

A Wheat Street Baptist Church Guide to



Wheat Street Baptist Church
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A Wheat Street Bible Study

A Church Focused in Prayer and Fasting

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†Study of the Word: Biblical Foundation†

Romans 6:1-4

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? **2** By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? **3** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Focus Text	Collateral Text	📖Commentary📖
Romans 6:1-4	<p>Romans 7:15-25 <i>The Struggle!</i></p> <p>Galatians 5:16-26 <i>The Victory!</i></p> <p>Ephesians 6:10-18 <i>The Weapons!</i></p>	<p>We are no longer held captive under the power of sin. We have been given the spiritual ability to get over sin in our lives. The work of God in salvation is identifying a believer with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection - thus separating him from sin's power and giving him a better quality of life. This is the basis of the Holy Spirit's continuing work in sanctification. We should be getting better not worst. We should be able to overcome many of the sins that have historically held us down.</p>
Romans 6:5-23	<p>Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus Fasted.</p> <p>Matthew 6:16-18 Jesus Tells Us to Fast.</p> <p>Mark 9:14-29 Prayer & Fasting is key in overcoming demonic attacks.</p>	<p>Fasting leads to victory and power. Jesus stood up to the temptations of the Devil during and after his fast. The devil is going to come hard during and after your fast but you have the victory. Jesus gives us this example of fasting and the products of fasting. If we are to live a life that becomes a Christian we are going to have to bring our flesh under the authority of God's will. We must bind up our fleshly desires by using the weapons God has given us. We must learn and practice spiritual discipline. This involves using everything God has given us to effectively fight and win this battle.</p>

Romans 6:5-23

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For whoever has died is freed from sin. **8** But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. **10** The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. **11** So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. **13** No longer present your members to sin as instruments[a] of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments[b] of righteousness. **14** For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Slaves of Righteousness

15 What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! **16** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? **17** But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, **18** and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. **19** I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations.[c] For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

20 When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. **21** So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. **22** But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Primary Purpose of Fasting - is to center us on God. The primary purpose of fasting is to glorify God and bring us into a deeper relationship with God via a God ordained fast. The results of such a fast should be the subduing of the flesh and bring our flesh under spiritual control. Therefore in fasting it is not so much abstaining from food as it is centering on God. **Fasting is not dieting.**

Secondary Purposes of Fasting - the secondary purposes of fasting can be any spiritual goal you feel led of God to set and obtain. The secondary reasons for fasting are numerous, see 'Reasons for Fasting' chart in this booklet.

The Power and Process of Fasting

Fasting is really a process that empowers you to bring the flesh under subjection. The power of fasting is found in your being able, by the Holy Spirit, to handle your fleshly weaknesses. We all have weaknesses. We must recognize them and allow the power of God to rule in our lives so that we can overcome them. Prayer and fasting is the number one way that can be done. The following outline is a process you can follow during your fast:

- ☞1. Start your fast with prayer.
- ☞2. Set the times of your fast. A start time and an ending time should be set.
- ☞3. Recognize your fleshly weaknesses and urges and seek God's power over them during the fast.
- ☞4. Define or set a spiritual reason for fasting. What are you asking God to do or answer during your fast? What are you seeking God for?
- ☞5. Spend special time with God in prayer and reading of his word during the fast.
- ☞6. The times you would normally spend eating physical food should be replaced by reading the Bible and praying. When you take your lunch break at work read your Bible.
- ☞7. Speak to your flesh and demand that it come under the subjection and authority of the Lord.
- ☞8. End your fast with prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

This is a simple process but a powerful process that will transform your life as you grow in the Lord. We must grow spiritually and prayer and fasting is critical to

this process.

