

Fasting's Supernatural Effects on Your Brain and Heart

We generally don't have any problem recognizing that many of the problems we face in our bodies are things we can control through healthy choices. For example, if someone has a problem with weight management or low energy, these are problems that can usually be addressed through healthy choices such as exercise, good nutrition, nutritional supplements, juicing, fasting and detoxing.

When it comes to the brain, however, we often don't appreciate that our thought lives can also be controlled by proper choices. For example, we often assume that our brain controls us and that we are a passive victim of toxic thinking, including painful memories, useless rumination and ongoing stress about the future. Because we don't understand the power God has given us to control our minds, we often respond to mental stimuli by taking up each thought and entertaining it before another thought takes its place.

The same thing happens with our emotions. Often when we feel an emotion such as anger, we think the emotion controls us. In fact, we often talk about emotions as if they are us. (For example, we say things such as "I am angry.") Accordingly, we think of ourselves as being victims of emotions. The first step to letting go of toxic emotions or thoughts is recognizing that they are separate from us. Put simply, you are not your thoughts or emotions. Rather, toxic thoughts and feelings are things outside yourself, such as airplanes in the sky, that you can either allow to land in the runway of your heart and mind or reject and watch them fly away.

This type of strenuous control over toxic thoughts and

feelings is easier during times of fasting. During a fast, the brain slows down, thus making it easier for us to exercise censorship over our thinking. But the functions of the brain are also more enhanced, more controlled and more at our disposal during times of fasting. This has emerged in a number of different studies. A group of students at the University of Chicago was asked to live for an entire week without food while keeping a regular routine: "Their mental alertness was so much greater during that period that their progress in their school work was cited as remarkable. Several repetitions of this experiment, always with the same results, proved that this was not exceptional." During a fast, you can channel this new mental alertness into observing toxic thoughts when they arise and letting them go without taking them up.

Exercising censorship over your thinking doesn't mean just gritting your teeth and saying, "I will not think this negative thought." A person can repeat, "I am not feeling stress" all day long, but that won't make it true. What we need to do is actively replace toxic thinking with the truth. This involves addressing the lies that are behind toxic thinking.

The main lie is that we can survive separate from God. Consider that when we worry about the future, when we ruminate over the past, when we try to grasp a lot of material things for ourselves or when we chase after the pleasures of life, we are doing exactly as Adam and Eve did when they hid from God: We are acting as if we are separate from the source of life. By contrast, when we focus on what is noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable (Phil. 4:8), we are connecting with our Creator and beginning to take the journey toward health and wholeness. {eoa}

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