



BREAKTHROUGH

Fasting & Prayer Journal

By: Gary Rohrmayer

21 DAYS OF
PRAYER

WHY PRAYER AND FASTING?

When was the last time you entered into an extended spiritual fast for a spiritual, relational or missional breakthrough?

Seeking a spiritual breakthrough, Moses spent 40 days alone with God without eating or drinking until he received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 38:24).

King David sought a personal breakthrough as he fasted to keep himself humble (Psalm 35:15).

Ezra was seeking a breakthrough as he called God's people to fast and pray for a protection against their enemies (Ezra 8:21-23).

Daniel fasted and prayed as he sought a restorative breakthrough for the exiled people living in rebellion to their God (Daniel 9:3-4).

The Apostle Paul fasted as he pondered his breakthrough encounter with the risen Lord Jesus and what it meant for his life (Acts 9:9).

The leaders of the Church in Antioch worshipped, prayed and fasted together as they sought missional breakthrough for their thriving church (Acts 13:1-3).

WHAT BREAKTHROUGH ARE YOU SEEKING?

For centuries the people of God have been seeking breakthroughs through prayer and fasting.

Fasting is deliberately abstaining from the normal routines of life for the purposes of spending focused time in prayer and the study of God's word as we seek to align our lives with God's purposes.

Fasting helps us humble ourselves before the Lord and positions us for experiencing spiritual breakthroughs in our lives. We recognize as we begin this 21-day fast that we need to boldly ask God for breakthroughs in any areas of heartbreak, challenge or opportunity facing us individually and corporately as God's people over the next 21 days.

HOW TO GET STARTED

STEP ONE: PICK YOUR FAST

Full Fast: Drink liquids only. Please consult your doctor first.

Daniel Fast: Eat only vegetables, fruit, water and juice (minimal amount of carbohydrates).

Partial Fast: Not eating one or two meals on a specific day or abstaining from certain kinds of food.

All-day Food Fast: Abstaining from food one day or multiple days per week.

Activity/Media Fast: Forgoing a time-consuming activity such as entertainment, hobbies, television, internet, sports, etc.

STEP TWO: SET GOALS & WRITE THEM DOWN

Begin with clear personal goals as well as breakthrough goals for your church. Be specific. Why are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Write these things in a journal or a notebook. Keeping a journal throughout your fast is a great way to track and remember all that God has done during your fast.

STEP THREE: FEAST ON THE WORD OF GOD

Fasting is ultimately an expression of humility and dependence on God. Fasting is more about replacing than it is about abstaining. It is about replacing the daily intakes of food, entertainment, and human contact with focused times of prayer, feeding on large amounts of the Word of God and spiritual listening. You can use the recommended readings or continue your normal bible reading program. The YouVersion Bible App or www.bible.com has a variety of 21-day bible reading programs.

STEP FOUR: OPEN YOUR LIFE BEFORE GOD.

One of the great benefits of spiritual fasting is a heightened awareness of God's presence and power in our lives. It is not that God has moved but that we have. Fasting has a great way of moving us towards a deeper spiritual dependency and away from willful self-dependency.

The greatest breakthrough will take place when you make time to examine your life and discover what areas most need breakthrough.

We ask that you also fast for spiritual breakthroughs for your church family and its' mission endeavors as well as your personal life.

STEP 5: EXPECT GOD TO MOVE

Enter this fast by faith. The word of God says,

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6) Spiritual fasting is a supernatural endeavor that has shaped and transformed God's people for centuries. If you have doubt, ask God to meet you in your doubts and to lead you in overcoming them just as the apostles prayed, “Increase our faith!” (Luke 17:5)

OUR PRAYER FOR YOU

Our prayer for you is that during the next 21 days you will experience a deeper craving for the beauty of the Lord and the wonder of His leading in your life as well as experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the favor of the God of Heaven. May God overwhelm you with His goodness as you see His provision in every step of your missional journey.

PERSONAL BREAKTHROUGHS

Lord, I need a spiritual breakthrough...

Lord, I need a relational breakthrough...

Lord, I need a financial breakthrough...

Lord, I need a missional breakthrough...

CHURCH BREAKTHROUGHS

Lord, my church needs a spiritual breakthrough...

Lord, my church needs relational breakthroughs...

Lord, my church needs a financial breakthrough...

Lord, my church needs a missional breakthrough...