Walking By The Spirit
12 STEPS

Biblical Principal Defined	Scriptural Basis
1. We are commanded by God to walk by the Spirit.	Romans 8:1-4
2. If we hunger and thirst for righteousness we will be filled.	Matthew 5:6
3. We must be obedient to the word of God and rebuke and remove sin from our lives. Sin is a barrier to the move of the Spirit.	Romans 8:1-10
4. You must constantly renew your mind by submitting it to the word of God. (" Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. " Romans 10:17) Moreover our minds are renewed as we submit to our callings by serving God which is our reasonable service. We must present our bodies as a sacrifice. Which means you must sacrifice your fleshly desires.	Romans 12:1-2
5. Bring every thought into the subjection of the truth which is contained in the word of God.	2 Corinthians 10:4-5
6. Pray in the Holy Spirit. Which means to pray as God gives you utterance, not simply speaking in tongues. It points to the listening, and quieting functions in prayer. Allowing God to get into our prayers.	Jude 1:20 Romans 8:27-28
7. Step out on faith as God commands you to go forth and do his will.	Hebrews 11:1-6
8. Fellowship with the saints.	Hebrews 10:22-25
9. Be willing to engage in spiritual warfare against the devil. God has already promised you victory (Mark 16:17-18).	Ephesians 6:10-18
10. Remain in fellowship with God and be a hearer and a doer of the word. Ask for wisdom and he will give it to you and direct you accordingly.	James 1:1-22

11.	Read the word of God, confess the word and submit to the precepts of the word.	1 Peter 2:1-12
12.	Mix the word with faith. Believe on the word and act on it. If God made a promise then he is going to keep it.	Hebrews 4:2-6

PRAYER

Prayer: is essentially communion with God. It is the basis of our desire to enter into conscious and intimate relationship with the Thou who is our life (1 John 1:3). To pray basically means to speak, listen in order to and have divine interaction with God. Prayer is a gift and a privilege in that we as humans have the right and opportunity to communicate with God.

Six Parts of Prayers:

- 1. Adoration:**Prayers of adoration are prayers that recognize our total responsibility upon God. They result in ones losing oneself in the will of an awesome all powerful God (Matt 28:17).
- 2. Confession:**because all sin is ultimately against God for it is against God's purpose for our lives to sin. We must therefore pray prayers of confession which ask for God's forgiveness (1 John 1:7-10).
- 3. Intercession:**is prayers, for and on behalf of another person, group of people, which is undertaken by and individual or group. It is very important to lift prayers of intercession for we are commanded in the word to pray for one another. This is one the most important prayers for we must lift people up and not tear them down (Acts 12:5; Col. 1:9).
- 4. Petition:** petition simply means to ask. We are to offer prayers of petition to God for we have needs and should present before God. God lets us know that what we ask that is according to his will we shall have them. We are constantly coming into to oneness with God (Romans 12:1-2) so that we will know what the will of God is for our lives. Therefore we are to go to God and ask of him with no shame but realizing God wants us to come before and ask of him for we realize that God is the only one who can give us all things (Matt. 7:7-11).
- 5. Thanksgiving:**we are to thank God for all that he has done, is doing and will do in our lives. Therefore the prayer of thanksgiving is an essential ingredient in the lives of the believer. Thanksgiving helps us continue to realize that God is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). We are to always give thanks unto God in our prayers (1 Thes. 5:16-22)
- 6. Victory:** we are to offer prayers of victory. These are prayers that recognize

that God acts on our faith. God has given us the power to believe and as we pray and believe God responds. We must stand on the word of God as revealed and claim our blessings via the word through faith. Victorious prayers are prayers that anticipate and walk in victory for God has revealed through his word and past experience how he is going to respond to your faith filled victorious prayers (Matt. 21:19-22).

FASTING

It is so important that we are clear about what it means to fast and pray. The saints of God are under constant attack by the enemy. The enemy is Satan and he comes to kill steal and destroy (**John 10:10**). The major reason and focus of fasting is to get closer to the Lord. We see many instances and more specific reasons for fasting such as direction, power and spiritual renewal. In the Bible we see persons like Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel, the Disciples and Apostles fasting on a regular basis. Jesus made it clear that he expected us to fast (**Matt. 6:1-18**). There are three types of fast:

1. **The Absolute Fast**-we see the absolute fast in the scripture in extreme spiritual situations. The absolute fast is to abstain for drinking as well as eating. The scriptures testify that this seems never to be for more than three days. We see these instances in **Ezra 10:6** where Ezra spent the night neither eating nor drinking over the faithlessness of the exiles. Queen Esther instructed Mordecai, "Hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do" (**Esther 4:16**). When Saul was called he practiced an absolute fast (**Acts 9:9**). We see it practiced again in (**Deut 9:9,18; Exod. 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8**);). The absolute fast is one that is called upon by God and especially under very spiritual conditions. It is therefore important that when one undertakes this type of fast that they have been directed from God. Moreover it is not advisable for more than three days. Once again all directions in this type of fast must come from God.

