

# THE MIRACLE RESULTS OF FASTING

*Discover the Amazing Benefits in  
Your Spirit, Soul, and Body*

by  
Dave Williams



**Harrison House**  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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*The Miracle Results of Fasting:*

*Discover the Amazing Benefits in Your Spirit, Soul, and Body*

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## Author's Note

I wish to express a caution to my readers. Use godly discernment when studying the subject of fasting from Web sources and non-Christian writers. While there is a host of helpful medical and scientific data in these studies from which we can learn, we must be cautioned to use godly discernment in our quest to understand the subject. I add this note because there are new age, pagan, and false religions that also practice fasting.

Also, a pregnant woman should not engage in a long-term fast. As she detoxifies, the toxins could go into her baby. Young children who are still growing should not go on long, extended fasts.

# Introduction

When my dear friend, Loren Triplett, retired after serving eight years as the director of foreign missions for his denomination, overseeing an annual budget of nearly \$120 million, he certainly didn't step out of the picture. He had plans—missionary plans.

Loren is an impressive fellow. During his time as director of foreign missions, the number of overseas church members and adherents grew from 16 million to 25 million. The number of foreign national ministers increased 48 percent. To top that off, when Loren assumed the directorship in 1989, we had missionaries in 86 nations. After just eight years of Loren's leadership, we had mission efforts in 148 nations of the world. Now, *that's* an achievement.

During a time of fasting, God told Loren and his wife, Millie, that He wanted them to be missionaries to Central America. Soon after Loren spoke at a campmeeting and told the people about his new calling. That night people laid money, diamond rings, and many other things of value at their feet. When they counted it all up it was enough to send them to the mission field right away. Typically it takes a missionary eighteen months to raise enough money to get to the field, but God did it in one night for the Triplett.

Was there a specific reason this happened to them? How did Loren accomplish so much in such a short time? What was his secret? Ask the people who know him. You will learn that Loren has lived a *fasted life*. Living a fasted life produces both miracu-

lous and radical results in the Christian walk. Among these benefits are:

- Deliverance from sinful or unhealthy habits
- Revelations from God
- Speedily answered prayers
- Constant supply of needs
- Rejuvenation of health and vitality
- Longer life
- Loss of unwanted weight
- Slow down the aging process
- Elimination of body toxins
- Elimination of food allergy sources
- Clear acne and other dermatological problems
- Defeat sinus and mucus problems
- Normalize blood pressure
- Help keep arteries young
- Maintain healthy cholesterol level
- Assist in curing mental and emotional disorders
- Increased energy
- Bring the body into spiritual subjection
- Break demonic oppression

To choose to deny yourself food in order to achieve some spiritual or physical benefit may seem crazy. However, fasting is a biblical precept long practiced by those who have sought God

for miraculous changes in their lives and the lives of those to whom they minister. You will see what fasting is, the different types of fasting, the purpose of fasting, and the proper attitude for fasting. I will also show you how to avoid the sweeping tail of one of our greatest spiritual enemies.

Perhaps you fast already, or maybe you fasted as a young Christian when you were just learning about the spiritual disciplines. Maybe you're like me and forgot the benefits of fasting for a while but now have a spiritual hunger that can't be satisfied any other way. We live in one of those phenomenal seasons when God is calling people to fast. I believe He is drawing us closer to His side so that we can win souls, walk in spiritual authority, and advance His kingdom at a greater speed and with greater impact.

Fasting supercharges our efforts to accomplish God's purposes. I'm not proposing some sort of new legalism by telling you to fast a certain number of days per month to achieve holiness. I'm simply showing how leading a fasted life increases our ability to hear from God, walk in His ways, and do His will.

As you fast you will find that there is an attitude that pleases the Lord, and there are attitudes that do not please Him. You will discover the most practical and rewarding fast for you. And you will find that, although there are times of struggle to maintain the fasted life, it is well worth the effort.

There are always critics who sneer when I mention fasting, no matter what I show them in the Word of God. Some call the practice of fasting "starvation." However, when Christians fast

with biblical understanding and common sense, the results speak for themselves.

My goal in writing this little book is to motivate you and inspire you to live a lifestyle that incorporates biblical fasting. Then you too will see amazing advances in your life. People at your retirement banquet will say, “How did he do that? How did she accomplish so much in so little time?”

Happy fasting!



# The Great Awakening

The year 1997 was a hard year for me. You know the kind that seem to land like an elephant in your living room, taking up too much room, demanding all your time and energy, messing the place up, and refusing to leave. A lot of people I knew died. I conducted more funerals than in any other year of my ministry. I saw young men die, leaving widows and children behind. I saw older men and women of God go to be with the Lord. I even saw teenagers and children snatched away before their time. After a while I considered dressing in my black suit all the time because I knew more funerals would be on the way.

I also struggled with the fact that although our church had more than 6,000 people who called it their church home, on any given Sunday morning we only saw about half of them. What were we doing wrong? Why weren't people coming to church more faithfully? What did that say about our effectiveness in growing mature Christian believers?

We were investing massive amounts of money and energy in evangelistic efforts, only to see our membership stay at roughly the same level. Why weren't we drawing more converts? Surely there were thousands who needed the gospel in our town. For years our church had grown exponentially by winning souls and

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making disciples for our Lord. Had we lost our touch? Reached our limit? Run out of the blessing of the Lord?

I began crying out to God for some kind of breakthrough. I needed to punch a hole through the barriers that kept us from moving forward. I attempted to do battle, but none of my weapons seemed to work. Then I traveled to a neighboring city to dedicate one of our daughter churches, and after the service I was in the foyer greeting people. I glanced over at the table where they were selling books and tapes and saw a tape album called *Fasting for a Desired Result*. I hadn't seen that series before, and my heart leaped. I wanted to buy it, but by the time I got to the table, all the products had been packed away, and I decided not to bother anyone about it.

When I got home, I looked for the tape series in our church bookstore and then in our warehouse. I couldn't find it anywhere. Still the idea of fasting or doing something—anything—to get a spiritual breakthrough was strong in my mind. That week one of my favorite evangelists, Dave Roeber, visited our church. As he and I sat in my office, I noticed that he had lost at least a hundred pounds. He seemed to have a new excitement and fervor for the ministry, and I asked him why and he told me his story.

Dave served in the U.S. Navy's Special Forces during the Vietnam War. In 1969, while preparing to throw a white phosphorous hand grenade, a sniper fired at Dave and hit the grenade, causing it to explode in his hand. Dave was burned beyond recognition, sixty pounds of his flesh melted away. By a miracle

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of God, he survived. His wife, Brenda, stood by him and he persevered through a long ordeal of recovery from his wounds. Most important, although he was physically scarred for life, there are no scars in his spirit or emotions. And God has put a love in Dave's heart for the Vietnamese people and a dream to reach that communist nation for Christ.

Over the years and after many surgeries, Dave gained quite a bit of excess weight. Doctors told him he wouldn't live to be fifty years old because of his original injuries and subsequent treatments. When he turned fifty, God began to move on Dave's heart to fast for forty days. He told him that a new direction was about to divinely unfold, but he needed to prepare himself.

For thirty days Dave consumed nothing but distilled water. Amazingly, after the first few days, his body was filled with energy and vitality. His excess weight seemed to melt away, not by the fire of a white phosphorous grenade this time but by the fire of the cleansing power of fasting. His system was being cleansed. In fact, after a week or two, he found that he needed to use no deodorant. Even his perspiration had a clean, fresh smell!

After thirty days Dave started drinking diluted juices in preparation for breaking the fast. For ten days he still ate no food, only weak juices. He testifies that he received divine guidance and a loving closeness to Jesus like he had never experienced before. Also, this time of fasting launched him onto a nutritional plan that helped him shed over 110 pounds. His life and ministry now have a fresh anointing and a new vitality. His

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time of fasting catapulted his life into a greater realization of God's love, care, guidance, and desire to reach the lost and hurting people of the world.

Dave has always had a heart for the Vietnamese children whose grandfathers were killed during the war, and after his fast a great miracle of supply occurred. The Japanese government gave \$1.1 million worth of children's clothes to Dave Roevers' ministry. Subsequently, Dave distributed the clothes to poor Vietnamese children. God has given Dave favor with the Vietnamese government. In the sixties and seventies, we tried to save Vietnam with M-16s and failed. Now the Vietnamese people will be saved through John 3:16!

The question is, would all these opportunities have opened up to Dave Roevers if he had not fasted forty days? More important, would he be alive today if he hadn't fasted? No one knows for sure, but Dave wouldn't trade the experience for anything in the world. Since his time of fasting, he has received heaven's direction with an astonishing clarity. He told me, "I had more revelation from God than I have ever had in my life." His ministry was imbued with incredible power and effectiveness, so that souls were being won in great numbers. God gave him specific goals and the strategies to reach those goals. In every way his life improved, and God advanced his ministry light years as a result of that forty-day fast.

After hearing Dave's story I was so excited that I wanted to start fasting immediately, but I also wanted some teaching on the subject to make sure I was doing it effectively. Anyone who has

fasted knows that it's best to begin with guidelines in place and to have encouraging testimonies and stories that build your faith. Then you won't lose heart. I renewed my search for the fasting tape series I had seen, and finally someone on my staff found it. I popped the first cassette into my car stereo and began listening. The encouragement and teaching touched my heart, and I thought, *This is the most wonderful thing I've ever heard.*

Then I realized it was my own sermon! I had forgotten that I had preached on fasting eleven years earlier! In fact, I had fasted quite a bit in the early years of my ministry, discovering for the first time its astonishing value and benefits. Prior to that, I thought fasting was sort of an “iffy” thing—you can fast if you want to, but you don't have to—and I didn't want to! But when I really began to study what the Bible says about fasting, I decided to do it.

My first fast consisted of three days eating no solid food and just drinking liquids. After the three days without food, I went into a prolonged “Daniel Fast,” where I ate no pleasant food. Daniel said, “I ate no pleasant bread.” That means he didn't eat cake, bread, or meat. He procured his protein from other sources. I stayed on that fast for a couple of months and found I was drawn closer to God. I discovered an intensified revelation of Him. Moreover, during that time of fasting I received more revelation knowledge than I had ever received in my whole combined Christian experience. And, as an added benefit, I shed fifty pounds of unsightly fat!

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During the fast God said to me, “Dave, as a result of this fasting, I am advancing your ministry by ten years.” In other words, what would normally have taken me ten years to accomplish only took me a matter of months! These benefits were the direct result of the concentrated, intensified power of God that was working in my life through fasting.

I had also read about other ministers like D. L. Moody, Charles Finney, and Charles Spurgeon, who all practiced fasting regularly. They rose out of obscurity, became great soul winners, preachers, and world changers.

How could I have forgotten this essential key to effective ministry and the Christian life? As I listened to the tapes, I barely recognized my voice, but the truths coming through my car’s speakers spoke deeply to me about this amazing practice. I was ready to rediscover fasting.

A few days later I attended the retirement banquet for Loren Triplett. My mind went back to some of the things we had talked about during the three years I served with him on the Missions board. I remembered that fasting was one of the cornerstones of his ministry. He always talked about how it was passed down to him from his parents, who were early Pentecostal ministers.

The more I thought about it, the more certain I was that the secret of his achievements was his commitment to fasting and prayer. Loren and his wife passed these practices on to their son, Don, who is a missionary in Central America and one of the most effective men in our denomination today. Sometimes he

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will find a mountain cave and fast a few days to seek the Lord. The Lord will give him revelation on what to do, where to go, and how to do it. This young man has reached 2.5 million people for Jesus Christ and has by far one of the largest missionary ministries in the world.