"Fasting of the body is food for the soul. As bodily food fattens the body, so fasting strengthens the soul." ~ John Chrysostom

DEVOTIONAL & JOURNAL



DAY 1 - ASSUMED PRACTICE

Fasting is not an option but it is an assumed practice for the serious minded follower of Jesus. Fasting was a spiritual discipline that was incorporated in their daily lives. Jesus did not say 'if you fast' but said, 'when you fast'.

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 6

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 6:16-18 - "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men 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."

FASTING THOUGHT: "Jesus takes it for granted that his disciples will observe the pious custom of fasting. Strict exercise of self-control is an essential feature of the Christian's life. Such customs have only one purpose - to make the disciples more ready and cheerful to accomplish those things which God would have done." ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, as I subdue the impulses of the flesh this day, I do so not to achieve anything, not to use it as a bargaining chip, or as a manipulative ploy to get your attention but as an act of worship to make myself ready and resolute to do your will with a cheerful heart. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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DAY 2 - DEPENDENCE

Fasting is a humbling experience that reveals who or what we really depend upon or are controlled by.

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 69

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 69:10 - "When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting."

FASTING THOUGHT: "More than any other single discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately...anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear — if they are within us, they will surface during fasting. At first we will rationalize that our anger is due to our hunger then we know that we are angry because the spirit of anger is within us. We can rejoice in this knowledge because we know that healing is available through the power of Christ." ~ Richard Foster

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, as I move through this fast I seek the transforming work of the gospel in my life. Reveal the controlling influences in my life. Grant me the courage to face them, to renounce them, to confess them and to surrender them into your healing hands. Draw me closer to you through this fast. In Jesus' Precious Name. Amen.

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DAY 3 - SPIRITUAL INVENTORY

Fasting is a holy and legitimate pursuit of a Holy God. It can be of great use in conducting a rigorous spiritual inventory of one's soul and spiritual fruitfulness.

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 35

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 35:13 - "I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting... when my prayers returned to me unanswered."

FASTING THOUGHT: "Let us say something about fasting, because many, for want of knowing its usefulness, undervalue its necessity, and some reject it as almost superfluous; while, on the other hand where the use of it is not well understood, it easily degenerates into superstition. Holy and legitimate fasting is directed to three ends; for we practice it either as a restraint on the flesh, to preserve it from licentiousness, or as a preparation for prayers and pious meditations, or as a testimony of our humiliation in the presence of God when we are desirous of confessing our guilt before him." ~John Calvin

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, through your probing eyes search my heart and reveal to me the areas of my life that are hindering fellowship with you. Expose those areas of my life that are interfering with my spiritual fruitfulness. Grant me the courage to face them with faith and confess them fully and humbly before you. Father I want more of you and to be fully used by you. Amen.

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DAY 4 - REAL HUNGER

Fasting is a struggle against the flesh and is emotionally and physically demanding; in this we discover what we really hunger.

SCRIPTURE READING: Deuteronomy 8

KEY PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 8:2-3 - “Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

FASTING THOUGHT: “Do you have a hunger for God? If we don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because we have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because we have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Our soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great. If we are full of what the world offers, then perhaps a fast might express, or even increase, our soul's appetite for God. Between the dangers of self-denial and self-indulgence is the path of pleasant pain called fasting.” ~ John Piper

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, as I move forward in this fast help me to turn every hunger pain, thought or craving towards you. Teach me to feed on your word and to find a deep satisfaction in your truth. Today Father I want to experience the sweetness of your word. Amen

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DAY 5 – CONFESSION

Remember to accompany your fast with confession of sin. Confess your sin, your spiritual weaknesses, your lack of dependence on God; through this we can experience the cleansing forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE READING: I John 1-2

KEY PASSAGE: “When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, ‘We have sinned against the LORD.’” I Samuel 7:6

FASTING THOUGHT: “Confession recognizes the absence of God’s presence in our lives through our own willfulness or indifference. Fasting is an act of craving more of God’s presence, power and purity in our lives and ministry. Confession is admitting there is something wrong between you and God. Fasting is longing for the fullness of God to flood our souls. When we practice confession in our fasting, our fasting becomes more than a tool to bring God back to us, it becomes an instrument moving us back to God because God never moves.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, show me through this fast those areas of spiritual weakness and self-reliance in my life in order that I may confess them and receive your healing, cleansing and purifying forgiveness. Father, I want to experience a new level of spiritual refreshment and strength that can only come through you. In the strong name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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DAY 6 - YEARNINGS

Fasting is ultimately a yearning for something missing. Something that was previously experienced but now is absent from our lives.

