

# *What About Fasting?*

**Definition:** A voluntary abstinence from food or anything good (physical) to achieve something better (spiritual).

**Types Of Fasts:** 1. Hard fasts - no solids or liquids; usually not more than 72 hours max. 2. Normal fasts - no solids; only water or juices. 3. Partial fasts - certain types of food; eg. Daniel

**\* Fasting is NOT: starvation, dieting, doctors orders.**

## **I) Is Fasting Presented In The N.T. As Valuable Or Just The O.T?**

- A) Mark 2: 18-20 A time was coming for Jesus' disciples to fast.
- B) Matthew 6:16-18 "when" not "if" you fast; this is part of the kingdom constitution.
- C) Acts 13: 1-3 Primarily a Gentile church; Judaizing problems later.
- D) Acts 14:23 "in every church" v.27 "Gentiles" Paul later was in trouble for not pressing Jewish customs on Gentiles.
- E) Jonah 3:5,10 Non-Jewish fasting by Ninevites

## **II) Purposes (often coupled with prayer)**

- A) Sorrow for sin - Leviticus 16:29
- B) Bereavement - II Samuel 1:12; 12:16,22
- C) Act of humility - Psalm 35:13; I Kings 21 :27-29
- D) Exercising self-control - Psalm 69:10; I Corinthians 9:27
- E) Help attain the Lord's will - Ezra 8:21-23
- F) Soul-searching - examining whether in the faith
- G) Aid Serious decisions - Esther 4:16; Acts 13:1-3; 14:23
- H) Fervency of prayer - Acts 9:9-11; I Samuel 1 (Hannah)

## **III) Warnings**

- A) Watch your motives - they must be pure
- B) Beware of ritualism - Colossians 2: 16-23
- C) Do not be carnal-minded - despising those who do not fast, being high minded, having a martyr complex, etc.
- D) Health advice - 1. Do not fast if sick, have heart disease, diabetes, against doctor's orders, etc. 2. Start gradually 3. Slowly restart after fast is over 4. Do not let side affects deter you.

**Conclusion:** Fasting can be a great tool for the Christian in his effort to become Christ-like. Remember that it is a voluntary thing and no where does the Bible compel a Christian to fast. If you are married, permission of your spouse is urged (I Corinthians 7:5). If your motives are pure, then fasting can "naturally" spring forth as an aid to holiness.