All of these thoughts came together for me after Loren's banquet in Springfield, Missouri. I had an extra day, and when I got up that morning, the Holy Spirit was on me like a blanket. I couldn't get fasting out of my mind. So I sat down at the little desk in my room and wrote for twelve hours. The Holy Spirit moved my hand, enlightened my mind, and touched my heart on the subject of fasting. I brought the scribbled-up paper back to my editorial staff and said, "Could you put this in book form by next week, so I can give everybody a free copy for our Christmas service?" In just a few weeks it was printed, and we gave a copy to everyone who attended our Christmas service.

God wanted our whole church to be supercharged, radically fasting warriors because He has a purpose for us that requires added power and sensitivity to His voice. I believe He has the same desire for you. Can you think of an area of your life where you need a breakthrough? An area of your spiritual life that seems sluggish and resistant to change? Fasting may be just what you need!

## Triple Benefits

When you think of fasting, do you imagine someone with hollow cheeks, sunken eyes, and a somber demeanor? Do you picture someone on a hunger strike to protest some global injustice? Or do you picture someone who is vibrant, alive, with a new light in their eyes and a bounce in their step? The latter is really what fasting should produce.

What is fasting?

Simply put, fasting is abstaining from something, usually food, for a certain period of time. The word translated “fast” from the Hebrew means to put your hand over your mouth.<sup>1</sup> In Greek, it means to abstain from something, normally food.<sup>2</sup> Food is not bad. We must eat to live, but our appetites can run out of control. Too much of even a good thing can lead us to ungodly habits, thinking, and behavior. Anything out of control, whether it’s an automobile or a person, is dangerous.

Fasting humbles the soul before God, denies and masters the appetite, manifests an earnest desire to seek God, gives us power over demonic oppression, and aids in prayer. Here is one of the most powerful passages of Scripture describing and defining fasting.



## Triple Benefits

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.

Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:

And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

And they that shall be of thee, shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

Isaiah 58:6-12

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen?” God, through the prophet Isaiah, enumerates some of the benefits of fasting. If you

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have a nicotine habit or any other addiction, God is going to show you how fasting can cure you of it. You can be delivered from the things that have held you in bondage for years, but for some reason you haven't been able to shake.

We have models of fasting in both Old and New Testaments. The Bible gives accounts of Moses and Jesus fasting.

And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 24:18

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Matthew 4:1-4

Fasting is a biblical practice that has three amazing benefits that happen to us all at once because it affects all three parts of our being. Paul said that each individual is made up of three parts: spirit, mind, and body. (1 Thess. 5:23.) We are each a little trinity, a reflection of God. We know that physical activity strengthens the body and clears the mind. Education helps the

## Triple Benefits

mind but does little for the body or spirit. Worship is a spiritual activity, although the Bible says to worship with our understanding and to demonstrate it with our bodies. But fasting affects all three areas. It impacts all three parts of us in significant ways and thus has triple benefits.

The first century church knew about the triple benefits of fasting. From time to time they called corporate fasts for specific purposes, and they also had regular times of personal fasting. One Bible dictionary said that early Christians fasted regularly on Wednesdays and Fridays, but after about a century, it became a religious routine. Some were fasting just to gain honor with men. So rather than temper the abuses with the proper use of this miraculous gateway to the supernatural, some of the church fathers discontinued it, and the power of fasting was lost.

Today people are realizing the triple benefits of fasting again and are reviving the practice. I have spoken with many believers who feel a personal conviction to start fasting regularly, and I know of many churches that embark on fasts together. I believe we have come full circle, and as the first century church practiced fasting, the end-time church is now practicing fasting.

Jesus endorsed fasting.

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do.

Matthew 6:16

Notice He didn't say "if you fast" but "when you fast." Fasting was supposed to be a regular, healthy discipline of the

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Christian faith just like praying and reading the Bible. Fasting was *not* an option in the early Church. Yet there were no harsh regulations or legalistic, regimented rules. It was left to the discretion of each individual. Historical records show us that in the beginning stages of church history, there was a regular time of fasting. These times of fasting were called by the church leaders and were typically on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Many great men and women of God in the Bible fasted. In Luke, chapter two, we get a glimpse of a very old woman named Anna who spent her life in the temple fasting and worshiping. Some historians say that she was between 106 and 110 years old! She was a prophetess and considered fasting and prayer her full-time ministry. We don't know if she fasted certain meals or if she fasted for days on end, but we do know fasting was such a prominent part of her ministry that the Holy Spirit forever enshrined it in His description of her in Luke's gospel.

Anna's fasting led to one of the great moments in the Bible. It was Anna who came to Mary and Joseph and prophesied over the infant Jesus. She must have considered her years of fasting a small service compared to the honor God gave her of encouraging Jesus' parents and foretelling His ministry.

Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 2:38

## Triple Benefits

Anna became one of the first New Testament evangelists in the Bible!

Even non-Christians knew fasting was a powerful spiritual practice. Before he knew Jesus, the Roman centurion Cornelius sought God through fasting and prayer with amazing results.

And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

Acts 10:30,31

God sent Peter to Cornelius, and the whole household was saved. It became a major turning point when the church understood that God was pouring out His Spirit on non-Jews too. I can't help but notice that fasting brought the visitation to Cornelius. Maybe it was his way of showing God how earnest he was to know the truth.

Early Christians also practiced fasting to learn God's will. In fact, Paul's ministry started during a season of fasting.

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers ... While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had *fasted and prayed*, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 13:1-3 (italics mine)

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Fasting was the normal practice the early Christians used to send out missionaries like Paul and Barnabas, but it was also how they chose local church leaders. When Paul and Barnabas were in Galatia, they demonstrated this.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, *with prayer and fasting*, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 14:23 (italics mine)

Perhaps you feel like your ministry has never moved forward. Or maybe you haven't had the clarity of mind and spirit to recognize what God is telling you to do. Have you had trouble finding your place in the local church? Have you bounced from one thing to another without settling down? Maybe God wants to clarify His call on your life and kick-start your ministry during a time of fasting.

When you invest in yourself by fasting, you receive a triple benefit—for your spirit, mind, and body. You'll never get that kind of yield in the stock market! In the next chapters, we are going to see how fasting enhances every area of your life.

## Fasting for Health

Many people are surprised to learn that fasting is a healthy thing to do. It cleanses our bodies and helps us to achieve the natural balance that can be lost through modern diets and medicines. My great grandfather was in his eighties when he was diagnosed with cancer. The surgeons told him that unless he had surgery he would die within a few months. He decided not to have the surgery but went back to his farm and started picking rhubarb and other vegetables and fruits out of the garden. He radically changed his diet, doing away with meat and boiling the rhubarb and vegetables for all his meals. This was a Daniel Fast, which we will talk about later. Not only did he live the rest of that year, he went on to live for sixteen more years! He did not die of cancer but because his heart finally gave out.

Our bodies were designed to heal themselves, and fasting helps that healing to take place. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, saw fasting as the remedy within. He said, “Everyone has a doctor in him or her, and we just have to help it in its work. The natural healing force within each one of us is the greatest force in getting well. Our food should be our medicine; our medicine should be our food but *to eat when you’re sick is to feed your sickness.*” In other words, he recognized that our

bodies are wired to fight sickness. He went on to say that if we are sick, it can be made worse if we keep feeding the sickness without a pause. That pause is fasting.

Fasting detoxifies our bodies, removing toxic elements introduced by the foods we eat. Look at the modern diet. It's full of artificial ingredients that our body was never intended to consume or absorb. Ice cream can contain formaldehyde to keep it from melting in the heat. Every kind of snack food, from potato chips to soda to gum, contains artificial colors and flavors that are chemically produced and nondigestible. Even raw meats are treated with red dyes to give them a fresh look.

Vegetables and fruit can be full of pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, and insecticides that make the problem even worse—overburdening our delicate systems and eventually developing into disease. People are living longer these days, but they are also more diseased than ever. Heart disease, cancer, and a host of other ailments are caused or worsened by the stuff we consume. Without some way of detoxifying our bodies, we remain walking time bombs for disease.

Dr. Dean Ornish says that after fasting just twelve hours toxins will begin to leave your system. We all have a unique, built-in repair system. When you fast, the poisons that are damaging your system will begin to come out. That is why your tongue gets a coat on it when you fast, and you have a terrible taste in your mouth. That “coat” is the evidence that the poisons



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are being eliminated. I tell people to make sure they have one of those little breath spray bottles handy when they are on a fast.

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1 Corinthians 9:27

Fasting is a Christian discipline that helps us spiritually, mentally, emotionally, relationally, financially, and physically. It even helps your memory, but not for the first few days! For the first few days your appetite is clamoring for food. You may experience headaches, dizziness, weakness, trembling, abdominal pains, and nausea. Dr. Ornish says this is a result of toxins being purged. Don't worry about it. Appetite is not the same as hunger. True hunger doesn't come until after about forty days of fasting. Remember, Jesus fasted forty days before he was hungry. After a few days, your body will catch on that you're not going to feed it. Your stomach actually quits producing acids, your screaming appetite will be quiet, and the body will settle down.

Fasting gives our body a chance to fight back without having to constantly process new chemicals. Otto Buchinger, M.D., founded the famous Buchinger clinics in Europe. They have had incredible success in curing people. Dr. Buchinger says, "Fasting is, without any doubt, the most effective biological method of treatment." He calls it "the operation without surgery" because it re-attunes, relaxes, and purifies our systems.<sup>1</sup>

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Buchinger has used fasting therapeutically for his patients and has seen astounding results. In fact, he has recorded results in curing cardiovascular and circulatory diseases, migraine headaches, glaucoma, digestive diseases, liver diseases, Crohn disease, chronic colitis, ulcerated colitis, degenerative diseases of the vertebral column, problems involving muscles and ligaments, skin diseases, allergies of the skin, cirrhosis, eczema, bronchial asthma, chronic sinusitis, and depression.

The advice given in the Bible almost always has a practical side to it, so I'm not surprised that fasting has been shown to be healthy. Why would God encourage a habit that was harmful? Isn't it like Him to add physical benefits to a spiritual discipline so that we receive more blessings? And it is no surprise that medical professionals are realizing how beneficial fasting can be.

There was a little boy named Luke who started growing breasts at the age of eight. He didn't have hair on his legs, and his genitals had never developed. His parents took him to a doctor, but a physical examination showed there was nothing wrong with him. Not satisfied, the doctor researched toxicity and concluded that Luke's body was not processing and eliminating estrogen, a female hormone. He put the boy on a modified fast and detoxification program, and within six weeks Jeff's breasts went down, hair appeared on his legs, and his genitals grew to the normal size for an eight-year-old. Was Jeff's condition some freak genetic occurrence? No, he needed detoxification. He needed to fast.<sup>2</sup>

## Fasting for Health

I used to think that fasting was optional for a Christian and certainly not something that encouraged health. Then I developed allergy problems and couldn't seem to overcome them. I was putting drops in my eyes to keep them from itching and trying every medication on the market. Getting no significant results, I finally I went to a Christian doctor, who said, "Have you tried fasting?"

