

Maybe you've skipped meals to lose weight or even simply because you're too busy or tired to cook, but that's not fasting.

Fasting isn't some magic ritual to try to get God to answer our prayer. It isn't about harming our bodies or depriving ourselves.

Fasting is about what we gain from the process: **focus on God**. Fasting is a discipline of abstaining from something good, like food, so we can concentrate on our spiritual lives and find **satisfaction in God**. Fasting is all about a **desire for God**.

The decision to fast should not be motivated by arrogance or legalism. When teaching on this topic, Jesus said, "when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others 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."

Why should I fast?

When talking about fasting, Jesus begins, "When you fast..." Notice that he doesn't say, "If you fast..." ([Matthew 6:16](#)). Fasting isn't commanded in the Bible, but Jesus seems to assume that His followers would fast.

Many people fasted in the Bible: Moses ([Deuteronomy 9:9-18](#)), Daniel ([Daniel 9:3-5](#)), David (2 Samuel 12:16 and [Psalm 35:13](#)), Jesus ([Matthew 4:2](#)), Paul ([Acts 9:9](#)), and many more. People also fasted for different reasons: to mourn, to humble oneself before God, and to focus on praying to God for guidance or preparation.

God will show you that He is what we are truly desperate for.

During Jesus' fast, He quoted Deuteronomy and said, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ([Matthew 4:4](#)) Fasting can help us understand this truth with new meaning. We can better understand that Jesus is the Bread of Life, who sustains us and supplies our greatest needs ([John 6:26-35](#)).

If you decide to fast, you will be physically reminded of your spiritual need. And when you are, God will show you that He is what we are truly desperate for.

How do I fast?

Don't simply give up eating. Set aside intentional time to focus on God. Read the Bible and pray when you would normally be eating or preparing food. Here are some great places to see what the Bible says about fasting:

- [Psalm 16](#)
- [Psalm 42:1-2](#)
- [Psalm 63:1-5](#)
- [Psalm 19:7-14](#)
- [Psalm 119](#)
- [Philippians 4:11-13](#)
- [John 15:1-8](#)

Some people have medical issues that prohibit them from fasting from food. Ask the Lord if there is another way in which you can fast. Maybe fast from social media or television, and use that time to pray and read the Bible.

Practical Tips for Fasting

1. **Start slow.**

If you've never fasted before, begin with just one meal.

2. **Continue to drink water to stay hydrated.**

While some individuals in the Bible fasted from both food and water, this choice can be dangerous if you're not experienced with fasting or haven't consulted a medical professional.

3. **If you're accustomed to drinking caffeine, don't stop suddenly.**

Decrease your intake for a few days before you fast or you may suffer headaches.

4. **Don't overeat before or after your fast.**

Eat smaller, healthier meals, including raw foods before and after.

5. **Tell only people that you must.**

Try to be considerate of others in your schedule if you fast.

6. **Make a firm, prayerful commitment before you begin that you can remember while you're fasting.**

Your commitment to fast is between you and God, so be sure to make a sincere, wholehearted commitment.

7. **Consciously reflect on Scripture and your experience.**

Your physical response will often reveal spiritual truths.