

Jentezen Franklin: How Fasting Releases God's Blessings

Fasting isn't meant to be just a New Year's thing but a lifestyle that releases God's power and blessings

What is the secret to deeper intimacy with the Lord? How can I know God's perfect will? How can I release the anointing, favor and blessing of God in my life?

For me, fasting has been the answer to these and other deep questions—the key for obtaining open doors, miraculous provision, favor and the tender touch of God upon my life. I was on a three-day fast when God called me to preach. I was on a 21-day fast when our ministry received its first \$1 million gift. When I was an evangelist, my brother and I traveled together and would rotate our preaching nights. On my night off, I would fast all day for him. On his night off, he fasted all day for me. We went from obscurity to doors opening all over the world through the power of fasting. Every assignment has a birthplace. When God has placed a dream inside of you that only He can make possible, you need to fast and pray.

Now that I'm a pastor, our church begins each year with a 21-day fast. From those early years of ministry until this day, fasting has become a lifestyle. When I feel myself growing dry spiritually, when I don't sense that cutting-edge anointing or when I need a fresh encounter with God, fasting is the secret key that unlocks heaven's door and slams shut the gates of hell.

Let me clear up some misconceptions, though. Fasting isn't merely going without food for a period of time. That is dieting—maybe even starving—but fasting it is not. Nor is fasting something done only by fanatics. Fasting isn't just

for religious monks alone in a cave somewhere. It isn't limited to ministers or to special occasions.

Stated simply, biblical fasting is refraining from food for a spiritual purpose. Fasting has always been a normal part of a relationship with God. As expressed by the impassioned plea of David in Psalm 42, fasting brings us into a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord.

When you eliminate food from your diet for a number of days, your spirit becomes uncluttered by the things of this world and amazingly sensitive to the things of God. As David stated, "Deep calls unto deep" (Ps. 42:7). Once you've experienced even a glimpse of that kind of intimacy with God and the countless rewards and blessings that follow, your whole perspective will change. You'll soon realize that fasting is a secret source of power that shouldn't be relegated to a New Year's tradition or an annual church event.

In Matthew 6, Jesus provided the pattern by which each of us is to live as a child of God. That pattern addressed three specific duties of a Christian: giving, praying and fasting. Jesus said, "*When you give ...*" and "*When you pray ...*" and "*When you fast.*" He made it clear that fasting, like giving and praying, was a normal part of Christian life. As much attention should be given to fasting as is given to giving and praying.

What blessings are not being released because we fail to fast? What answers to prayer are not getting through? What bondages aren't being broken?

According to the words of Jesus, it is the duty of every disciple and every believer to fast. When addressing the Pharisees as to why His disciples did not fast, Jesus replied, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast

in those days" (Luke 5:34-35).

Then they will fast. Jesus didn't expect His disciples to do something He hadn't done as well. Jesus fasted, and according to the words of Peter, Jesus is our example in all things (see 1 Pet. 2:21).

If Jesus could've accomplished all He came to do on earth without fasting, why would He fast? The Son of God fasted because He knew there were supernatural things that could only be released that way. How much more should fasting be a common practice in our lives?

Whether you desire to be closer to God or are in need of great breakthroughs in your life, remember that nothing shall be impossible to you. Fasting is truly a secret source of power!

Jentezen Franklin is the senior pastor of Free Chapel in Gainesville, Ga., and Irvine, Calif. He is the author of New York Times best-sellers *Right People, Right Place, Right Plan* and *Fasting*. His ministry extends internationally through the televised broadcast, *Kingdom Connection*, which is seen on television networks such as TBN and The Church Channel.