

How These Fasts Can Help You Receive Your Spiritual Breakthrough

Complete health involves three parts: spiritual health, mental health and physical health. Too many Christians focus solely on spiritual health to the detriment of physical and mental health. However, the Bible speaks of physical health and its importance as well.

John wrote: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well" (3 John 2). Verse 3 mentions that Christians "walk in the truth." I urge you to not only walk in spiritual truth but also to walk in truth in regard to your food. Knowing the truth about what you are eating, about genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and about chemicals in food is necessary.

The story of Daniel goes into more detail about the foods Daniel ate, and it is a popular diet for people to follow today. In the Old Testament, Daniel, a Jewish boy taken captive into Babylon, now modern-day Iraq, was chosen among a select group of young men to be trained to serve the king. These young men were selected based on their appearance, physique and ability to learn in wisdom, knowledge and understanding. They would learn the language and literature of the Chaldeans (Dan. 1:4).

The first mention of Daniel fasting in the book of Daniel reads as follows:

The king appointed them a daily provision of the king's food and of the wine which he drank. They were to be educated for three years, that at the end of it they might serve before the king. ... But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's food, nor

with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested of the master of the officials that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and compassion with the master of the officials. The master of the officials said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king who has appointed your food and your drink. For why should he see your faces worse-looking than the youths who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king."

Then Daniel said to the steward, whom the master of the officials had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before you, and the countenance of the youths who eat of the portion of the king's food. And as you see, deal with your servants." So he consented to them in this matter and tested them for ten days.

At the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter than all the youths who ate the portion of the king's food. Thus the guard continued to take away the portion of their food and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables" (Dan. 1:5, 8-16).

Today this is often referred to as the Daniel Fast, but seldom do people take this part in context, as Daniel's fast was a 10-day trial period to prove a fasted lifestyle that lasted three years or longer, depending on how long he stuck to vegetables and water (Dan. 1:5–8). Put into today's practical application, a 10-day trial could be seen as a jump-start into eating healthier, not as a short-term diet, but as a reboot to a better plan long-term, proving to yourself, your doctor or someone else that the changes made in a 10-day trial period helped.

So on one side, Christians interpret the Daniel Fast as a

short-term eating plan. On the other side, this plant-based diet is often used to promote a vegan lifestyle. From Scripture, I believe it is safe to assume Daniel went for a long period of time, perhaps months or years, surviving and thriving on a plant-based diet but without adhering to a strict vegan diet. In Scripture, Daniel goes on another fast, eating “no tasty food, no meat or wine” to mourn over a disturbing vision he was shown of future events to come (Dan. 10:3). Daniel’s abstention from meat for a period of time implies he was not always eating a vegan diet and was conscientious about what he put in his body. We can benefit from mirroring his lifestyle.

As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in every branch of learning and wisdom. “And Daniel had understanding in all *kinds of* visions and dreams” (Dan. 1:17).

Beyond promoting good health, the connection between fasting and seeking God and being more alert to the supernatural realms is evident in Daniel’s life. What about miracles? There is a story in the New Testament in which Jesus’ disciples were unable to heal an epileptic suffering from a demon and, instead, Jesus rebuked the demon and healed the boy. When the disciples asked Jesus why they were not able to heal him, He said it was because of unbelief, and prayer and fasting were key (Matt. 17:20–21).

Have you ever needed a breakthrough? Have you ever sought God in desperation for a miracle? There is another example from Scripture where Esther and her people fasted, neither eating nor drinking for three straight days, to seek God for breakthrough, favor and protection on behalf of the Jewish nation, which was in exile and in danger of being annihilated (Esth. 4:15-17). {eoa}

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Jennifer Mac is the author of *The Right Blend: Blender-only Raw Food Recipes* and shares her delicious recipes, health-promoting lifestyle and natural beauty tips. Jennifer Mac's passion is to share with others how to be deliciously healthy® using real foods and real ingredients from her home to yours. Growing up on a farm in Idaho, Jennifer Mac got her start pioneering the raw food movement in China after becoming a chef from Living Light Culinary Institute in Northern California. Visit her website, [.](#)