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 9

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 9:14-15 - Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast."

FASTING THOUGHT: "Christian fasting, at its root, is the hunger of a homesickness for God. It tells only half the story of Christian fasting. Half of Christian fasting is that our physical appetite is lost because our homesickness for God is so intense. The other half is that our homesickness for God is threatened because our physical appetites are so intense. In the first half, appetite is lost. In the second half, appetite is resisted. In the first, we yield to the higher hunger that is. In the second, we fight for the higher hunger that isn't. Christian fasting is not only the spontaneous effect of a superior satisfaction in God; it is also a chosen weapon against every force in the world that would take that satisfaction away." ~ John Piper

PRAYER: Father in Heaven fill my life with a deeper awareness of your presence and power in my life. Grant me a deeper hunger for you than for those creature comforts the world offers. Give me victory this day in the strong name of Jesus Christ my Lord, Amen.

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DAY 7 - DISCERNING

*Fasting is a tool that aids in discerning the call of God in our lives.
Fasting helps us slow down and hear God's voice.*

SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 9

KEY PASSAGE: Acts 9:3-9 - As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

FASTING THOUGHT: A discerning fast “involves focusing on our choices instead of our foods and praying our decisions through to successful conclusions...this type of fast helps us receive God’s wisdom to make our decisions. This type of fast is not for every minor decision in life, such as where to go for lunch or what minor purchase to make. A discerning fast offers help in weighty decisions such as choosing a mate, resigning a job and other life changing choices. Fasting brings more light into the application of good decision-making skills.” - Elmer Towns

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, today in my fast I yield to you and seek your wisdom in my life. Through this fast today grant me a bigger perspective on those decisions before me both minor and major. I want your best in my life, protect me from being impulsive and rash and guide me in your perfect ways. In Jesus Name, Amen.

FASTING & PRAYER JOURNAL

BILL BRIGHT'S FASTING TESTIMONY

Bill Bright, the passionate leader of Campus Crusade (CRU), had a power experience with God in the late 1990's specifically around this area of fasting. Read his fasting testimony and allow God to speak to you through it.

"I believe the power of fasting as it relates to prayer is the spiritual atomic bomb that our Lord has given us to destroy the strongholds of evil and usher in a great revival and spiritual harvest around the world.

Increasingly I have been gripped with a growing sense of urgency to call upon God to send revival to our beloved country. In the spring and summer of 1994, I had a growing conviction that God wanted me to fast and pray for forty days for revival in America and for the fulfillment of the Great Commission in obedience to our Lord's command.

At first I questioned, "Is this truly God's call for me?" Forty days was a long time to go without solid food. But with each passing day, His call grew stronger and more clear. Finally, I was convinced. God was calling me to fast, and He would not make such a call without a specific reason or purpose. With this conviction, I entered my fast with excitement and expectancy mounting in my heart, praying, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

I believe such a long fast was a sovereign call of God because of the magnitude of the sins of America and of the Church. The Lord impressed that upon my heart, as well as the urgent need to help accelerate the fulfillment of the Great Commission in this generation.

As I began my fast, I was not sure I could continue for forty days. But my confidence was in the Lord to help me. Each day His presence encouraged me to continue. The longer I fasted, the more I sensed the presence of the Lord. The Holy Spirit refreshed my soul and spirit, and I experienced the joy of the Lord as seldom before. Biblical truths leaped at me from the pages of God's Word. My faith soared as I humbled myself and cried out to God and rejoiced in His presence.

This proved to be the most important forty days of my life. As I waited upon the Lord, the Holy Spirit gave me the assurance that America and much of the world will, before the end of the year 2000, experience a great spiritual awakening. This divine visit from heaven will kindle the greatest spiritual harvest in the history of the Church. But before God comes in revival power, the Holy Spirit will call millions of God's people to repent, fast, and pray in the spirit of 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

The scope of this revival depends on how believers in America and the rest of the world respond to this call. I have spent fifty years studying God's Word and listening to His voice, and His message could not have been more clear."

