

# Jentezen Franklin Reveals How Fasting Can Lead to Spiritual Power

What is fasting? Since there are so many misconceptions about it among believers, I want to clarify what fasting—biblical fasting—is *not*. Fasting is not 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. I really want to drive that point home. Fasting is not to be done only by religious monks set apart in a cave somewhere. The practice of fasting is not 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 one into a deeper, more intimate and powerful relationship with the Lord.

“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, ‘Where is your God?’” (Ps. 42:1-3, NKJV).

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). David was fasting. His hunger and thirst for God were greater than his natural desire for food. As a result, he reached a place where he could cry out from the depths of his spirit to the depths of God, even in the midst of the trial he was going through. Once you’ve experienced even a glimpse of that kind of intimacy with

God—our Father, the holy Creator of the universe—and the countless rewards and blessings that follow, your whole perspective will change. You will soon realize that fasting is a secret source of power that is overlooked by many.

### **Fasting for Breakthrough**

“A threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccl. 4:12).

During the years that Jesus walked this earth, He devoted time to teaching His disciples the principles of the kingdom of God, principles that conflict with those of this world. In the Beatitudes, specifically 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 to praying.

Solomon, when writing the books of wisdom for Israel, made the point that a cord, or rope, braided with three strands is not easily broken (Eccl. 4:12). Likewise, when giving, praying and fasting are practiced together in the life of a believer, they combine to create a type of threefold cord that is not easily broken. In fact, as I’ll show you in a moment, Jesus took it even further by saying, “Nothing will be impossible” (Matt. 17:20) for those who practice them.

Could we be missing our greatest breakthroughs because we fail to fast? Remember the thirtyfold, sixtyfold and hundredfold return Jesus spoke of (Mark 4:8, 20)? Look at it this way: I believe that when you pray, you can release that thirtyfold return, but when both prayer and giving are part of your life, they release the sixtyfold blessing. But when all three—giving, praying and fasting—are part of your life, the hundredfold return can be released!

If this is true, you have to wonder: What blessings are *not* being released? What answers to prayer are *not* getting through? What bondages are *not* being broken because we fail to fast?

Matthew tells the story of a father who had a demon-possessed son. For years he watched helplessly as his son suffered with severe convulsions. As he grew older, the attacks became so severe that the boy would often throw himself into an open fire or a trench of water. A suicidal spirit tormented him constantly, and his situation had become life-threatening.

Having exhausted every attempt to cure the boy—even taking him to the disciples to no avail—the father was at his wit’s end. His son’s plight seemed impossible. Then he heard that Jesus was near. Going to the Master, he cried, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him” (Matt. 17:15-16).

The Bible says that when the boy was brought to Jesus, He “rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour” (v. 18). But what made the difference? After all, Matthew 10:1 records that Jesus had already given the disciples power to cast out evil spirits and to heal every disease. So why couldn’t the disciples cast out the demon and cure the boy?

That’s what they wanted to know, too, so later that night, when they were alone with Jesus, they asked Him. Jesus replied, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting” (vv. 20-21).

Now, I’ve read that passage many times, and I’ve even taught

from it on occasion. But each time, I've focused on the statement "and nothing will be impossible for you." I think a lot of people stop right there, but Jesus didn't because He knew there was more—much more.

See, that funny little word "however" is the connection—it's the key that unlocks the power in the statement "nothing will be impossible for you." Jesus told the disciples they needed faith, even faith as small as a tiny seed. But that wasn't all. Long before this incident, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, where He spent forty days and forty nights, taking no food. For Jesus, casting out that stubborn demon wasn't impossible because He was prepared.

If Jesus had been able to accomplish all He came to do *without* fasting, why would He fast? The Son of God fasted because He knew there were supernatural things that could be released only that way. How much more should fasting be a common practice in our lives? {eo}

*This article is excerpted from Jentezen Franklin's book Fasting (Charisma House, 2007).*