I reasoned, "Come on; don't you have a pill that can fix me?" But he convinced me to try it, so I went on a fast. To my amazement, the allergies subsided. After that I noticed that certain foods would cause my allergies to flare up again. I would spread peanut butter on whole wheat bread and start sneezing. I would eat ice cream, and my eyes would start itching. I made a list of the foods that caused problems, and I stopped eating them. As a result, I eliminated the wheezing, sneezing, and itching entirely. Fasting not only got me back on the right track, but it also helped me to identify problems in my diet. I began fasting those foods permanently.

In his book, *Fasting and Eating for Health*, Dr. Joel Fuhrman states that fasting and starting a natural diet should be the first treatment when someone discovers that they have a medical problem.<sup>3</sup> Research on animals at the New York Academy of Science showed that with periodic fasting, animal life spans increased up to two-fold.<sup>4</sup> Even animals benefit from fasting! If you love your dog or cat, make them fast one day a week and maybe they will live longer.

You too will probably live longer with regular fasting. This is brought out in the Bible. Remember that Anna the prophetess

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lived to be very old. Many of the great men and women of God who fasted as a normal part of life lived long lives. And being older or even in your senior years does not prohibit you from fasting. When Roy White was 106 years old, he looked like he was sixty. His secret? He fasted four times a year for seven days each time and did progressive weight training three times a week.<sup>5</sup>

At the age of seventy, Martin Cornica was playing a championship tennis game with much younger players—and winning. His secret? Regular fasting! He said he feels like a twenty-year-old out there on the court.<sup>6</sup> The number of health benefits fasting brings is great at any age. Here are some quotes from notable people who have seen the physical benefits of fasting.

Fasting is simply wonderful. I can do practically anything.  
It's a miracle cure. It cured my asthma.

—Actress Cloris Leachman<sup>7</sup>

To lengthen thy life, lessen thy meals.

—Benjamin Franklin<sup>8</sup>

Sylvia Franco was a medical doctor and had a master's degree in business by the time she was thirty years old. She kept in shape and ate properly, but she and her husband couldn't seem to conceive a child. She spent \$100,000 on fertility doctors to no avail. Finally she contacted a doctor who found that Sylvia was in a toxic condition that was messing up her hormones. The doctor concluded that taking birth control pills for five years and several doses of an unusual type of antibiotic had upset her

## Fasting for Health

system. Then, when she quit taking the birth control pills, her hormone levels became unbalanced. He put her on a cleansing fast, and in three months she conceived a child.<sup>9</sup>

The doctor of the future will give no medicine but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame in diet and in the cause and prevention of disease.

—Thomas A. Edison<sup>10</sup>

Although often the solution to a health problem, medicine can be a problem if taken indiscriminately. At our church we find that the vast majority of people who request prayer and counsel for depression are taking medications that are not supposed to be taken together. Their problem stems from mixed chemicals that fight one another inside the body.

When my wife, Mary Jo, was pregnant, her doctor prescribed a pill for morning sickness. She asked about side effects, and he insisted there were none. When she inquired further, he became somewhat hostile and asked if she was questioning his integrity. We didn't feel right about her taking the pills, so she refused to buy them and stopped seeing that doctor. We read a year later in the newspaper that those very pills can cause birth defects.

It's not wrong to take medicines, but we should research and pray about the ones we take. Putting chemicals into our bodies should not be routine. We should only use them when absolutely necessary. On the other hand, I have seen the value in taking natural supplements that get rid of the toxic chemicals in the body. I have felt so much better as a result!

## THE MIRACLE RESULTS OF FASTING

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When Mary Jo and I were in London, England, we discovered that the exhaust was horrible in the downtown area. I had taken some Pycnogenol with us, which is an antioxidant that comes from a Mediterranean pine tree and is extremely powerful in fighting toxins. We took that before bedtime after walking around London all day, and in the morning we coughed and black stuff actually came out of our lungs! I can't imagine what that stuff would have done if left inside our bodies.

Fasting and taking antioxidants will help purify the body when you are not fasting, but fasting alone can help your body achieve its natural balance. How much fasting you should do for physical benefit is up to you and your doctor. I recommend people experiment—under a doctor's supervision—to see what they are able to do and then do it regularly.

A friend of mine fasts every Wednesday. Some Christians choose one or two days a week for fasting. People who fast a couple of times a week have healthier, more beautiful complexions. And because fasting helps to balance the body and your appetite, if you're underweight or anemic, fasting can help you put on weight and become strong, and if you're overweight, fasting can help you maintain a healthy weight.

Fasting is not starvation, which is really the process of dying. You cannot starve your way into good health, but you can fast your way to better health when you fast for the right reasons and for a reasonable period of time. Living a fasted life is a scriptural, healthy lifestyle.

## Fasting for Help

We all know what it's like to need a fast solution to a specific problem, whether it is financial, physical, or spiritual. Fasting is one of the best ways to get a solution. Someone might say, "Well, aren't you trying to twist God's arm by fasting?" No! I am just trying to get my spirit, mind, and body into a position to receive whatever God has for me.

God wants us to be prosperous and live productive lives for Him. He says in His Word, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). This means He wants to guide us continually so that we can be blessed. The discipline of fasting puts us into position to receive these blessings. It intensifies or concentrates God's power at work in our lives.

Fasting can save your life!

—Ronald G. Cridland, M.D.<sup>1</sup>

A pastor friend of mine discovered one day that he had cancer and was going to die. It was a heart-breaking discovery, especially since he didn't want to leave his church, and the church didn't want him to leave.

## THE MIRACLE RESULTS OF FASTING

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One of the elders of the church went before the congregation and said, “Pastor’s got cancer. The doctors say he’s going to die. We can’t afford to lose him. We need to fast.” The church fasted on behalf of their pastor, and within a week the cancer was gone. My friend went on for many more years as pastor of that church. Fasting brought a miracle of healing!

The Bible also shows us how judgment has been averted as a result of corporate fasting. The huge city of Ninevah, comparable in influence to New York City today, was marked for destruction. When Jonah prophesied their destruction, the ruler of Ninevah called for a nationwide fast, and God gave them mercy instead.

Similar things have happened in our times. In the 1960s there was a great drought in America. Crops and livestock were dying, and farmers were suffering horribly. President Johnson called the nation to a time of fasting and prayer, and in three days the heavens broke open, the rain came down, and America was spared.

Help can come in a variety of ways through fasting. God may give you something that is the solution to your problem—like a UPS delivery truck pulling up to your house. When you need a financial miracle or breakthrough, the solution may come as a gift, something undeserved and unexpected. Many Christians, myself included, can tell stories of receiving anonymous money or surprise support in time of great need.

Fasting can bring deliverance from an enemy. In 2 Chronicles 20:3, King Jehoshaphat and the nation needed deliverance from



three armies that were coming against Judah: Moab, Ammon, and those on Mount Seir. Judah didn't have a chance against them, so Jehoshaphat did the only thing he knew might work: He called a fast.

That's when Judah's deliverance began. For no apparent reason, the enemy changed plans. Instead of attacking Judah first, Moab and Ammon decided to conquer Mount Seir first, so they slew all the people on Mount Seir then said, "Now we can attack Judah." But the Moabites began to suspect the Ammonites, and the Ammonites began to distrust the Moabites, and they fought each other until nobody was left. Judah's enemies killed each other off, and it all happened within three days of the time the nation started fasting and praying.

In the book of Esther, the Hebrew nation called a fast, so they would not be wiped out. An evil man named Haman was a member of the king's cabinet, and he was planning to initiate a serious persecution against the Jewish people, which would result in killing all of them. Esther's uncle, Mordecai, also worked in the king's service. When he discovered Haman's plot, he called for a corporate fast. Do you know what happened? The tables turned on Haman, and he himself was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for the Jews. A whole race of people was saved, and this is one of the most famous fasts in history. That's the kind of power God releases against our enemies when the corporate body fasts.

## THE MIRACLE RESULTS OF FASTING

I wonder what would have happened if the power of fasting behind this miracle in the book of Esther had been applied before the Holocaust in World War II. What might have occurred if nations had been called together for fasting and prayer? History may have been different.

Fasting can also bring God on the scene to deliver someone from demonic oppression and possession, as when Jesus cast the demon out of a boy and said:

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could we not cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing will be impossible unto you. *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*

Matthew 17:14-21 (italics mine)

I have friends named Liz and Fred who went through a terrible experience. Liz was a talented singer and signed with a company in New York to record gospel music, but she discovered that people in the company were actually practicing witchcraft. They were mixing herbs to bring occult results, doing chants, and casting curses and hexes. Liz decided she didn't want to have anything to do with the company, but when she attempted to break the contract they decided to sue her.

Soon Liz became sick and her daughter, Jasmine, began having unexplained seizures. Liz and Fred took Jasmine to the hospital. A brain scan showed that she had suffered twelve mini-strokes. There were five dark spots on her brain, eating it alive. She was dying by the minute, and doctors said she had only two days left.

When Liz saw the X-rays, God gave her a revelation that the devil was behind the attack. She took Jasmine home. They had to tie her to a wheelchair because the seizures would make her violent, and at times another voice would begin to speak through her, saying things like, "I know about your sins, Liz." The voice even named sins from Liz's past, things her daughter didn't know anything about.

Not many Christians have faced spiritual warfare like this before. Until you come face to face with the devil, you don't know what it's like. Liz had not been able to fast a day in her life before then, but her daughter was dying. She urgently needed an

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answer, so she fasted for three days and asked God to send someone to help her.

During her fast, an old friend who didn't know what Jasmine was going through called. Liz explained the situation, and the friend recommended she go to a pastor that had a deliverance ministry. Fred and Liz took Jasmine to the service, and the pastor began to preach. Liz grew more and more impatient, thinking, *My daughter's brain is under attack from the devil! Can't you start the prayer time?*

But the Lord said, "Be still. Everybody has needs. You are going to be taken care of." Later in the service the pastor called Jasmine up and identified five demons that had taken control of her mind. He had not seen the X-rays and didn't know about the five dark spots. As he called them out one by one, Jasmine was delivered. Today she is a beautiful, vibrant young Christian lady with the touch of God on her life.

God worked supernaturally as a result of Liz's fasting. When we desperately need help, fasting is the best way to invite God's intervention.

## Fasting for Holiness and Humility

Do you ever get into a routine where you're doing much more than you should and it's wearing you down? It happens to me sometimes. My schedule latches onto me like a pit bull, and I feel gripped by urgency and stress. When I was feeling that way recently, I plopped down on the floor and said, "God, I'm out of control. I need help to rein in my life, so it's manageable again." I felt the gentle nudge to fast, and it hit me again how easy the solution was.

Fasting does for us mentally what it does for us physically. It removes toxic thoughts from our minds. It humbles our soul and gives us a fresh poise. It makes us real before God. Through fasting we declare that God is more important and more essential than food or anything else that vies for our time. By fasting we fulfill the First Commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). In fasting we say, "God, You're my source. I'm accountable to You, and I'm going to show You that You're more important and more essential than my food!"

These bodies of ours want to be number one. All day they whine, "I'm hungry. I want to look at this. I want to taste that.

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Feed me!” The flesh can get in the way of spiritual revelation being received in our soul, but fasting humbles us before God so that we can hear and see spiritually. David said,

I humbled my soul with fasting.

Psalm 35:13

Every sincere Christian wants to be holier than they are. The Bible commands it, and our hearts desire it, though walking in it is often a struggle. Holiness means we deny what we want and embrace what God wants.

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?