Source: www.cru.org

DAY 8 - REPLACING VS. ABSTAINING

Fasting is more about replacing than it is about abstaining. Replacing normal daily activities with focused times of prayer, confession, feeding on the Word and worshiping the Lord.

SCRIPTURE READING: Nehemiah 9

KEY PASSAGE: Nehemiah 9:1-3 - "On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads...They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God.

FASTING THOUGHT: "We tend to think of fasting as going without food. But we can fast from anything. If we love music and decide to miss a concert in order to spend time with God that is fasting. It is helpful to think of the parallel of human friendship. When friends need to be together, they will cancel all other activities in order to make that possible. There's nothing magical about fasting. It's just one way of telling God that your priority at that moment is to be alone with him, sorting out whatever is necessary, and you have cancelled the meal, party, concert, or whatever else you had planned to do in order to fulfill that priority." ~ J. I. Packer

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, as I fast today, I desire to seek your face through earnest prayer and honest confession, feeding on large portions of your word and offering responsive praise. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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DAY 9 - THIRSTS

Let your thirsts drive you to God, that He may satisfy your desires and meet the needs of your soul.

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 63

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 63:1 - "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water."

FASTING THOUGHT: "Prayer needs fasting for its full growth. Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible. Fasting is the other hand, the one with which we let go of the visible...Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." ~ Andrew Murray

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, I reach out to you, the only one who can satisfy my thirsty heart and quench needs within my soul. Through this fast may I crave you and your Kingdom more and more. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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DAY 11 - CHEERFULNESS

In fasting it is virtuous to conceal our suffering and discomfort with cheerfulness.

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 6

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 6:16-18 - “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men 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.”

FASTING THOUGHT: “Let us learn from our Lord’s instruction about fasting, the great importance of cheerfulness in our religion. Those words, ‘anoint thy head, and wash thy face,’ are full of deep meaning. They should teach us to aim at letting men see that we find Christianity makes us happy. Never let us forget that there is not religion in looking melancholy and gloomy. Are we dissatisfied with Christ’s wages, and Christ’s service? Surely not! Then let us not look as if we were.” ~ J. C. Ryle

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, let me finish this fast with joy and cheerfulness as I feed on your beauty, truth and goodness. May every growl of my stomach, every internal complaint and headache be turned into moments of dependence on you and delight in every spiritual blessing I have in Christ. In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.

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DAY 12 - SATISFACTION

Fasting is rewarded because it is a cry from the heart of one who finds their ultimate satisfaction in God and God alone.

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 73

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 73:23-24 - “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee I desire nothing on earth. My heart and my flesh may fall. But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

FASTING THOUGHT: “When God sees the confession of need and this expression of trust, he acts, because the glory of his all-sufficient grace is at stake. The final answer is that God rewards fasting because fasting expresses the cry of the heart that nothing on earth can satisfy our souls besides God. God must reward this cry because God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.” ~ John Piper

PRAYER: Father, whom have I in heaven but you? And besides you I desire nothing on earth. My heart and my flesh may fail. But you are the strength of my heart and my portion forever and ever. I declare this in the precious name of Jesus, Amen

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DAY 13 – SACRIFICE

Are you tired of fasting? Fasting is a sacrificial act that realigns our affections from the temporal to the eternal. It turns each moment of craving into a prayer of intense dependence.

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 109

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 109:24 - “My knees give way from fasting; my body is thin and gaunt.”

FASTING THOUGHT: “If religion requires us to sometimes fast and deny our natural appetites, it is to lessen that struggle and war that is in our nature; it is to render our bodies fitter instruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace; it is to dry up the springs of our passions that war against the soul, to cool the flame of our blood, and render the mind more capable of divine meditations. So that although these abstinences give some pain to the body, yet they so lessen the power of bodily appetites and passions, and so increase our taste of spiritual joys, that even these severities of religion, when practiced with discretion, add much to the comfortable enjoyment of our lives.” ~ William Law

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, my flesh is tired, my spirit is weakening; grant me the mental focus, spiritual awareness and physical will to push through the quitting points as I seek to realign my desires to be within your perfect will, your mission and for your glory. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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DAY 14 - AUTHENTIC FASTING

Fasting must be accompanied with good will and good works towards others to be effective and pleasing to God.

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 58

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 58:3-4 “‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’ Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.”

