

**Title: Soul Detox**

**Text: Matthew 6:16-19**

**Target:** What consumes you, controls you, and what controls you, eventually characterizes you. (Ex. Hangry)

**I. Truth about Fasting:** Not commanded, but Compelled!

- A. The Priority of Fasting:** When you fast, not if you fast: (Matthew 6:16)
- B. The Purpose of Fasting:** *"My soul thirst for you!"* (Psalm 42:1-2, 63:1) Hunger for God, by Abstaining from something in the World. (If there is no spiritual purpose, then it's just going hungry: Piper)
  - 1. Give up something good for something greater. It's got to cost you something.
  - 2. Live by faith not by flesh. Our cravings do not control us, we control them.
  - 3. Give up something external for God to do something internal.
- C. The Principle of Fasting:** You can pray without fasting, but you can't fast without praying.
  - 1. **Dependence on God:** *"After fasting forty days and forty nights he was hungry."* (Matthew 4:2)
    - a. Fasting doesn't manipulate God towards our will, but moves our will to His will.
    - b. Fasting causes you to battle cravings, and forces the choice of not just will power, but God power.
  - 2. **Deepens time with God:** *"So, he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water."* (Exodus 34:28)
    - a. Regard Silence & Solitude
    - b. Read and Memorize Scripture
    - c. Record your Supplications
  - 3. **Delight yourself in God:** *"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."* (Psalm 37:4)

**Discussion Question:** Fasting teaches self-discipline, that we can live with less, and reminds us to rely on God as our source of strength. Jesus, himself, knew this principle and not only practiced fasting, but taught his disciples how to fast. In his book *A Call to Die*, David Nasser asks his readers to join him on a 40-day journey of fasting from the world and feasting on God. Have you fasted before? If so, reflect upon the last time you fasted and what God revealed to you about Himself and yourself through the process. If not, pray and ask God to reveal to you what you should fast from in order to gain more of Him. What is it that you want more of from God? Ask God to show you areas of your life that you need to decrease so that He can increase in those areas.

**II. Types of Fasting:** (Not about the Formula, it's about the Focus - What's going to get your attention?)

- A. Complete Fast:** Drink only liquids, abstain from all food. (Ex. Jesus, Moses...)
- B. Selective Fast:** Removing certain elements from your diet. (Ex. Daniel fast)
- C. Partial Fast:** Abstaining from eating during a certain time such as sunup to sundown. (Ex. Jewish fast)
- D. Soul Fast:** Removing distractions such as TV, social media, streaming etc.

**Discussion Question:** Even in this moment, is there one of these types of fasting that you feel drawn to by The LORD? Have you already identified something you know inhibits your worship

or walk with God? If not, again pray and ask God to reveal to you how and what you should fast from in order to grow closer to Him.

**III. Timing of the Fast:** We here at CBC begin every year with a 21-day church wide fast to tune our hearts to God's voice above all voices and above the noise.

**A. Starting and Ending:** January 10<sup>th</sup> 6am to January 30<sup>th</sup> 6pm.

**B. Prayer and Praise:** Wednesday's at 6:30pm - January 12, 19, 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Discussion Question:** The Bible commands us to bring our firstfruits as a tithe or offering. This 21 day fast at the beginning of the year is our opportunity to give God the first fruits of our time, our affections, our attention, our desires, and ultimately ourselves as a firstfruit offering. Will you commit in your spirit and to those in your group to participate in and complete the 21-day fasting challenge? How can your group encourage one another along this journey? Could you commit to three Wednesday nights of worship? Consider coming as a group and worshipping together. Bring your sacrifice of praise to God and be encouraged as you fast and pray.

**IV. Transformation in Fasting:**

**A. Believing for Victory:** 2 Chronicles 20:3: *"Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah."*

**B. Believing for a Breakthrough:** Mark 9:29: *"This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting."*

**C. Believing for Revival:** Nehemiah 1:4: *"As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven."*

**D. Believing for a Miracle:** 2 Samuel 12:16: *"David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground."*

**E. Believing for Wisdom:** Daniel 9:3: *"Then I turned my face to the Lord God seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes."*

**F. Believing for Success:** Esther 4:16: *"I and my young women will fast as you do. Then I will go to the king,....If I perish, I perish."*

**Discussion Question:** Here we have six different examples of fasting and praying as these individuals sought God for various reasons. What will you seek during your fast? Will you seek revival? A miracle? A breakthrough? An opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus to your co-workers? No matter what you fast from or what you feel led to pray for during the fast, let us be reminded of Paul's writings in Ephesians 3:20-21: *"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*

Would you join me even now in giving God praise, glory, and honor for what He is going to do over the course of this 21-day journey of fasting and prayer?

**Takeaway:** *If I were to tell you that 21 days of fasting would lead to 344 days of feasting, would you do it?*