Luke 9:23-25

Fasting is a way of denying self and experiencing greater measures of holiness. It causes you to be more real with God. Suddenly it becomes clear what is holy and what is unholy. You begin to see your heart for what it is, and it takes pride right out of you!

During a fast you have a deeper spiritual perception. Instead of constantly trying to impress other people, which is what most of us spend a good deal of time doing, you try only to impress God. That's why Jesus said, “When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites,” (Matt. 6:16). Their fasting was an effort to impress men rather than God. True fasting brings humility that cares only what God thinks.

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Hypocrites not only fast to impress men, but they profess values that they don't really possess. They might profess peace, but inside they are in conflict because they are running themselves ragged or walking in fear instead of faith in God. They might declare that family is important, but they don't spend time with or enjoy their children. They might tell others to pray but rarely do it themselves. Even Paul recognized he was a hypocrite at times.

For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Romans 7:19

Like you and me, Paul was sometimes confused, sometimes in a mental battle. Whenever your mind is in a toxic state, not purified through fasting, reading the Word, and prayer, the fleshly imagination will win over your will. When we fast, we put our spirit in charge of our minds. Jesus put it this way,

The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

Matthew 26:41

Fasting puts the spirit in the driver's seat of our thoughts and actions so that we choose the holy things of God. This is what Paul meant when he wrote,

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

## THE MIRACLE RESULTS OF FASTING

I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:27

Fasting clears the mind and can release us from mental disorders. In a Moscow psychiatric unit seven thousand patients had disorders ranging from schizophrenia to neurosis. They were treated with conventional medicine, but nothing seemed to help. The directors read Otto Buchinger's work and decided to try what they called the "hunger experiment." They did not feed the patients solid food for a week, giving them only water and juice. After that week, more than 80 percent of those patients were well enough to be released and live normal lives.<sup>1</sup>

In Japan, the *Sapporo Medical Journal* reported that out of 382 patients with psychiatric diseases, 87 percent were cured through the use of fasting. Fasting somehow improves our ability to handle frustration and the stresses of life. God confirms this in His Word.

You will keep in perfect peace, him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 26:3

The mental rewards of fasting alone are worth the price. We find a renewed closeness to God, a new power with God, and a greater sensitivity to spiritual things. The mind is clear, the body is clean, and the searchlight shines on the soul to humble us. We may want to cry out like Isaiah did, "I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5), but we will surely find ourselves being drawn into a closer relationship with God.



## Different Kinds of Fasts

Have you encountered people who are proud of the way they fast or who look down their noses at people who don't fast as often as they do? These believers turn fasting into a competition, but fasting is not a one-size-fits-all thing. The Bible tells about different kinds of fasts that were called for different purposes.

Fasts can differ from church to church and person to person. They even differ from situation to situation. There are two basic types of fasting: a corporate fast and an individual fast. A corporate fast is called by the leader of a nation, a tribe, a church, or a family. We have talked about how King Jehoshaphat and the king of Ninevah called for a nationwide fast. There's power when a leader calls for a corporate fast. It's like a nation or church declaring war. I believe God magnifies their efforts more than we can possibly imagine.

Corporate fasts are also a time of detoxification for a church body. Impurities come to the surface where the Holy Spirit can blow them away, just as toxins are removed from our bodies. There have been times when I hated corporate fasting because it seemed like everyone was so irritable. However, until we fast we don't know what impurities are there. When a church fasts together, they get to see each other in a much less

polished way. Fasting can make you irritable, tired, and even mentally slow (temporarily, of course). It's easier to find fault with others and yourself.

This is part of the process. Let the Holy Ghost blow away those things like a cleansing breeze. Corporate fasts bring us to our knees in repentance and draw us closer. We see each other for who we are (for better or worse!) and learn to love each other more deeply.

The second kind of fast is individual, when you declare a fast for personal reasons. David fasted often, and he was called a man after God's own heart. He fasted while interceding for a friend (see Psalm 35:13). Nehemiah fasted while seeking guidance from God. John the Baptist abstained from food other than locusts and honey. Would you care to go on one of those kinds of fasts? What a menu! But whether you are participating in a corporate fast or an individual fast, the same principles apply.

To me the most important principle of fasting is this: *no legalism*. Fasting has no harsh rules or regulations. Of course, in a corporate fast, the pastor may or may not specify when and what to fast. If the pastor or leader does specify, this is the direction of the Lord to a corporate body and should be respected. If for some reason you cannot comply with the instructions because of health or some other reason, you can talk to your pastor or leader and work something out.

In an individual fast, how much you fast and what you fast is between you and the Lord. You can fast one day a week, two

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days a week, one day a month, two days a month, four times a year—whatever you believe He is calling you to do. Once you settle on a plan and feel it's the right one, however, *don't change it in the middle*. Stick with it! Abide by your commitment. Sometimes I feel the need to fast for a week, sometimes for a day. Sometimes I fast all food, and sometimes just meats and sweets. The Bible doesn't tell us exactly how to fast but shows a range of options.

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

2 Corinthians 11:27

Paul fasted often, but we don't know in what manner. If he was like the other New Testament believers, he probably fasted two days a week. I personally believe that Paul's fasts were short fasts. We have only one record where he was on a long fast, and that was probably for one week when he was on a ship in the middle of the storm.

After the men had gone a long time without food....

Acts 27:21

Clearly, if long fasts had been important to Paul he would have made a point of recommending them. The emphasis these days on fasting for forty days is a little overdone, in my opinion. This extreme view also might hinder sincere people from fasting because a forty-day fast is hard on both the body and the mind and might not be right for everyone. Those who have completed

forty-day fasts successfully clearly had the Lord's leading. Those who try, only to find they can't go through with it, usually are just doing it to be religious and are not being led of the Lord. A religious notion always sets believers up for failure.

The Bible only gives account of two people who fasted forty days: Jesus and Moses. Moses fasted when he was on the mountaintop receiving the Ten Commandments, and Jesus fasted when He was being tempted in the wilderness. Elijah may have fasted forty days. An angel came to him and gave him food from heaven, and the Bible says that the food sustained him for forty days. It doesn't say that he fasted, but it's likely that he did. Interestingly, all three men appeared together when Jesus was transfigured before the disciples, with Moses representing the Law and Elijah the prophets.

Other than Jesus and Moses, there is no one else in the entire Bible who fasted forty days on water alone. That's good news for those who aren't physically capable of fasting that long with no food. The length and manner of a fast is not important to God unless He specifies the time and what to fast. And it is not about winning a competition or going as long as you can. It is about humbling and chastening the soul. God is not measuring the length of time but the sincerity of the heart. If you are hung up by your inability to fast for a long time, now is the time to let that go! God has given you freedom to choose a fast that fits you.

Fasting can mean going without certain foods but not all foods. Some people fast two meals a day then have a very

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simple dinner; for example, a boiled potato and broth. Others eat normally but exclude meats and sweets. This is what the Bible describes as a “Daniel Fast.”

Daniel was a palace assistant to the king of Babylon. When Daniel and his three Hebrew friends were taken into captivity in Babylon, the king decided to train them for service. While living in the palace, Daniel saw that the king’s table was spread with steak, turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, breads, pies, gravies, and all sorts of delicacies. To keep from losing sight of the God of Israel, Daniel and his friends purposed in their hearts not to eat of the king’s delicacies. They ate nothing but vegetables or “pulce,” which is whatever comes out of the earth. After ten days the leader of the trainees noticed that the Hebrews’ complexions were fairer. They were healthier and more nourished than those who were eating at the king’s table.

It goes on to say that Daniel became gifted in understanding visions and dreams and was considered ten times wiser than the others in the king’s palace. I don’t think some Christians realize the power of a Daniel Fast. He was given phenomenal gifts because of his faithfulness and fasting. God saw his heart not his plate. He realized that during a time of rigorous training it was good to eat something, but Daniel still made an effort to put God first.

A Daniel Fast can be a powerful experience. We can gain just as much or more than on a total fast. It all depends on what we purpose in our heart to do. Is God leading you to go a week with

only water? If so, He will provide the grace to carry it out. Is He asking you to go on a Daniel Fast for a month? He'll give the grace for that too.

I often go on Daniel Fasts and keep from eating pleasant foods. Nevertheless, if I need a little bit of energy to be in the pulpit on Sunday morning, I'll have a banana or a bowl of fruit with the other ministers before service. A Daniel Fast is a good way to combat legalistic tendencies. It acknowledges that we need food but tells the soul that the only luxury we will enjoy during the fast is the luxury of God's presence.

Getting the technical aspects of a fast right is important, but the spiritual aspects are much more important. Here are wise and healthy things to do while you fast.

- Attend a prayer meeting at least once a week. If you're on a corporate fast, prayer meetings will become the heart of the church, as they should be anyway. Even if you're fasting individually, a prayer meeting will encourage you.
- Sign up as an intercessor. Maybe your church has back-room intercessors praying during each service. Put your prayer power to work when fasting.
- Read the Bible.
- Pray for your neighbors. Establish a "soul zone." Take daily walks around your neighborhood and pray for each household as you pass by.

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- Give up entertainment, television, radio, and videos for the duration of the fast.
- Do acts of kindness for people. Help a lady with her groceries, put a quarter in somebody's parking meter.
- Ask God for someone to disciple if you aren't already discipling someone.

Again, the important thing is to stick with the commitment you have made. Don't wake up each morning and decide what you will fast that day, and especially don't eat whenever you feel like it "in the name of grace." Fasting is a discipline. It's not supposed to be a straitjacket, but it doesn't mean we do whatever we feel like at the moment. If we follow the instructions of the Lord in faith, the fast will bring victory into our lives.

## The Time To Fast

When God leads me to call a corporate fast at my church, my congregation members love to joke with me about it. One man said, “I think we’re on this fast because Pastor Dave needed to go on a diet, and he didn’t want to diet all by himself.” Another lady wrote me and said, “You call Mount Hope the ‘Come as you are’ church, but now you don’t want fat people!”

They were joking, but it’s important to know when to fast. Seeing a few extra pounds register on the bathroom scale is not the best reason, although losing weight is a nice side benefit (if you don’t gain it all back later!). How do we know when to fast? Do we wait for a sign from heaven or a still, small voice in our spirit? I don’t think so. If we wait for inspiration, we could be waiting a long time.

Jesus did not say, “When the Holy Spirit tells you to fast.” He simply said, “When you fast.” He taught that fasting was a discipline. I don’t always feel like praying or reading the Bible, but I do it anyway. Likewise, I don’t usually feel inspired to fast, but I do it anyway. The nature of discipline is that we don’t always want to do the thing that is healthy for us.

What are some specific situations that should provoke you to fast? One situation which may require a fast is when we are facing



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a mammoth task. Nehemiah fasted before returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall. He needed the strength and discernment to make right choices in what proved to be a massive undertaking.

Maybe you're facing such a task in your time. You might be moving across the country, starting a business, establishing a new ministry, adopting children, or facing new challenges at work. Whenever you face a situation like Nehemiah's, where success will only come with God's help, that is a time to fast. You will see breakthroughs that once seemed unattainable.

I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions.

Ezra 8:21

Sometimes we face physical danger. Maybe you're traveling to a foreign country. Maybe you're getting on an airplane in icy weather or going in for surgery. Any time we face danger is a good time to fast, even one meal or for a day. Maybe your son or daughter is serving in the military in a hot spot or in war. I recently saw the parents of a young military man who was one of the crew on the spy plane that was detained in China for eleven days. In a television interview this man's parents testified that they had sought the Lord for an answer to the crisis. Those service men and women were brought home without a scratch.