2. **The Normal Fast**-we see the normal fast as observed by Jesus in **Matthew 4:2** where we see that Jesus was hungry but not thirsty. It is believed that he drank but obviously did not eat. Therefore the normal fast is to abstain from all foods (solid or liquid) but not from water. We are to watch, pray and fast for they are combined as we look to God to reveal to us, by his Spirit, the things he would have us to know (**2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27**). It is also strongly inferred that for married persons that they abstain from marital relations. This decision is to be a mutual decision between the husband and wife (**1 Corinthians 7:3-5**).

3. **The Partial Fast**-we see the partial fast exhibited in **(Daniel 10:1-12)** where they abstained from meat, delicacies and wine. They ate only special types of food while denying themselves a normal diet. They abstained from their normal menu and only took certain things. The partial fast calls for as much discipline as any other fast and it is a good start as one works up to the normal and or absolute fast. This type of fast can take on many variations in your life. You may pray and be led by God to abstain from your favorite food or all meat, for a prayerfully prescribed period of time.

It is clear that we are to fast; Jesus makes it clear when he says in **Matthew 6:2,5,16** "When you give alms...when you pray...when you fast". We are to fast as disciples of Jesus Christ. Moreover God wants you to pray when you fast. Sometimes we fast for our personal Godly inspired reasons and other times we fast as a result of the call of God by or through the man or woman of God **(Jeremiah 36:6; Joel 2:15)**. Whenever we fast we are to fast unto God **(Zechariah 7:5; Acts 13:2)**. There are other instances of fasting for various reasons:

Some Reasons for Fasting	Biblical Reference
Personal Sanctity	Psalm 69:10
To be heard by God	Ezra 8:23
As called by God as a sign of commitment to return to Him	Joel 2:12-13
So that God might hear you and have mercy on a people	Jonah 3:5-10
For revelation from the Lord	Daniel 9:2-22
To bring the body under subjection	1 Corinthians 9:27
In periods of mourning	1 Samuel 31:13 / 2 Samuel 1:12
After humiliation	1 Samuel 7:6
In times of danger/ before engaging in major battles	Judges 20:1-26
For or with someone who is about to do a mighty work for the Lord on behalf of a people	Esther 4:1-17
In repentance for a sinful act against God (remembering all sin is against God) as directed by God through his servant man	Joel 1:1-14
Before a great undertaking	Ezra 8:21
As a means of intercession	Nehemiah 1 & 4

Some Reasons for Fasting	Biblical Reference
A prescribed by leadership of the church	Leviticus 23 & 24
Voluntary as a result of ones desire to be in the will of God	Luke 18:2
To be obedient to the expectation Jesus Christ has of his disciples	Matthew 6:16
Before beginning an ordained work for the Lord	Acts 13:1-5 / Luke 4:1-13

Practical Concerns of Fasting

How do I begin my fast? The first thing one must do in preparing to begin a fast is read **Ephesians 6** as you focus on the armor God has given you to endure. You must begin a fast with prayer and clear purpose and reasons for the fast. Commit to God the exact type of fast and the time frames for your fast. You should confess the following and ask yourself the following questions:

1. I am confident that this desire to fast is God given! Would He have me undertake a normal, absolute or partial fast? "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness."

2. I am sure my motives are right if there is any doubt I will ask God to reveal them to me. Is there any hidden desire to impress others? "Your Father who sees in secret will reward you." You must fast with intentions of getting closer to God.

3. What are the spiritual objectives in this fast?

Personal sanctification or consecration?

Intercession? What special burdens am I seeking relief of?

Divine intervention, guidance, blessing?

The Spirit's fullness for self or others?

To loose the captives?

To stay the divine wrath; bring revival?

4. Do my objectives tend to be self-centered? Is my desire for personal blessings balanced by genuine spiritual growth and concern for others?

5. I am determined above all else to minister to and with the Lord in this fast!

When you take on the directive of God and fast there are some spiritual and practical concerns that go hand in hand. You will be under supernatural attack but God has let you know, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world (**1 John 4:4**). Fasting is characterized by distinct phases:

Phase #1-this is the first few hours where your stomach will growl and you will have hunger pains. Your mind will tell you that you better eat immediately but this is normal. As you progress the hunger pains will go away. If you are on a fast of several days the pains will go away and your stomach will stop growling.