FASTING THOUGHT: “Why is this fasting unacceptable to God? What’s wrong with it? What’s wrong with it is that it left the sin in their lives untouched. The only authentic fasting is fasting that includes a spiritual attack against our own sin. Whatever else we fast for, we must fast for our own holiness. We cannot fast for anything with authenticity while living in known sin.” ~ John Piper

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, grant me the faith to move closer to the light of God’s holiness and deal with the darkness of my own soul. Grant me the courage through this fast to examine my attitudes and behaviors toward those around me and to make right any wrongs for which I am responsible. Father, I desire that my fast be acceptable to you. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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DAVID BRAINERD'S FASTING TESTIMONY

David Brainerd, a young missionary in his 20's, understood the need for fasting in the advancement of the Gospel as well as the expansion of his soul. Here is a brief testimony from his diary:

"Feeling somewhat of the sweetness of communion with God and the force of His love and how it captivates my soul and makes all my desires and affections to center in God, I set apart this day for fasting and prayer to God, to bless me in view of preaching the Gospel. I had life and power in prayer this afternoon. God enabled me to wrestle ardently in intercession for my friends. The Lord visited me marvelously in prayer. I think my soul was never in such agony before. I felt no restraint, for the treasures of God's grace were opened to me. I wrestled for absent friends and for the ingathering of poor souls. I was in such agony from sun half an hour high till near dark that I was all over wet with sweat. Oh! my dear Savior did sweat blood for these poor souls! I longed for more compassion toward them. I was under a sense of divine love, and went to bed in such a frame of mind, with my heart set on God."

Source: Journey with David Brainerd by Richard A. Hasler

DAY 15 - FASTING AND GOD'S FREEDOM

Fasting is a means of seeing spiritual breakthrough for a physical or emotional problem as well as finding freedom from the besetting sins that affect our relationship with Him. Today focus your prayers on those hurts, habits and hang ups that you need spiritual healing to overcome them.

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 58

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 58:6 - "Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke?"

FASTING THOUGHT: "The Elijah Fast is not a common corrective device to be used for freeing yourself from minor habits. It is called for in severely negative cases of mental and emotional response. It often works because it is a discipline that builds self-discipline and self-esteem. But more important than psychological esteem the Elijah Fast invites God into the problem. Then, in the strength of God, victory is possible." ~ Elmer Towns

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, you are the great physician, you are the healer of my soul, you are one who grants victory over my emotional wounds that are the cause of my destructive thinking and debilitating habits. During my fast bring to light those besetting sins that hurt my relationship with you and my effectiveness in your mission. May I experience a new level of freedom and victory as I lean into you this day during my fast. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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DAY 16 - FASTING AND GOD'S REFRESHMENT

*Our fasting may be rewarded in the experience of not only spiritual replenishment
but also physical refreshment.*

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 58

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 58:6, 8 - "Is this not the fast which I choose...and your healing will quickly appear...and will strengthen your frame."

FASTING THOUGHT: "Of fasting I say this: It is right to fast frequently in order to subdue and control the body. For when the stomach is full, the body does not serve for preaching, for praying, or studying, or for doing anything else that is good. Under such circumstances God's Word cannot remain. But one should not fast with a view to meriting something by it as by a good work." ~Martin Luther

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, as I subdue my flesh and control my appetite today refresh my spirit, replenish my soul, heal my wounds and strengthen my will to carry out your desires this day. I ask this in the strong name of Jesus Christ my Lord, Amen.

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DAY 18 – FASTING AND GOD’S VICTORY

Fasting is a weapon used to respond to the present and future attacks of the evil one.

SCRIPTURE READING: Esther 4

KEY PASSAGES: Isaiah 58:6, 8 - “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen...then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.”

Esther 4:18 - “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

FASTING THOUGHT: “When the devil, the foe and the tyrant, sees a man bearing this weapon [fasting], he is straight-away frightened and he recollects and considers that defeat which he suffered in the wilderness at the hands of the Savior; at once his strength is shattered and the very sight of this weapon, given us by our Commander-in-chief, burns him.” ~ Isaac of Syria

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, LORD Almighty, today through my fast I seek to be better prepared for the spiritual battles that I am engaged. I choose to stand firm in you. I choose to live my life by the truth of God and not the lies of the enemy; I choose to live righteously and not selfishly. I choose to live by faith and not by sight, extinguishing every attack from the enemy. I choose to live by the power of the Word of God. In the Strong Name of Jesus my Lord, Amen.