When we are facing a monumental task or the enemy is attacking and we don't know what to do, fasting can clear away confusion and fear so that we can hear from God and know what

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to do. We saw earlier how King Jehoshaphat called a national fast when he learned that his adversaries were marching against him (see 2 Chronicles 20). He didn't know what to do, and his first action was to fast.

When you don't know what to do, try fasting first. It works better than worrying or rushing around to force a solution! When you fast, you feel a sense of peace and rest knowing that you're doing everything you can and ultimately God will provide a solution.

It is also time to fast when you look around you and find yourself appalled at the society you live in. Has your spirit ever recoiled from what people think is acceptable entertainment? Acceptable morality? Acceptable business practices? Acceptable politics? The prophet Joel saw his own nation in moral rot and commanded,

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly.

Joel 1:14

When your heart is repulsed or grieved by what goes on in your nation, do the biblical thing and fast. Not only will it call God's attention and invite His intervention, it will separate you and purify your own heart from unholy cultural influences.

God doesn't change in character, but He will change His mind. He allows for true repentance to affect how He deals with people. Jonah went to Ninevah and preached that God's judgment was falling on the city. The leader of the city called for a citywide fast.

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Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.

Jonah 3:7-9

God changed His mind and decided not to bring judgment on Ninevah because the people humbled themselves in fasting. What He did for a city He will also do for you personally. Maybe God's judgment is on you or your family because you have violated God's rules. Now is the time to fast. If you have been in rebellion, repent from your ways and fast to show God you're serious about changing your ways and pleading for His mercy. You can change His mind!

A crucial time to fast is when the church commissions ministers. There are few things more important to a local church than choosing and commissioning leaders. The men and women in charge will largely determine the course that church takes, whether to grow and prosper or stagnate and decline. Even if the entire congregation is ready to move forward, wrong leadership can thwart their efforts. That's why every church should choose its leaders with the utmost care and spiritual discernment, and there's no better preparation than fasting.

We saw earlier how the first-century church fasted and prayed before sending Saul and Barnabas off and how Saul and

Barnabas appointed elders in the churches only while fasting and praying. (Acts 13:1-3; 14:23.) Should we do any less? To be quite frank, we usually stuff ourselves at a banquet before the commissioning service. Then, still burping our beef, we lay our hands on the new ministers and pray that God will bless their ministries. Candidly, we can't hear the Holy Spirit clearly when we are stuffed with food and can't wait to take a nap!

Whenever your church comes to a place of choosing its leaders, you should fast and pray that the right ones are chosen. This goes for all leadership positions, including nursery workers, musicians, and even those who stand and greet people at the door. Every ministry is potentially life-changing to believers who visit for the first or hundredth time.

Sometimes a creeping feeling of restlessness can come into your life, and sometimes it's God stirring you out of your comfort zone. A friend of mine was pastoring a successful church. He had security, money, a nice car, and yet he felt restless. He fasted and prayed, and God said, "I want you to begin a home missions work in a totally different city." He left the security of that big church and went to a little town to begin a brand-new work for God. He started a church with eleven other people, and today it's on course to having a broader influence than the church he left.

Sometimes that restless feeling is God moving you on. At other times it's not of God. The way to find out is to quiet yourself

before Him with fasting and prayer. Your heightened spiritual perception will help you see which is the right way.

There is another restlessness that comes when demonic forces are at work in the church. Many Christians don't like to deal with the demonic realm, but it's part and parcel of the gospel Jesus preached. We are told very plainly that some demonic strongholds will not be broken without fasting.

And he [Jesus] said unto them, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

Mark 9:29 (insert mine)

Sometimes you can encounter problems that don't make any sense unless a demon is causing them. When you suspect that this is true in your life or a friend's life, fast immediately. There's no reason to wait. Fasting gives us spiritual booster rockets to triumph over strong demonic oppression. Then you can pray and lay hands on that person with other Christians, and the bound-up person will be freed.

What about fasting for angelic help? We've all had times when we wished God would send angels to help us. The Bible says in a number of places that He does send angels. It's not our place to demand that God send angels, but we can acknowledge situations that require an extra measure of supernatural intervention. The early church did this when Peter was put in prison. They had every reason to believe that King Herod would execute him. Stephen had already been stoned by an angry mob, and attacks of violence against believers were becoming common.

## THE MIRACLE RESULTS OF FASTING

But the church was earnestly praying to God for him [Peter].

Acts 12:5 (insert mine)

The night before Herod was to bring Peter to trial, an angel led him to safety through locked prison gates. Peter said,

Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me.

Acts 12:11

We are not told specifically that the church was fasting, but it's a good bet that they were. Fasting was such a normal practice of the church that Luke, the writer of Acts, might have simply assumed it. Or this might have been one of the church's regular times of fasting. In any case, God did send an angel to deliver Peter.

Daniel fasted and received an answer from Gabriel the archangel.

Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.

Daniel 10:12

Can you imagine coming face to face with an angel? Daniel did and fell facedown, totally overwhelmed. He recognized that his situation was beyond his ability, he fasted for supernatural intervention, and his prayer was answered.

Can we fast for others? Yes! Fasting is one of the most powerful things we can do on someone's behalf. Most people have

never heard of George McCluskey. He was a man of God who had two daughters and one son. One day he decided that he was going to skip his lunch daily and spend that time praying for his children. In the course of time, his two girls married ministers and his son went into the ministry. Pretty soon they started having children, and George decided to fast for his grandchildren and future great grandchildren, too.

The grandchildren grew up and went to college. All of the girls married ministers and missionaries, and all of the boys went into the ministry or were preparing to go into the ministry except for one rebel who chose psychology, even though he felt guilty about it. He thought he was ruining a family tradition because everyone else had gone into the ministry, but his heart kept pulling him to psychology.

Did George's fasting and prayer work? Today that "rebel" has several best-selling books that help parents raise their children in a Christian way. He has one of the most popular Christian radio programs on the air. His name is Dr. James Dobson, and his career began with a fasting and praying grandfather!<sup>1</sup>

There are thousands of other reasons to fast, but these cover some of the basic ones. When should you fast? Whenever the Lord tells you, whenever your regular schedule tells you, or whenever you find yourself in a situation that demands extra spiritual power or assistance. As a result, your life will have spiritual booster rockets!

## Rewards for Fasting

Do you need your family saved? Children protected? Wisdom? Anointing? Favor? Healing? Do you have an overwhelming problem? Have you failed in the past and want to succeed in the future? Fasting isn't just about keeping ourselves from the pleasures of food. It's also about gaining rewards. Is it biblical to fast and expect rewards? Absolutely! Jesus said:

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, *will reward you*.

Matthew 6:17,18 (italics mine)

The reward is the solution we seek, the answer we are hoping to gain, the provision, the deliverance, the comfort. I have not found a single fast in the Bible that didn't have a specific goal it was trying to achieve.

Is it okay to fast simply to draw close to God? Yes, but it's also healthy to fast with the expectation of receiving a specific answer. This does two things for us. First, it causes us to focus on the reward we seek and not to focus on our hunger; and second, it allows us to see God's faithfulness when the answer comes. In Ezra, the Jews determined that their reward for their



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fast was God's protection for their families, their little ones, and their possessions during a journey. They decided to fast and clearly stated, "Lord, this is the reward we want. We want divine protection." God gave them their reward. They kept their eyes focused on the reward and not on their hunger.

A terrible way to fast is to have no reward ahead of you but the food you will eat when the fast is finished. In this state of mind every morsel of food you see looks like a sirloin steak, and your appetite screams so loud that you can't hear your own prayers. On the other hand, when you fast for a reward, even the most succulent prime rib will look like cardboard compared to what you are expecting from God. I know a man who fasted for his unsaved wife. Food meant very little compared to her salvation. One day she came to the church shaking like a leaf, ran to the altar, and accepted Christ. Over the years I have witnessed dozens of similar occurrences.

If you are fasting, expect a reward. If you pray, expect answers. There is too much "slot-machine religion" in the church today. Too many believers pray, "Well, I'll put my silver dollar in and hope my lucky number comes up." That is fatalism, a "Que. sera, sera," whatever-will-be-will-be attitude. That is not God! God says to expect something when you live your life according to His Word and trust Him for results. Expect answers to your prayers. Expect reward from your fasting.

It is important to write down what you need during a time of fasting, praying and asking the Holy Spirit for guidance. I pray,

list my rewards, and then expect them. When you pray and receive His instructions, list your requests and say, “Lord, these are the rewards that I am expecting.” You are not *buying* the reward; you are just *expecting* the reward. And when you determine your reward before you enter the fast, it will make the fast a joy.

Jesus said that secret seeking brings open reward. Think of loved ones, friends, and neighbors who need a relationship with God and name their salvation as your reward. Think of those who are afflicted and sick and name deliverance for them as your reward. What about your need for guidance? Questions you would like God to answer? Financial needs? Write them all down. Ask God to reward your fasting. You must have specific rewards written out to effectively fast for a desired result.

Again, you cannot expect rewards that are based on your fleshly desires. They must be in line with the Word of God. James 4:3 KJV says, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” The Bible is specific about some of the rewards we can expect when we fast. As we saw earlier, Isaiah 58:6-12 KJV spells them out. When we fast God’s way, we can expect His rewards.

### Is Not This the Fast That I Have Chosen?

#### **Reward #1: To loose the bands of wickedness...**

Bands are things that hold you back. It’s what the writer of Hebrews meant when he wrote:

## Rewards for Fasting

Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1

Have you ever known Christians who are held back and nothing works for them? They plant seeds of faith, but the seeds don't grow. Perhaps they are held by bands of wickedness of their own doing. Only prayer and fasting can loose those bands so they can advance in the things of God.

### **Reward #2: To undo the heavy burdens...**

The Hebrew word translated “undo” means “to tear off.”<sup>1</sup> Fasting doesn't just get rid of burdens that God never intended for us to carry; it violently pulls them off. Many believers are carrying burdens that God never intended for them to carry. Through fasting they can shake loose of them forever.

### **Reward #3: To let the oppressed go free...**

The discouraged, bruised, and wounded go free when we fast. The Hebrew word-picture here is of a vase that is cracking up.<sup>2</sup> Have you ever felt like *you* were cracking up? That's a type of oppression. When you fast, you start a process of mending, becoming that beautiful vessel of honor God designed.

Do you know people around you who really hurt? They are oppressed. They are what we call the “walking wounded.” But they can be set free as you fast for them! The Bible says God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good and

healing all that were “cracking up,” oppressed by the devil. We need to humble ourselves and put ourselves into a position where God can use us to heal the oppressed and bind up the broken hearted.

**Reward #4: Break every yoke...**

A yoke is a bondage or a bad habit that you cannot seem to break. When you fast, bad habits *will* be broken. I used to be addicted to caffeine, drinking three pots of coffee every day. Whenever I fasted I had terrible headaches. I thank God that I was eventually delivered from caffeine by fasting.

I have known believers who were addicted to nicotine, but three days of fasting smoking broke all desire for a cigarette. I read about a believer who did not believe in speaking in tongues but smoked cigarettes. He fasted smoking for a few days and all of a sudden did not want cigarettes anymore. Whatever yoke is keeping you in bondage and hindering your health and Christian walk, it can be broken through fasting.