Phase #2-the second phase of a fast is characterized by a feeling of physical weakness. Now one should note this is not always the case for there are times when you fast that this phase is overtaken by a surge of strength. This is the phase that you must be in intense prayer for you may feel an intense desire to eat. When you hold on through, ***prayer, reading of the word of God and the singing and listening to spiritual songs*** the potential weakness and hunger will subside.

Phase #3-is experienced as the fast goes on. It is a sense of growing spiritual strength as you get closer to God. The fast period is one that you take your normal meal time and spend it with the Lord. The fasting period is to be a period where you spend an extraordinary time communicating with the Lord. Through this intense time with the Lord you will feel stronger as you go on in the fast. You will feel stronger spiritually and physically. At this stage you may feel that you could continue fasting indefinitely without any great effort.

How do I break my fast? To break a fast one is to end similarly as one begins, with prayer and reading of the word. Don't just jump into a plate of food without reflecting on what God has ministered to your spirit during the fast. You should read some foundational scripture that spoke to you during the fast. Thank God in prayer for sustaining you during the fast and claim the revelation he has given

you in this very intimate time you and the Lord just shared. After you have prayed and read the word then partake of an appropriate meal (**1 Samuel 30:11-12**).

Common Questions Asked Concerning Fasting?

1. When is fasting inadvisable? Are there some illnesses or conditions that render fasting inadvisable?

In cases of serious illnesses one is not recommended to fast without consulting a doctor. If one is a diabetic or anemic one should consult a physician. If you are under the care of a physician or taking medication always consult your physician. God does not want you to hurt yourself. We are to use those who are to help us in the medical profession.

2. Is it practical to fast while working at a secular job?

It is practical to fast while working. The ideal of a fast is to be as free as possible to spend time with the Lord during a fast. The only difficulty a job presents is that one may not have the time one would like to spend with the Lord. Therefore one might consider taking a vacation day to fast and pray. It is important that during a fast you spend special time with God. As far as one being able to physically perform work during a fast, that will not be a problem.

3. Should one use laxatives or enemas while fasting?

No it is not necessary to use laxatives or enemas while fasting.

4. Is it advisable to fast during the winter?

It is safe to fast during the winter for your body will protect itself. Be careful to keep warm by wearing appropriate clothes.

5. Is there any way of preventing possible dizziness during fasting?

The only prevention method is to watch ones movement. Be very intentional and deliberate about your movements. This is usually a temporary symptom. It is sometimes caused by a sudden change of positions, especially sitting up from the lying position.

6. Can one do anything about sleeplessness?

This is sometimes due to the fact that the mind is overactive during this period. Try to relax during your fast. Don't be anxious. Pray and ask God to give you a calm spirit during the fast.

7. What can be done about foul breath during a fast?

It cannot be avoided for your breath will smell bad during a fast. One can purchase breath sprays to be used during this period. Be mindful of the fact that your breath will be foul and don't get in too many peoples faces.

8. How much water should I drink during my fast?

It is recommended that you drink at least eight glasses of water during a fast. This will keep you going to the rest room but you can use these times to whisper a prayer unto the Lord. This sounds humorous but it can be effective. The water will serve to flush your system. If eight glasses is too much water or not enough for you then let your body speak to you.

9. How will I know that God is speaking to me during my fast?

God will not guide you to do anything that is against his word. Moreover he will not let you hurt yourself. God will speak to you by his Holy Spirit in your conscious. Read the word of God and a scripture will speak to you. Consult your pastor about your fast and the reason thereof and he/she will be able to guide you to scriptures to read. The book of **Proverbs** is always a good book to read during a fast. God will speak to you therefore you must communicate with him in prayer and meditation. You have to sit sometimes and just listen. Satan's voice can be distinguished for he always speaks to you to do things contrary to the word of God.

We fast unto to God for his glory to be revealed through us. Therefore let us fast and pray as we stomp on the head of our enemy, Satan.¹

¹This short essay is based on the **Bible** and the book God's Chosen Fast: A Spiritual and Practical Guide to Fasting by Arthur Wallis (Christian Literature Crusade, P.O. Box 1449, Forth Washington, PA 19034) 1986.

NOTES:
