

# Fasting Applies Extra Pressure to the Spiritual Realm

Have we forgotten the hidden secret of fasting? I believe that we have. [Watch the Fasting Forum here.](#)

In Matthew 17:21, Jesus said that a certain evil spirit does not go out of a person except by prayer and fasting. Some manuscripts disagree on whether this verse should be there or not, but the principle is found throughout scripture: Fasting applies pressure to the spiritual realm. Arthur Wallace notes, "Often, pressure has to be maintained before there is a breakthrough in heavenly warfare." It appears that some demonic activity is not released until pressure is applied through prayer and fasting.

The weapons we use to fight Satan are not physical; they are spiritual. The weapons should match the warfare! Satan cannot be eliminated with an AR-15, but we can fast and pray. Those two high-caliber spiritual bullets do substantial damage. Open the Word of God, pray, meditate, and worship for the fatal blow: "'Not by might nor by power but by My spirit,' sayeth the Lord" (Zech. 4:6 KJV).

Two wills cannot successfully live in the same body—our self-will and God's will. We can't defeat what we feed. First John 2:16 (NIV) states, "For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world." Society says, "Be yourself! Embrace your longings! Feed your desires!" However, we know that gluttony and indulging the flesh never lead to spiritual victory, or any victory for that matter. Some strongholds hang on piece by piece. We must "resist the devil" and he will eventually flee (cf. James 4:7). Fasting

disciplines the body, prayer and worship binds the enemy, and the Word provides wisdom. Fasting ignites a hunger for God as well as direction.

Don't misunderstand, I'm not promoting a works-based religion; I'm demonstrating the importance of spiritual disciplines that produce godly fruit. What is dead in your life that you know God is wanting to resurrect? What dream, goal or godly ambition is waiting to be realized? Is there a stronghold that has been gripping your life? Do you desire a deeper walk with God and increased spiritual hunger? Do you need help in the area of self-discipline and temperance? Do you need a breakthrough, direction or peace? Is all hell breaking loose in your life? Are there great obstacles ahead? Then it's time to prepare for battle through prayer and fasting.

Ask God for direction and set a target date. Remove the hindrances within your home such as junk food and junk media—out of sight, out of mind. Fuel the completion of your fast by praying, reading, worshiping and listening to sermons on fasting. Have a prayer list available. It's a battle—a hunger strike against hell—it's challenging and difficult, but the pain of discipline far outweighs the pain of regret.

After my first seven-day water fast that I stumbled through, Fox News contacted me to fly to New York to debate a pastor with opposing views on morality. (It can be viewed here: [WCFAV.org](http://WCFAV.org).) While there, my wife and I also met two strong Christian men who I look up to, Jim Cymbala at the Brooklyn Tabernacle and Kirk Cameron at the Fox Studio, all in two days. Additionally, God grew the church, expanded our reach, and healed old wounds. A perfect fast didn't do this, but God, through His mercy, honored my feeble attempt, and He will do the same for you.

The vast majority of the heroes of the faith fasted, and it's still very common in many places. But in America, our fullness is our downfall. Leonard Ravenhill said, "When there's

something in the Bible that churches don't like [such as fasting], they call it legalism."

Whether it's on the radio, television, Internet or at church, we often hear that God has a wonderful plan for our life and that Christianity is easy and carefree. But as Ray Comfort notes, "The preacher promises a bed of roses for those who come to Christ, but those who are in Christ are evidently sitting on a painful bed of thorns." We have turned following Christ into an easy path rather than a narrow road. We've made Jesus a butler rather than a King. We want the cross light, the road easy, and the burdens lifted.

Spiritual disciplines are not intended to only break down strongholds, but to also build us back up. Don't misunderstand, God blesses His people. We should pray for, enjoy and encourage His blessings. But a wonderful, comfortable life is not always a blessing. As the Bible teaches, the presence and the power of God in our lives is always a blessing: "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace" (Psalm 29:11).

Christians are called to be lean, fighting machines. I'm not talking about body weight, but spiritual weight—weight to pull down strongholds. Leonard Ravenhill said, "How can you pull down strongholds of Satan if you don't even have the strength to turn off your TV?" We could add, "How can we pull down strongholds of Satan if we don't even have the strength to say no to food?"

I'm not teaching perfectionism. No one has complete mastery over the flesh, but our goal should be victory rather than constant defeat. Deeply embedded addictions can be reversed by starving the flesh. We are not powerless. We give control to either the flesh or the Spirit. [James 4:5](#) reminds us that our spirit has envious yearnings. Do we yield to these yearnings, or do we give in to the pull of the flesh? We will crave more of what we feed. Fasting silences the voice of the flesh.

We all fall short. The only difference between those who succeed and those who fail is that those who succeed get back up again. Fasting doesn't twist God's arm; it realigns our heart with His and gets us back on track; it gives us wisdom and discernment for crucial issues. Discernment is one of our greatest challenges today. I came across this news clip some time ago that illustrates my point:

*A 17-year old Dutch girl who died on Monday during a bungee jump misheard instructions and jumped on the "no jump" instruction. One of the Spanish instructors on the bridge when the teenager plunged 40 meters to her death has told police the girl jumped before her harness was clipped on to the bungee cord. An instructor told Spanish television channel RTVE that she had said, "No jump. No jump," but that the girl may have misheard and thought she said, "Now jump."*

So tragic. Too many today are listening to the wrong voice. Are you? The ultimate goal of sin is to destroy our testimony and our lives by following the wrong voice. Obviously, we are to spend time in God's Word seeking wisdom and discernment, but fasting aids the process. We don't want to go when God says, "No!"