**Reward #5: Deal thy bread to the hungry,...bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him...**

You are going to save a little money by fasting because you are not buying as much food for yourself. When you are not buying food, what do you think you are supposed to do with that money? It is to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. You are to give what you save to the poor. Have you ever watched poor,

starving, and naked children on television and said, “Oh, I just wish I had fifteen dollars to send to them!” Fast a few meals and you will have fifteen dollars to give.

### **Reward #6: Then shall thy light break forth as the morning...**

Have you ever been reading the Bible and suddenly something dawns on you? We call that revelation. You are going to receive revelation from God during your time of fasting. Things will dawn on you. When I fast, the Bible comes alive to me, and I see things I never saw before. It's almost like revelations are spilling out faster than I can catch them.

Martin Luther translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek to German, and he prayed and fasted over every word that he translated. That Bible is still being used by the German people today because Luther was guided by revelation. His translation is considered the most accurate, the most excellent, and the highest quality.

It is amazing how ordinary people can receive heaven-sent ideas that catapult them ahead in business and ministry. I read about a pastor who could never understand the book of Revelation. It really frustrated him because he wanted to teach his people about Bible prophecy, but he could not even understand it himself. So he began to fast, and soon God unlocked his understanding to the book of Revelation. He was able to teach it to his people, and they were all excited and happy about the Second Coming of Jesus.

**Reward #7: Health shall spring forth speedily...**

It is hard to believe, but fasting brings health “speedily.” Many would scoff and say that God heals slowly and methodically, through a process. But that is not what He says in this verse of Scripture! I knew a seventy-year-old man who had struggled with medical problems most of his life. He had been hospitalized many times, five times for asthma alone, and could find no relief until one doctor suggested that he go on an extended, supervised fast.

The fast was difficult at first. He seemed to be worse as he struggled to breathe, but he focused on the reward of good health. After six days, his enlarged prostate had shrunk to the size of a young man’s. Then his sinuses cleared up. His breathing became normal. And on the thirty-sixth day a miracle occurred when he regained permanent hearing in his deaf ear. A few days later he found that his sex drive had returned, and he was no longer impotent. Talk about a bundle of rewards!

**Reward #8: Righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward...**

We all know the feeling of adversity, but this promise is that there will be a shield of protection for frontal attacks, and God Himself will protect us from the things that come up behind us—the ones we don’t see or expect.

**Reward #9: Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am...**

It’s wonderful to have quick answers to prayer. During and after a fast, you will find that prayers are answered at lightning

speed. You will pray, “Oh Lord, please...,” and the answer will zap you before you finish! One time I was flying to Holland, and the Dutch stewardess seemed to know only one English phrase: “There you are.” She helped me get my suitcase under the seat and said, “There you are.” She walked by and filled my coffee cup and said, “There you are.” She said that to me no less than twenty-five times. Not only did I get a good laugh out of that, but I also got a picture of what God will do for us. We’ll ask for His assistance, and immediately, with the provision delivered, He’ll say, “There you are.”

### **Reward #10: Then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day...**

Do you know what this means? It means you are going to become very successful. You will simply rise out of obscurity and become a real somebody. A good example of this is the story of a young man who went to professional counselors to be tested. He wanted to find out what he would be good at. The counselors said, “Well, you’d be good at engineering.”

The young man responded, “I kind of thought that God called me to the ministry.”

The job counselors said, “Forget it. You don’t have what it takes to be a minister. Go into engineering. Do yourself a favor.”

So the young man enrolled in an engineering program in college, but after three years the call of God to minister was still there. He left college and fasted because he didn’t know what to

do. God gave him His plan and he began to carry it out. He rose from obscurity to become the pastor of the largest church in his city today. The professional people had said, “No way. You’re not cut out for it.” But through fasting and prayer God lifted him from obscurity to success.

The darkness that you have walked through is going to be broken, and success will shine forth in your life as you fast and pray and are diligent to do God’s will. For those who are struggling for breakthrough in their business or ministry, this is a great reward.

**Reward #11: And the Lord shall guide thee continually...**

Guidance can come in all sorts of ways. One time I was on vacation, and I heard about a certain up-and-coming company. As I was praying, God said, “Buy it!”

I called the church from the hotel and said, “Buy shares in this company.” In less than a year that stock had more than doubled and we sold it for a great profit. I would like to be guided like that all the time!

You are going to receive guidance during your time of fasting or shortly thereafter. You will not have to call your friends or go to your pastor and say, “I don’t know what I’m going to do. What should I do?” God will be right there telling you what to do! He promised to guide us, not just some of the time, but continually. The steps of believers are ordered by the Lord.



**Reward #12: Satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not...**

Once your health springs forth, God keeps you healthy through fasting. Not only that, but you will have a divine supply no matter what. You may get a pink slip on Monday, but you will know that God will provide. Fasting helps us to live not paycheck to paycheck but promise to promise. It helps us to see the reality of God's system that will never let the righteous go hungry.

It does not matter what the economic conditions of the world are; you are going to have all you need. Your needs are going to be supplied no matter what the situation is. The news can tell you that a depression is coming, the stock market is expected to drop, banks are closing, and the savings and loans are going out of business. They will say people are in lines three miles long waiting to get their money out. Don't worry—the Bible says your needs are going to be met. God is going to provide for *you*.

**Reward #13: And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.**

God is going to use you to turn wastelands into fruitful orchards. Relationships that have gone sour can be restored because of your fasting. You will come into overflowing abundance. As a church, we took forty-three acres of desolate land and turned it into an orchard where spiritual fruit is growing: an

international outreach center, printing headquarters, a television production center, a youth action center, and more.

Do you think a bar is a pretty desolate wasteland? I know of a man who took a bar and nightclub and turned it into a church. He caught lots of criticism at first because six nights a week it was still a bar and nightclub. He was only renting it as a church on Sundays. But the church grew, the income went up, and they were able to buy the building and turn it into a church seven days a week. Praise God!

This verse means you will be able to take desolate land and turn it into fruitful orchards. You can take desolate, barren lives destroyed by drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, and the other problems permeating our society and turn them into fruitful orchards for God. Fasting can take desolate lives and bring them to new life in Christ. Then their lives will reflect His glory.

Don't these sound like wonderful rewards? Let's review them.

1. You'll be released from what's holding you back.
2. Heavy burdens will be broken.
3. You be free from oppression and help others get free.
4. Bad habits will be broken.
5. The hungry will be fed, the naked clothed, and the poor helped.
6. Divine revelation will come to you.
7. Your health will spring forth speedily.
8. God's glory will guard your life.

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9. Prayers will be answered speedily.
10. You will rise out of obscurity to prominence.
11. The Lord will guide you continually.
12. All your needs will be met regardless of economic conditions.
13. Desolation will turn into high production.

I know you are seeking these rewards because every human being is. Why not write them down and plan a fast? You have nothing to lose except a few pounds! And God will certainly show Himself faithful.

## Defeating Leviathan

This is a special chapter that applies to every Christian who has ever faced trouble. This chapter can save you months, even years, of heartache. It can help you through the most severe times of torment when you feel like you have become the special target of hell.

The subject of this chapter is how to fast to drive off Leviathan. Who is Leviathan? He is a spiritual creature who ranks high in Satan's order of fallen angels.

Do such creatures exist? Paul said they did. He wrote:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Ephesians 6:12

Some of our most stubborn problems can be motivated by these evil powers: insanity, persistent sin, depression, suicidal thoughts, drug use, and division in families and churches. Jesus cast a demon out of a boy who was rendered speechless and insane, and the boy returned to normal. Jesus cast demons out of the Gadarene man who lived among the tombs, cut himself

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with stones, and was incredibly violent. Jesus didn't just treat symptoms; He saw to the root of the problem, which was demonic power.

Some years ago I stood in our church narthex talking with a Church of God minister who had been involved with some of the major ministries in America. He told me about a demonic being that is sometimes loosed against the children of God and the ministries of God. The Bible calls him Leviathan. He knew a pastor in a major city who had gone through a horrible time of turmoil in his ministry, feeling as if he were in the jaws of a monster. That monster would flip him one way, and before he could get out of its grip it would flip him another way. Back and forth he was flung until he was worn out and ready to give up.

I didn't understand what this minister was talking about until a year and a half later. It was then that I had my own encounter with Leviathan. I came to see that this demon was behind the avalanche of turmoil and confusion that had come upon my congregation and me.

I'm a preacher with fairly conservative beliefs. I don't go looking for exotic theories about the spirit world. But during this time of spiritual warfare, when our church was divided, I learned much about the dark, evil powers that work against believers. Leviathan is in the Bible, but I didn't really pay attention until the bad circumstance rose over my head like a rushing river. During that time, I locked myself away in a Sunday school room for several hours a day and fought in the spirit.

## THE MIRACLE RESULTS OF FASTING

One day God gave me a vision. As I prayed I kept seeing a white, thick-skinned, crocodile-like creature. Finally I said, “Lord, what is that?”

That’s when the Lord first spoke to my heart and said, “Leviathan has been loosed against you.” I remembered the name “Leviathan” from the Bible, so I looked it up and found it first in the book of Psalms.

But you, oh God, are my king from of old; you bring salvation upon the earth. It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert.

Psalm 74:12-14

God began to reveal things about this creature that I had never considered. I had always thought it meant a sea creature or alligator of some kind, maybe one that had become extinct. I realized that the psalm was not talking about a natural creature. The closest word we have in the English is crocodile or reptile, but God would never give reptile meat to Israel to eat because that creature was considered unclean. There had to be a spiritual meaning.

I also realized that “creatures of the desert” are believers who are in a wilderness time, seeking God for direction and sometimes confused in the midst of doing what He’s called them to do. In other words, they are on track and doing God’s business, so Leviathan comes to try to take them out.

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In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that *is* in the sea.

Isaiah 27:1

When prophets talk about the sea, it usually means masses of people.<sup>1</sup> In the book of Revelation, for example, it says the beast came out of the sea, meaning he came out of a group of people. This verse in Isaiah reveals that Leviathan is a spiritual creature important enough to mention in the Bible and important enough to prophesy that one day the Lord will finish him off.

The prophet called Leviathan a serpent, a term usually reserved for Satan himself. I concluded that Leviathan must be a powerful, hideous demonic creature who is apparently under the direct leadership of Satan himself and is assigned to bring down ministries, men and women of God, churches, families—people who are seeking God and doing His will.

I went to the encyclopedia to study crocodiles, since that is the closest word-picture we get from the Hebrew translation for Leviathan.<sup>2</sup> I learned that crocodiles always hang around water, which is symbolic of God's Spirit. Jesus said:

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.<sup>3</sup> By this He meant the Spirit.

John 7:38,39

Wherever the Holy Spirit is moving, you can be sure Leviathan is going to come. Crocodiles put their eyes just above the water and look for a little duck, a baby deer, or even a human being who comes up to the river to get a drink. We are supposed to be safe where the river of God is flowing, so Leviathan tries to make it unsafe. He wants us to close our spirits off because of fear. In one lightning leap, he will open his mouth and grab a victim in his jaws. His jaws are powerful enough to crush the victim, but the crocodile doesn't do that. He applies enough pressure to hold the victim in his mouth while he throws him back and forth until the victim becomes weary. Just when he thinks he might get free, the crocodile starts shaking him again until the victim loses all hope, and then the crocodile crushes and eats him.

