

Accessing the Power of Fasting & Transformation

When I first wrote a book about fasting 20 years ago, I was just trying to get the word out to as many people as possible about the power, favor and breakthroughs that fasting brings. I wanted people to know that when you fast, you can experience a level of intimacy with the Lord unlike any you have ever experienced. I had no idea that this book would reach so many people around the world. I just knew in my heart and from personal experience that fasting was God's secret weapon that many in the body of Christ had yet to discover. Today, I am thrilled to see millions of Christians worldwide placing such a great emphasis on prayer and fasting and, for many, that book was just the jump start they needed to take that next step of faith.

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Looking back over our ministry and seeing all God has done through the years only deepens my resolve to challenge even more believers to use the old weapon of fasting to win the new battles. We decided to implement fasting into the yearly calendar of our church long before fasting became popular. Today, the internet is filled with doctors and specialists touting the powerful medical benefits of fasting. This generation is fighting enemies that didn't even exist 20 years ago when the original *Fasting* book was released. Praise God that these biblical principles are timeless and not dependent on the events that grip a generation or even a nation. Fasting works. Fasting sustains. Fasting opens doors of revelation and acceleration in every generation, in every nation under the

sun.

Beyond The Article With Jentezen Franklin

A Supernatural God

I believe in a supernatural God. No wall can defy or deter the God that I serve. When you fast, you will see walls of shame, walls of regret, confusion and depression begin to fall. Walls of hurt, offense and unforgiveness—they're all going to fall. In Matthew 17:20, after the disciples had tried everything they knew and still experienced no results casting out a demon, Jesus explained this critical piece of God's plan. He shared a spiritual truth: there are some kinds of issues, addictions, rejections and even demons that can only be overcome by prayer and fasting.

Whether you are just trying to feed your family in a third-world country or serving as an executive on the New York Stock Exchange, there is more—more hope, greater purpose and breakthroughs that can only come through prayer and fasting. God loves co-laboring with His own creation. He loves using you and me to accomplish His purpose in the earth. When you fast, you partner with God. He desires to have a divine partnership with you in the area of prayer and fasting for your family, your life and His purpose for you. There are times when God requires us to take private, physical action to receive a spiritual blessing. There's a connection between private, physical sacrifice and what God releases spiritually in the Bible.

Exodus 17 tells the story of Moses holding up his hands with a staff and, as long as his hands were extended, the battle was won against the enemies of Israel. But when Moses' arms started getting weary, the battle would begin to turn as his arms would lower and Israel's enemies would start to prevail. The story tells us that there are times when what we do physically affects our circumstances. Fasting is perhaps the most powerful physical action a Christian can take to show God

how sincere you are about wanting to see change. In reality, there is no war between God and Satan. Satan is not co-equal with our God. But there is a war between angelic forces and demonic forces. And you and I get to vote on who wins! We have a vote in the battle in the heavenlies. We can affect the forces of darkness when we fast and pray. We can have influence in the unseen world by fasting.

God Reveals Assignments When We Fast

I encounter so many young believers who are desperately seeking God for their calling, their assignment. If there is one recurring theme in my life and ministry it's that fasting is the birthplace of assignments. I was 19 years old when the Lord impressed upon me to fast for three days. For a 19-year-old, this seemed so extreme. Nevertheless, the gravity of that moment was not lost on me and I went on a three-day fast. At the end of the three days, God called me to preach. It was undeniable what God was calling me to do and I knew this life-altering moment happened because I had fasted. That fast was the birthplace of my assignment. I found my mission. I found my calling. It's time to develop some of your own "extremes" when Satan is coming with such targeted opposition against you and your life. I've learned that I'm stronger with God when I am seeking Him more. When I feel weaker, I am seeking Him less.