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DAY 19 - FASTING AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Are you being surprised in your fasting experience? God loves to surprise His children by strangely satisfying them with His presence.

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 58 & Psalm 1

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 58:6, 11 - "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen...he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."

FASTING THOUGHT: "The rewards of fasting are not often instantaneous but are experienced over time. They come as surprises, like in the midst of a worship service when my soul is stirred and strangely satisfied. Or when I am reading the Word and my inner being is lifted beyond this world with a fresh perspective. Or when I am in prayer and the groaning of my heart experiences a peace that is unexplainable. I have found the rewards ultimately lead to a more intimate and satisfying experience with the God who made me, saves me and fills me." ~ Gary Rohrmayer

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, today during my fast may I experience the sweet satisfying nature of your presence and may I experience the refreshing power of your abiding strength. Father, I want to be like a well-watered garden, like a spring that never runs dry for your honor and glory. In Jesus Name, Amen.

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DAY 20 - FASTING AND GOD'S GUIDING HAND

Fasting has its spiritual rewards. One of the rewards of fasting is experiencing the guiding hand of God in our lives.

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 58; Psalm 23

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 58: 6, 11 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen...And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong."

FASTING THOUGHT: "Every time I have fasted I have found my worship experience sweeter. I found the illumination of God's Spirit brighter and my hunger for God's word stronger. Through my fasting God has guided me, comforted me, challenged me and corrected me. It is not that I have bent God towards me through fasting, but that I, though fasting, have bent my heart towards Him." - Gary Rohmayer

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, I want to experience your guiding and empowering hand on my life and ministry. There is nothing like knowing that the hand of the Lord is on my life. Today through my fasting I bend my heart and my will towards you and your ways. In Jesus Name, Amen.

FASTING & PRAYER JOURNAL

DAY 21 - A HOLY HABIT

Fasting is a discipline that should be turned into a holy habit.

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 9

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 9:14-15 - Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast."

FASTING THOUGHT: "For the serious minded follower of Jesus, fasting is a consistent habit. In a world filled with indulgences we need, on a routine basis, to consciously lay aside our freedoms in Christ for the purpose of seeking the face of God, intimacy with the Son of God and fullness of the Holy Spirit." ~ Gary Rohrmayer

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, thank you for all you have done in my life over the last 21 days. My heart longs for you. My soul craves your presence. I need you. I worship you. I love you. Help me to make fasting a habit in my life. In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.

FASTING & PRAYER JOURNAL

IN THE LAST 21 DAYS HAS GOD GIVEN YOU A FASTING TESTIMONY?

Experiencing the sweetness of His presence. Enjoying the wonders of His grace. Discovering His guiding hand in a major decision. Finding a new sense of freedom and healing from the hurts of the past. Realizing a victory over a nagging area of sin in your life. Embracing a spiritual breakthrough in your ministry.

How has God shown up in your life in the last 21 days of fasting? If He has, write it down, share it with a friend and reflect upon it with a thankful heart. If He hasn't, keep fasting until He does. Be determined like Jacob who wrestled with God and would not let Him go until He blessed him. In this, Jacob experienced the transformational power of God that marked not only his life in that moment but also his descendants for eternity.

The great theologian Ole Hallesby wrote, "The purpose of fasting is to loosen to some degree the ties which bind us to the world of material things and our surroundings as a whole, in order that we may concentrate all our spiritual powers upon the unseen and eternal things."

May we all experience blessedness of what Jesus taught his disciples, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6)

YOUR FASTING TESTIMONY

EXTRA DAY - FASTING AND THE SUFFERING WORLD

Fasting is turning your hunger pain into requests, prayers and petitions for the suffering around you. Today focus your prayers on those suffering close to you and those suffering throughout the world.

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 58; James 2:14-26

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 58:6-7 “Is this not the fast which I choose...is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”

FASTING THOUGHT: “Fasting is a hard discipline to practice without it consuming all our attention. Yet when we use it as a part of prayer or service, we cannot allow it to do so. When a person chooses fasting as a spiritual discipline, he or she must, then, practice it well enough and often enough to become experienced in it, because only the person who is well habituated to systematic fasting as a discipline can use it effectively as a part of direct service to God, as in special times of prayer or other service.” ~ Dallas Willard

PRAYER: Father in Heaven, today I turn my prayers towards all the suffering in our world. Make a way for food, clothing, shelter and medical supplies to reach those in critical need. Send medical help to those in need. Grant those who are serving the poor and needy your strength, wisdom, compassion and spiritual insight to care for those in need. In the merciful name of Jesus. Amen.