Have you ever felt like you were being tossed back and forth with only brief moments of relief? That's the way Leviathan, the spiritual creature, works. He will try to whip you this way and that until you get so tired you become cynical and say, "What's the use?" and give up.

But we don't need to succumb to Leviathan. We can recognize his character and defeat him. How do we recognize Leviathan? What are his character traits? Here are five that I have identified.

### **1. Leviathan Has Many Heads**

The Psalmist spoke in the plural about the heads of the dragon. When there are many heads, there is confusion. When Jesus was arrested, the witnesses couldn't get their stories



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straight. I believe Leviathan was loosed against Jesus, causing confusion among the so-called witnesses. One head says one thing, another head something else, and each head tries to speak with authority. Families become this way when everyone thinks they are in charge. The result is confusion and distrust.

Churches are also often afflicted by this multi-headed problem. During my Leviathan encounter I heard so many ridiculous things, but I couldn't pinpoint where they were coming from. I heard rumors about me and about my staff. I heard rumors that we were committing every sin that I ever preached against. It seemed like everybody in the world knew more about my church and me than I knew. It was the most awful experience of my life. I was fighting a multi-headed monster and didn't know it.

Not only does he have many heads, but also each claims to be right. When the Lord gave me a vision of Leviathan, I asked, "Why does he look like a white alligator?"

The Lord reminded me of His Word. In Isaiah He cleanses us from sin and makes our sins as white as snow. In the book of Revelation, when the righteous are standing before the throne, they are clothed in robes of white, which is symbolic of righteousness. Then He said, "Leviathan has come at you in the form of right-ness or righteousness. He is declaring to be right, claiming to be righteous, asserting to stand up for what's right, not caring who he puts in his jaws to ruin."

Each head of Leviathan speaks to a different person, whispering in ears, convincing each that they are right. Through rumor,

gossip, and even doctrinal error and disputing, he convinces believers that they are right and their leadership is wrong. In this way he incites a very subtle rebellion and works against our unity in the faith. When unity starts to break down in relationships around you, you may be experiencing an attack from Leviathan.

### **2. Leviathan Is Piercing**

In Isaiah 27:1 KJV he is called “the piercing serpent.” The word “piercing” in Hebrew means roaming, shifting, focusing only on the temporary.<sup>3</sup> Leviathan tries to get people to focus on the temporary rather than the eternal. I have known people who roam from church to church within the same city. Their families are almost always unstable, and the children have trouble trusting Christians and finding their place in the Church. Leviathan makes some believers wanderers, and they carry him everywhere they go. They reap no harvest except transience and confusion. A sense of restlessness or an inability to connect at church can be a sign that you’re under his attack.

### **3. Leviathan Seems Bigger Than He Is**

Do you know the feeling when your problems appear far too big for God to handle and prayer can’t send them away? It’s an interesting fact that most people who see crocodiles report them being thirty feet long, but the average crocodile only grows twelve to fifteen feet long. In other words, people think Leviathan is twice as big as he really is. Part of the devil’s plan is to intimidate you into giving in so he won’t have to fight. Nothing—not even Leviathan’s attack—is ever as bad as it seems.

#### **4. Leviathan Is Crooked**

Crooked means deceitful. A person who is affected by Leviathan will not give you a straight answer. You feel that you're dealing with something that you can't nail down. The worst kinds of problems are those you can't identify. They are nebulous, like "the Blob" in the old horror movie. Leviathan doesn't walk in the front door and introduce himself. He is crooked, shifty, and deceitful.

So how do we get rid of this horrible creature? There's only one way, and I know this from experience: prayer and fasting. Nothing else will do it—not good motives, not bright ideas, not friendly smiles, not emotional conversations, not meetings, not strategy, not quoting the Bible—nothing but the atomic bomb of prayer and fasting.

#### **5. Leviathan Is King of the Children of Pride**

Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue  
with a cord which thou lettest down?

He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the chil-  
dren of pride.

Job 41:1,34

The entire chapter of Job 41 is about Leviathan. It would take an entire book to discuss this demonic entity, but I believe the bottom line with this demon is pride. He personifies and incites people to be proud, haughty, arrogant, and superior in their own eyes. Those who come under Leviathan's influence

believe they are right. They know more about God's Word than anyone else, they are more sensitive to the Holy Spirit than anyone else, and their ideas and their agendas are far more important than anyone else's.

With "pure motives" and a view toward "speaking the truth in love," these saints wreak havoc in fellowships of believers, thinking they are doing the right thing. They are blinded by pride, which is why only prayer and fasting will break Leviathan's grip on their minds and hearts. As we have discussed before, fasting humbles and cleanses the soul, releasing the toxic ideas and deception of the enemy. Fasting and prayer are the only weapons that can pierce the thick, proud skin of Leviathan and send him packing.

When God gave me the vision of Leviathan, I also saw that it had thick skin. I asked the Lord why, and He said, "Because you can throw rocks at him. You can hammer him. You can shoot at him with BB guns and pellet guns. You can yell at him. You can scream at him, but his skin is thick. It doesn't bother him at all."

I said, "What do we do about him?"

Immediately the scripture came to me, "This kind goeth forth not but by fasting and prayer." I began fasting for a few days, and some who were closest to me joined in. Right before our eyes Leviathan started walking away. Pride was being broken in our hearts and the hearts of those who had been deceived by it.

I studied revivals in my city of Lansing, and I discovered that no move of God has lasted more than four years. There have been sparks of revival in certain churches and ministries, but

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they haven't lasted long. Leviathan was trying to do to us what he had done for decades in Lansing, but we found the weapon he couldn't resist: fasting. As soon as we started fasting, church attendance went up. Our church income began to soar. More people got saved than ever before.

Leviathan had one more trick before he disappeared, however. Remember that crocodiles have tails. When Leviathan is walking away from your family, home, church, ministry, or business, he will take one last swipe at you with his tail. When he left our church, he swept a hundred people with him, and not partially committed people but good workers, board members, worship leaders, ushers, usher captains, teachers, children's ministers, and secretaries. When he can't get you in his mouth, he swishes his tail in one final effort to bring you down, but with fasting and prayer, you can avoid the swishing tail of Leviathan.

I learned a lot about this demonic monster when I attended a national conference for ministers. I heard many renowned men of God share their experiences with Leviathan. I thought, *They faced exactly the same thing that I faced. This is the same spirit that came against me.* Later I discovered that almost every major ministry in the United States of America has faced Leviathan, and those who don't discover or learn the secret of fasting don't make it out of his jaws. They are defeated and quit.

At the conference Pastor Jack Hayford said that when you get out of the jaws of Leviathan, things are going to be good for awhile because Leviathan is moving away and you are no longer

caught in his teeth. “But then,” Jack continued, “there’s something you have to watch out for as Leviathan moves away—his tail. Because as Leviathan, in defeat, walks away from you, he’s going to try to get one final blow in with his powerful tail.” I believe Jack’s word was a word from the Lord, a word of warning. Satan tries to stop us by frightening us with his threats. God does not threaten us; He warns us. There is a big difference.

You may recall in the book of Revelation how the tail of the dragon knocked the stars out of heaven. He dragged down a third of them with his tail. “If I can’t get them with my mouth, I’ll get them with my tail,” Leviathan says. I believe through fasting and prayer you can avoid the swishing tail of Leviathan. You may feel a little draft go over your head, but that is as close as he is going to get!

When you fast, you are entering into dynamic spiritual warfare. In fasting and prayer, you will gain a concentrated, intensified power from God and protection all around you as well as revelation about the enemy and his plans against you. Whenever our church sends out ministers to plant new churches in other communities, we ask that they fast for at least ten days. Fasting helps fine-tune our spiritual senses, making it easy to identify Satan’s strongholds in that city, including Leviathan. Fasting seems to heighten our discernment, helping us to understand the evil principalities and territorial spirits in the area. (Eph. 6:12.)

Once recognized, these usurping, evil beings can be dealt with by the authority we have through the blood and the name of

## Defeating Leviathan

Jesus Christ. Again, we cannot beat against them or defeat them in the physical realm. They must be defeated through spiritual warfare. And prayer and fasting reveals demonic strategy and presence in our lives, our families, our churches, and every other corporate body in which we participate.

You can't deal with an enemy you don't recognize. Satan's work is undercover work; it is secretive, deceptive, and hidden. That is why fasting is critical to beginning a new work in a city or community. We have learned that ministers who have fasted first become successful and fruitful quickly. Those who bypass this step seem to struggle with the same problems year after year because they are fighting in the flesh and not in the spirit. Prayer and fasting are tremendous spiritual weapons and are vital to defeating Leviathan.

Through fasting and prayer Leviathan left our church. As we entered the new year, we found it to be the greatest year in our history. Everything skyrocketed. Attendance went up over 62 percent. The income went up. Everything in the church grew abundantly. It was almost like there was a release of God's presence, power, and favor. There were hardly any people hospitalized. And I didn't have one nasty "sniper" letter the whole year. Unity, harmony, peace, and success had returned like a dove.

I hope Leviathan is never loosed against you, but if he is, you know how to recognize him and drive him away: through fasting and prayer.

## Four Roadblocks to Effective Fasting

Is it possible to lose the rewards of fasting? Yes. Jesus warned of becoming a hypocrite because of fasting with the wrong motive. There are four reasons our rewards will be withheld, and they all pertain to the attitude of our heart.

### **1. Fasting To Compete**

Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists.

Isaiah 58:4

Anyone who goes into a fast with a competitive spirit or thinking that it will show them to be holier than other people will lose their reward. If you're fasting everything but distilled water for ten days and you criticize someone else for doing a Daniel Fast, you have lost your reward because your motivation is wrong. You are fasting with competitiveness. If you're going to have a bad attitude or competitive spirit, call it a diet, not a fast!

It's also wrong to be silently competitive. If you delight in fasting because it makes you feel spiritually superior or more worthy, that is just as wrong as making outright comparisons.



Don't compete with others or with your own past performance in fasting, lest you lose your reward.

### **2. Fasting in Arrogance**

Arrogance says, "I'm not going to eat until God does what I want." The point is to fast until God does what *He* wants. We have goals, but they had better be God's goals. If they are selfish goals, then we are fasting in arrogance.

Years ago I found an old book on fasting and was encouraged to fast three days totally and then between sixty and ninety days on a Daniel Fast. In that time I had more revelation from God than I had ever had. God spoke to me after the fast and said, "I have advanced your ministry by ten years."

This was not what I had fasted for. I didn't know exactly why I was fasting, but I knew I was being obedient to God. He clearly had goals and purposes for me. My only purpose was to humble myself. I didn't stand up in arrogance and insist that God do something for me because I had discovered this spiritual discipline.

Less than two years later I became pastor of Mount Hope Church, but I was not ordained. Some of the men in my own denomination didn't want me to pastor the church. I sat in one district meeting and slouched in my seat because they were discussing a resolution that said that only ordained Assembly of God ministers could pastor Assembly of God churches. I knew they were talking about me, but I didn't get angry or fight back.

Instead I continued to lead the church as best I could, and that included regular times of individual and corporate fasting.

A few years later, after the church had grown from two hundred to seven hundred people, they decided to ordain me. We were seeing amazing miracles. Tumors would pop off people. One little girl was born without ears, and she got her hearing in one of our services. We fasted, and God caused the church to grow and prosper.