The Bible says this about King Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26:5: "And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." I have found that the most dangerous period for all of us, and especially leaders, is when God is blessing us. We get complacent and stop seeking Him with all our heart. When we are weak with God, temptation is strong. When we are strong in our relationship with God, temptation is weak. That's why Jesus didn't fall for the trap when Satan came to Him in the wilderness with extreme temptations. Jesus instead defeated Satan in the wilderness

with His own extremes: extreme fasting, extreme prayer and extreme focus on the Word of God.

Discipline Is Required

Fasting breaks the monotony of the weekly schedule and your focus shifts to the things that matter most. Fasting requires the discipline of extra time and focus on Jesus, His Word and His presence. When you do that, you become a disciple, a disciplined one. When you discipline yourself like this, look out! God will raise you up because you have humbled yourself before the mighty hand of God and, in due season, He will raise you up. He will promote you and He will open doors that you once thought were walls. He will give solutions and answers where there was only confusion, silence and doubt because you will have the hand of God on your life in a dimension you've never experienced. Some will even see miracles.

In this culture of entertainment and instant gratification, it's almost unheard of to expect people to sacrifice. That word has been lost in the body of Christ. Biblical fasting has to do with being preoccupied with God and His will rather than the things of this world. When we begin to biblically fast, we increase our receptivity to the Lord's voice and to His Word. It's not easy to fast. It's not fun to fast. It requires sacrifice, but the powerful reward is worth the sacrifice because your faith will begin to explode as you fast.

What Should I Fast?

As I travel, the number one question people have on the topic of fasting is, "What should we fast and how long?" My response is always the same: "That's up to you." It is up to you. At my church, for over 30 years we have started every year with a 21-day fast, and it is truly the most exciting time of the year. Over one million people worldwide fast with us for 21 days in the month of January every year. Some people will fast

from sun up to sundown and others will fast one meal a day. The most common is the Daniel fast, which is no meat, no bread, no sugar. It's a very healthy and powerful fast. Some people are doing a liquid fast for three days and then converting over to the Daniel fast. You figure out what works for you and stick with it. Have a made-up mind about fasting and purpose in your heart, "I'm going to fast and I'm going to do it for the glory of God."

Time and experience with fasting make me qualified to proclaim with boldness, that if you will seek the Lord through fasting and prayer, then He will release a freshness, a sensitivity, a new desire and a tender spirit upon your life. Seek Him. Seek His face with fasting and prayer and He will reward you. It's not about the food. It's not about the recipes and it's not about legalism. It's about fasting for more of Him. If I do nothing but abstain from certain foods, I have wasted my time. I must also focus on the Word, on worship and on prayer.

Private Discipline Leads to Public Reward

Victories are not won in public, but in private. Where there is little private discipline, there will be little public reward. Whenever there is private fasting and prayer in the secret places of our life there will be public rewards! If you want a stronger relationship with God, you have to seek it. There is a secret source to our power, and it always accompanies the discipline of fasting and prayer.

Fasting is not for the strong. Fasting is for the weak. Fasting is for the common. Fasting is for the frail and for the ordinary. Fasting is for people of all ages and all cultures who realize that they desperately need more of God in their life. Fasting is for you.

If you've never fasted before, I encourage you to begin this journey, maybe even this week. Start with one day or possibly three days. Or, if you've fasted many times, maybe go a little

longer but always with this warning—consult your physician before taking on a longer fast.

I'm excited about what God will do for you on this journey if you will step up and say, "God, I want You, and I'm coming after You through prayer and fasting." You literally have nothing to lose but a few pounds if you fast and feel nothing. But you will have everything to gain when you experience the greatest breakthroughs of your life, moments that will mark you and change your trajectory forever.

Pastor Jentezen Franklin is the pastor of Free Chapel in Gainesville, Georgia, a congregation with 10,000 in attendance each week that has recently grown in a new location in Orange County, California. Franklin is a popular conference speaker, and his nationally televised program, Kingdom Connection, is seen weekly on national and international networks. He has written several best-selling books, including Right People, Right Place, Right Plan, and his latest, the re-release of the best-selling Fasting. He and his wife, Cherise, have five wonderful children.