MORE FASTING THOUGHTS

“Christian fasting moves from broken and contrite poverty of spirit to sweet satisfaction in the free mercy of Christ to ever greater desires and enjoyments of God’s inexhaustible grace.” ~ John Piper

“Fasting is an act of humility that spotlights our weaknesses and reveals dependence on things rather than God.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Fasting is a virtue that restrains desire; for sin occurs more readily by excess in delights, and so it is virtuous to restrain the bodily appetites.” ~ Thomas Aquinas

“Fasting tests where the heart is. And when it reveals that the heart is with God and not the world, a mighty blow is struck against Satan” ~ John Piper

“Fasting is more about longing for the power and presence of Jesus than restricting our appetites.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in Him a source of sustenance beyond food.” ~ Dallas Willard

“In a world filled with indulgences we need to routinely lay aside our freedoms in Christ through fasting, while seeking the face of God.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“The birthplace of Christian fasting is homesickness for God” ~ John Piper

“Fasting helps to express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution, that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves, to attain the Kingdom of God.” ~ Andrew Murray

“Whenever men are to pray to God concerning any great matter it should be expedient to appoint fasting along with prayer.” ~John Calvin

“Fasting is more about replacing than it is about abstaining. Replacing normal activities with focused times of prayer and feeding on the Word of God.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Fasting is calculated to bring a note of urgency and importunity into our praying, and to give force to our pleading in the court of heaven. The man who prays with fasting is giving heaven notice that he is truly in earnest.” ~ Arthur Wallis

“Fasting is not about changing God. It is not a mystical exercise to gain God’s approval. Fasting is not about changing my world, but about letting God realign my heart toward his purposes.” ~ Alex Gee

“The benefits of fasting are a soul strangely satisfied, a mind lifted beyond this world with eternal thoughts and a body refreshed with new strength.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Fasting is not a tool for gaining discipline or developing piety. Instead, fasting is the bulimic act of ridding ourselves of our fullness to attune our senses to the mysteries that swirl in and around us.” ~ Dan B. Allender

“As soon as a Christian recognizes that he has failed in his service...that all his joy in God has vanished and that his capacity for prayer has quite gone, it is high time for him to launch an assault upon the flesh, and prepare for better service by fasting and prayer” ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“By aligning our hearts with God through fasting we find ourselves consumed by His resplendent nature and filled with the light of His love.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one’s flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, and kindles the true light of chastity.” ~ Augustine

“For the serious minded follower of Jesus fasting is a consistent habit of deliberately restricting our freedoms in Christ for the purpose of seeking the face of God, intimacy with the Son of God and fullness of the Holy Spirit.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Faith needs a life of prayer in which to grow and keep strong...prayer needs fasting for its full and perfect development.” ~ Andrew Murray

“Fasting with a pure heart and motives, I have discovered, brings personal revival and adds power to our prayers.” ~ Bill Bright

“The rewards of fasting ultimately lead to a more intimate and satisfying experience with the God who made me.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“More than any other single discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.” ~ Richard Foster

“In fasting we do not bend God towards us, but through fasting we bend our hearts towards Him.”
~ Gary Rohrmayer

“A fast is not a hunger strike. Fasting submits to God’s commands. A hunger strike makes God submit to our demands.” ~ Ed Cole

There’s nothing magical about fasting. It’s just one way of telling God that your priority at that moment is to be alone with him.” ~ J. I. Packer

“Every time I have fasted I have found my worship experience sweeter, the illumination of God’s Spirit brighter and the hunger for God’s word stronger.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Fasting is an act of humility. Fasting gives opportunity for deeper humility as we recognize our sins, repent, receive God’s forgiveness, and experience His cleansing of our soul and spirit. Fasting also demonstrates our love for God and our full confidence in His faithfulness.” ~ Bill Bright

“In fasting we do not bend God towards us, but though fasting we bend our hearts towards Him.”
~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Fasting is the soul of prayer; mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. So, if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy.”
~ Peter Chrysologus

“Fasting possesses great power. If practiced with the right intention, it makes one a friend of God. The demons are aware of that.” ~ Tertullian

