as counsel and assistance for those who choose to participate in a fast. No one should feel compelled to fast out of guilt, nor should anyone use fasting as an excuse to indulge the flesh by doing less than they clearly understand to be their personal, God-directed, Holy Spirit-prompted responsibility and capacity. Because we are not trying to convince God of our worthiness, but rather are simply observing a biblically-taught discipline, it is not unspiritual to recognize there will be functional realities at a physical level that ought to be understood. Within these boundaries, these guidelines are intended to help believers pursue a fast in what one leader called the "Spirit of Fasting"—living with a continual awareness and intention of the fast, even when fully attaining the ideal proves challenging.

A few more practical notes...

- The Grace Pastoral leadership often calls the church to seasons of fasting, and each person is encouraged to prayerfully seek the Holy Spirit's leading in determining the length of their fast.
- Do not fast if there are medical or dietary reasons which prohibit it.
- Always drink plenty of water to wash out physical impurities released into your system by the fast.
- When removing food and other elements from your diet and routine, be sure to spend that time in prayer, worship, and the reading of Scripture.
- Practical wisdom recommends that a fast be concluded with a light meal to assist the body in resuming its digestive duties. In this case, soup or light breakfast without meat would be wise.

May your fast align your heart with Heaven, sharpen your spiritual sensitivity,
and position you to see God release breakthrough, restoration, and renewed purpose in your life.