

5 2 W E E K S
O F G R O W T H

Give it a Year
Week 43

WEEK 43

Joel 2:12

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord,
“return to Me with all your heart, with
fasting, with weeping, and with
mourning.”

Fasting and prayer have long been sacred practices among God's people, not as religious obligations, but as holy invitations to draw near to Him. Throughout Scripture, fasting is consistently connected with moments of repentance, desperation, clarity, and spiritual renewal. When paired with prayer, fasting quiets the noise of the world and creates intentional space for God to speak, lead, and transform.

Fasting is an act of surrender. It is the deliberate choice to lay aside something necessary or meaningful (most often food) in order to focus more fully on God. Fasting does not twist God's arm or guarantee specific outcomes. Instead, it reshapes us. It exposes our dependencies. It reveals hidden attitudes of control or comfort, and reminds us how deeply we need God in every aspect of life. When we fast, we confess that our strength, wisdom, and provision come from Him alone.

In Matthew 6:16–18, Jesus teaches about fasting within His Sermon on the Mount. He warns against fasting for recognition or spiritual display and instead calls His followers to a posture of humility. This teaching reminds us that fasting is not about impressing others, but about encountering God.

True fasting is an act of worship. It redirects our hunger toward God. Each moment of discomfort becomes a reminder to pray, listen, and trust. In this way, fasting trains our hearts to turn instinctively to God rather than to temporary comforts.

Fasting is not merely about abstaining from food. Prayer is an essential part of fasting. Prayer allows our fast to be more purposeful, focused, and intentional. As our bodies feel the absence of food or familiar routines, our spirits become more alert to God's presence. Scripture reveals that many significant spiritual breakthroughs occurred during seasons of fasting and prayer:

- The people of Israel sought protection and guidance through fasting and prayer (Ezra 8:21-23).
- The early church fasted and prayed before commissioning leaders and stepping into new ministry (Acts 13:2-3).
- Jesus Himself fasted for forty days before beginning His public ministry, emerging in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:1-14).

Fasting with Prayer helps us slow down and listen. It shifts prayer from a list of requests to a posture of surrender. Our hearts begin to transition from "*Lord, what do I want?*" but "*Lord, what are You saying?*"

Ultimately, fasting and prayer is about intimacy with God. We learn to trust God more deeply, even when answers are delayed or outcomes are unclear. Fasting creates space for that nearness with Him. It reminds us that God Himself is the reward—not answered prayers alone, but His presence, peace, and guidance.

READ:

Matthew 4:4
Matthew 6:17–18
James 4:8
Chronicles 7:14
Daniel 9:3–5
Romans 12:1–2

REFLECT:

- Is this your first time fasting and praying? If so, why do you feel led to start fasting now? If not, reflect back on previous fasts...how did God reveal Himself to you during that time?
- What is God inviting you to surrender during this season of fasting and prayer?
- In what ways might fasting help you listen more closely to God's voice?
- What habits, comforts, or distractions are competing for your attention and devotion?

PRAYER:

Father God, thank You for teaching me how to be completely dependent on You. Teach me to fast and pray with a sincere heart—not for recognition or control, but for deeper intimacy with You. Reveal anything in me that hinders my walk with You. As I seek You, align my desires with Your will, soften my heart toward others, and renew my spirit. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.