“I desired as many as could to join together in fasting and prayer, that God would restore the spirit of love and of a sound mind.” ~ John Wesley

“Fasting is more about replacing than it is about abstaining. Replacing normal activities with focused times of prayer and feeding on the Word of God.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Is not the neglect of this plain duty--I mean, fasting, ranked by our Lord with almsgiving and prayer.”
~ John Wesley

“The Bible does not teach that fasting is a kind of spiritual hunger strike that compels God to do our bidding. If we ask for something outside of God’s will, fasting does not cause Him to reconsider. Fasting does not change God’s hearing so much as it changes our praying.” ~ Donald Whitney

“If religion requires us sometimes to fast and deny our natural appetites, it is to lessen that struggle and war that is in our nature; it is to render our bodies fitter instruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of divine grace.” ~ William Law

“Fasting turns each moment of craving into a prayer of intense dependence.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“The abstinence is not to be an end in itself but rather for the purpose of being separated to the Lord and to concentrate on godliness. This kind of fasting reduces the influence of our self-will and invites the Holy Spirit to do a more intense work in us.” ~ Williams Thrasher

“Fasting if we conceive of it truly, must not...be confined to the question of food and drink; fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose. There are many bodily functions which are right and normal and perfectly legitimate, but which for special peculiar reasons in certain circumstances should be controlled. That is fasting.” ~ Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“A season of fasting and prayer of deep humiliation and confession are the conditions from which a genuine and powerful work springs.” ~ EM Bounds

“Fasting is turning your hunger pains into requests, prayers and petitions for the world around you.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Few people arise in the morning as hungry for God as they are for cornflakes or toast and eggs.” ~ Dallas Willard

“Fasting from any nourishment, activity, involvement or pursuit—for any season—sets the stage for God to appear. Fasting is not a tool to prey wisdom out of God’s hands or to force needed insight about a decision.” ~ Dan B. Allender

“Fasting is abstaining from anything that hinders prayer.” ~ Andrew Bonar

“Fasting is a sacrificial act that realigns our affections from the temporal to the eternal.” ~ Gary Rohrmayer

“Do you fast? Then feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick, do not forget the imprisoned, have pity on the tortured, comfort those who grieve and who weep, be merciful, humble, kind, calm, patient, sympathetic, forgiving, reverent, truthful and pious, so that God might accept your fasting and might plentifully grant you the fruits of repentance.” ~ John Chrysostom

“So that although these abstinences give some pain to the body, yet they so lessen the power of bodily appetites and passions, and so increase our taste of spiritual joys, that even these severities of religion, when practiced with discretion, add much to the comfortable enjoyment of our lives.” ~ William Law

WHO IS GARY ROHRMAYER?

Gary Rohrmayer was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Growing up in a family of entrepreneurs and after a dramatic conversion turned this entrepreneurial energy into starting new churches throughout the Midwest. As a pastor, author, speaker, coach, trainer and leader he has a unique focus in mobilizing and mentoring leaders in the mission of Jesus. He specializes in equipping leaders in areas of spiritual formation, church planting and church health. Gary has been involved in church planting since 1987. During this time he has been involved in over 151 new church plants and trained thousands of church planters across the country. He is currently serving as the Regional President of Converge MidAmerica, overseeing its' business and ministry interests that supports regional church planting and ongoing care of its partner churches. Gary's vision is to see "that no leader travels their ministry journey alone".



WHO IS CONVERGE?

Converge is a movement of 1300 churches. We were born out of mission to reach immigrants in the 1850's. These new believers cherished the word of God and depended on God through prayer. From these humble beginnings a multi-generational, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic group of churches was formed. We voluntarily work together in the starting and strengthening churches together worldwide.

Converge is sold out to starting new churches. As a proven church planting force, we are reaching people from every segment of society. Over the last 15 years we have started over 700 churches in the United States.

Converge is serious about church health with a number of new church strengthening initiatives. We have a commitment to seeing every church in our movement get stronger relationally, theologically and missionally.

Converge is determined to see the least reached people groups throughout the world touched by the gospel of Jesus through the sending of missionaries and supporting of national leaders in this great task.

Converge is relentless in its pursuit to reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the country. We believe the future of every movement is found in God's harvest field. The new leaders, new churches and new missionaries will be found as "we make disciples of all nations".

For More Information about Converge go to www.convergemidamerica.org