After a while I became a hero to the men who had not wanted me to be pastor! I was given leadership positions on national committees and universities, *but not once did I fast to achieve any of it.* I never said, “God, I’m going to fast until You elevate me.” I fasted for reasons that pleased God. My goals were His goals. I fasted not for personal gain but to advance His kingdom. And I never fasted with an ultimatum that God had to do something. That’s a hunger strike, not a fast.

I believe that the fasting I did as a young man laid the groundwork for my later ministry. Instead of reaching for the most prestigious things, I got on my face and humbled myself, and God opened doors that He saw fit to open. He responds to humility. He does not respond to an attitude that says, “I deserve a response.”

### **3. Fasting in a Showy Display**

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

## Four Roadblocks to Effective Fasting

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18

When you enter a fast, don't make funny faces and proclaim what you're doing. The last thing you want is for people to say, "You are really spiritual." Why? Because then you will have received your entire reward.

A man invited me to lunch one time. He picked me up at the office and said, "By the way, I'm not eating today."

I said, "But you invited me to lunch."

He said, "I know, but I'm fasting!" If you're fasting, don't take people to lunch because it makes them feel guilty for eating, and they might think you're trying to "one-up" them.

Showy displays can also be subtle, as Jesus pointed out. You don't have to say anything, but if you put on a sad face or suck in your cheeks a little, you're accomplishing the same thing. So when fasting, act as normal as you can even if you feel weak or ill. Don't make your fasting the centerpiece of everyone else's life. Come out of the house smiling; go through your day like you do all other days. That way your reward will be secure.

If somebody asks you to lunch, simply say, "No thanks. Today is one of my days." You haven't lost your reward because your motivation is not to be seen of men. Your motivation is to receive a reward from your heavenly Father.

#### **4. Fasting With Boasting**

Jesus gave the perfect example of this. Two men were praying. One said, “Lord, I sure thank You that I’m not like that sinner. I fast twice a week.”

The sinner said, “I’m a mess. God, be merciful to me.”

Jesus said the man who fasted twice a week went home unjustified, and the sinner who may not have fasted at all was justified in the sight of God! (Luke 18:12.) That tells us that unless we get the heart attitude right, we may as well not fast. Fasting in a showy display is like boasting to men; but when you start boasting to God, as the first man did, you show just how backward your heart motivations are.

Fasting doesn’t impress God. It never causes us to deserve anything. Everything depends on His mercy and grace. To boast to Him about our paltry efforts at righteousness is to give up our reward.

When you fast, be certain that you are not competing with yourself or anyone else, that you’re not fasting in arrogance, that you’re not fasting to make a showy display, and that you are not fasting with boasting. If you maintain pure motives and are diligent to focus on God’s purpose for the fast, you will have great success and many rewards.

## Seven Tips To Supercharge Your Fast

It's possible to go through a season of fasting feeling sluggish, as if you're not advancing in the Spirit or hearing from God. Anyone who has tried fasting over the years probably knows the feeling. But fasting doesn't have to be like driving an old clunker that burns oil and always overheats. There are easy ways to turn your fast into a Lamborghini that is quick and responsive, making your season of fasting rewarding, fulfilling, encouraging, purifying, and exuberant. I call these the ways to supercharge your fast, and they are found in Nehemiah 9:1-3.

On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God.

Let's look at seven principles of fasting revealed in this passage of Scripture.

## **1. Get Together With Other Christians and Pray**

During times of corporate fasting the church needs to assemble more, particularly for prayer. The pastor can schedule extra prayer meetings so people are encouraged and feel they are part of a bigger cause. I mentioned before that it's also important to go to prayer meetings if you're on an individual fast. You will appreciate the energy and anointing you receive to help you keep going.

You can also spend the time you would normally be eating in prayer. Pray for others. Pick a prayer project, such as a neighbor, coworker, or someone else the Holy Spirit is bringing to your remembrance. Then pray for them daily. If you are a student, pray for the classmates who sit in front of you, behind you, and on each side of you. Ask God to move mightily in their lives and give you favor with them.

It's a good idea to meet with other Christians as much as is comfortable while you're fasting. Their encouragement and prayers can make the difference in the success of the fast. Whatever you do, stay plugged in with other believers.

## **2. Get Separated**

The Israelites cut themselves off from any non-believing influence. This doesn't mean you should cut yourself off from co-workers, friends, or unsaved family. What it does mean is you deliberately, willfully purpose in your heart to focus on God and stay away from non-believing influences. This may mean a

## Seven Tips To Supercharge Your Fast

person, a television show, a radio program, certain magazines, the Internet, or books.

Your spirit is especially open during a time of fasting. You are more sensitive to everything—godly and ungodly influences. If you allow something in that is impure, it will have a deeper effect on you. It's impossible to avoid going to work or driving down the street for the duration of a fast, but you can put a guard over your senses and control your thoughts, mentally rejecting thoughts that hinder or oppose what the Lord is doing.

### **3. Confess Your Sin**

Confession is like putting a gasoline additive into your tank to burn out the junk that builds up in the engine. The apostle John wrote,

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

During times of fasting, we see things in our lives that we need to confess. There's nothing better than the clean feeling confession gives you in your spirit during a time of fasting. Name these sins specifically to the Lord and renounce them. You will feel so free!

### **4. Confess the Sins of Past Generations**

Why would we want to dig up the sins of our forefathers? Because there are some people who are saved but not delivered. There are people who love God but are in bondage. I believe that

there are things called generational curses that are passed down. Have you noticed how certain problems afflict certain families for generations? Heart trouble, anger, crime, drug abuse, obesity, and gluttony. These sins become generational curses that the devil uses to trip up each new batch of children.

We may not even know the sins of past generations, but we should confess that we come from a line of sinners and then, through the blood of Jesus, reverse that curse. Daniel the prophet did this. He laid himself out before the Lord and confessed the sins of his forefathers just as if he had committed the sins himself. I believe that we can also confess the sins of our president, governors, and mayors. There's power in acknowledging sin, even if we didn't actually commit the sin.

### **5. Spend Extra Time in God's Word**

They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God.

Nehemiah 9:3

The people in Nehemiah's day gave themselves constant exposure to God's Word while they fasted. If you want to supercharge your fast, spend more time in the Word. Listen to tapes of the Bible or preaching and teaching. Let your open spirit absorb all the rich nutrients of God's Word.

### **6. Confess the Word of God**

...and spent another quarter [of the day] in confession....

Nehemiah 9:3 (insert mine)



## Seven Tips To Supercharge Your Fast

This confession is different from acknowledging sin. This means to confess what God says is true. It means verbally affirming the Word of God. For example, you would say, “I’m an overcomer by the blood of the Lamb and the word of my testimony,” or, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Speaking the Word with faith will get you through the times when your body feels weak.

### **7. Worship**

Worship is heart-to-heart communion with God. Jesus said true worshipers worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Never will your worship soar like when you’re fasting! You will have confessed your sins, confessed your forefathers’ sins, been filled with the Word, gathered with other believers, and put off anything that would contaminate your mind. That’s a recipe for supercharged worship!

These seven tips will get you out of a rut and keep you on the straight and narrow road. They will put a 300-horsepower engine on your fasting times, and you will advance faster than you could have imagined.

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## A Final Word

Fasting essentially does one thing: It places us in a position to receive from God. It doesn't earn His favor or get His attention. It doesn't produce faith, but it does put a razor's edge on the faith we have. Fasting intensifies God's power and presence in our lives because we are more aware of Him. My most rewarding memories come from times when I fasted and felt the nearness of God like never before. Keeping this focus is foundational to whatever kind of fast you are on.

One of the following plans might be a good fast for you, but you must develop your own plan for fasting as it fits your schedule and lifestyle.

Plan A—Drink only distilled water for three days. On the fourth day start drinking juices. After a few days, eat only fruits and vegetables (Daniel Fast) for the remaining days.

Plan B—Drink only distilled water for seven days. On the fourth day start drinking juices. After a few days, eat only fruits and vegetables (Daniel Fast) for the remaining days.

Plan C—Fast one designated day per week for a whole year. That's 52 days!

Plan D—Fast two designated days a week for a whole year.

That's 104 days!

Plan E—Fast three to seven days every three months, plus once a week.

Plan F—Skip one or two meals on designated days each week.

Plan G—Do a Daniel Fast for as many days as God directs.

This means consuming distilled water, juices, vegetables, and fruits only. Perhaps you can designate one day a week as your “meat day” and stay on the Daniel Fast for the other days.

Following is a checklist to make your time of fasting a success.

- Make a firm commitment to God and to yourself.
- Consult a health professional to determine what is best for you physically.
- Don't listen to your appetite. Remember what Paul said and keep your body under subjection, presenting it as a living sacrifice to God.
- List the rewards you're expecting. Write them down and review them daily in prayer.
- Pray more during times of fasting.
- Give up secular television and secular videos.
- Select a plan for fasting and stick to it.
- Stay focused on the benefits and the purpose of the fast.

## THE MIRACLE RESULTS OF FASTING

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I hope and pray that this book has given you insight into the biblical basis and benefits of fasting. Living a fasted lifestyle can enhance and improve every aspect of your Christian life. May your life be enriched and blessed because of fasting!

# Endnotes

## Chapter 2

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- <sup>2</sup> Sidney MacDonald Baker, M.D., *A Boy With Breasts*, (New Canaan: Keats Publishing, 1997) "Detoxification and Healing," pp. 23-27.
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## **Chapter 5**

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## **Chapter 7**

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# Prayer of Salvation

God loves you—no matter who you are, no matter what your past. God loves you so much that He gave His one and only begotten Son for you. The Bible tells us that “...whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NIV). Jesus laid down His life and rose again so that we could spend eternity with Him in heaven and experience His absolute best on earth. If you would like to receive Jesus into your life, say the following prayer out loud and mean it from your heart.

*Heavenly Father, I come to You admitting that I am a sinner. Right now, I choose to turn away from sin, and I ask You to cleanse me of all unrighteousness. I believe that Your Son, Jesus, died on the cross to take away my sins. I also believe that He rose again from the dead so that I might be forgiven of my sins and made righteous through faith in Him. I call upon the name of Jesus Christ to be the Savior and Lord of my life. Jesus, I choose to follow You and ask that You fill me with the power of the Holy Spirit. I declare that right now I am a child of God. I am free from sin and full of the righteousness of God. I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen.*

If you prayed this prayer to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior for the first time, please contact us on the Web at [www.harrisonhouse.com](http://www.harrisonhouse.com) to receive a free book.

Or you may write to us at

**Harrison House**

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# About the Author

**Dave Williams** is pastor of Mount Hope Church and International Outreach Ministries, with outreach headquarters in Lansing, Michigan. He has served for 24 years, leading the church from 226 to over 4000 today.

Under Dave's leadership, 29 daughter and "branch churches" have been successfully planted in Michigan, one in the Philippines, one in the Ivory Coast, and one in Zimbabwe. Pastor Williams also founded the Mount Hope Bible Training Institute and the Dave Williams School for Church Planters.

He has authored 43 books including the 15-time bestseller *The Start of Something Wonderful* and more recently *The World Beyond: The Mysteries of Heaven and How to Get There*.

Dave's television program, "The Pacesetter's Path," is aired nationally over Sky Angel Satellite System, Golden Eagle Broadcasting Network, and TCT World Satellite. It is viewed worldwide over 11 satellite systems and is broadcast 44 times weekly. He has produced over 90 audio and video programs including the nationally acclaimed School of Pacesetting Leadership which has been shown in churches throughout the world.

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