

Jentezen Franklin: Fasting, Faith and Patience

I don't really remember what grade I was in, but we did an experiment in elementary school that left a lasting impression on me, even into adulthood.

The teacher told us to save our milk cartons from lunch for this special event. We were to bring them back to class with us, where we rinsed them out and cut the funny tops off. She then opened a big container of black potting soil, and we scooped some into our cartons. She handed each one of us a big butter bean seed and told us how to plant the seed in the soil by making a small hole with our finger and dropping the seed in. After I pressed the dirt back down into the hole, I watered the seed, taped my name to the box and set it in the sunny window beside everyone else's.

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Every day when that class started, I ran to the window with the others to see what was happening with the seeds. We couldn't see anything until the third day, when a tiny bit of green sprout began to show in some of the boxes. By Day 6, most of the boxes had green sprouts, and some even had leaves showing—but not mine. For six days I eagerly ran to the window to look at my box; there was nothing but dirt. I watered it like everyone else did. It sat in the same sun that everyone else's did, but no sprout was showing. I wondered if my seed was even still there.



On the seventh day, I couldn't take it any longer.

I arrived to class before anyone else and used my finger to

dig around in the soil to see if my seed was still in the box. I pulled it out, and sure enough, it had begun to sprout. My teacher walked in about that time. When she saw what I had in my dirty little fingers, she kindly explained that I really should have left it alone and just waited. Since I had pulled my seed out of the soil too soon, I had destroyed my harvest. She was right. All the other seeds grew strong and tall, and before long, they were filled with multiple pods of butter beans—far more than the one seed that was sown.

Don't Dig It Up!

That little childhood experiment has stayed with me for so long because I have learned that we do the same thing in our spiritual lives.

We get a word from the Lord—it's just a seed—but it gets planted deep in our hearts: "God is going to bless me. I'm highly favored of the Lord. God sees my need and will provide for me. He will protect my family and save my lost loved ones." The mountains you face seem so big, but you take that tiny seed of faith, plant it into that mountain and wait.

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Before long, impatience sets in. The mountains seem even bigger than they were before, and your seed isn't showing any sprouts—no matter what you do. Other people are being blessed, but nothing is happening in your situation. You begin to think, "Did I really get that word from God?"—like my wondering if my seed was still in the little box. I knew I had planted it and I didn't think anyone had taken it—but surely it must be gone because I couldn't see anything. You end up getting discouraged. You dig your fingers in and pull your seed out too early, destroying the promise.

Likewise, I've heard people say they just couldn't make it

past a day or so on a fast because they got discouraged. They listened to their flesh instead of continuing in faith and felt worse than when they started. What happened to walking by faith and not by sight?

Faith and patience must go together.{eoa}

To learn more about the spiritual impact fasting has on your life, click here!

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