

Larry Tomczak: Discover These 15 Fasting Benefits for Miraculous Breakthrough

Ministering to 2,000 young people in the 1970s, I shared Bible teacher Derek Prince's "Changing History Through Prayer and Fasting" challenge, prompting believers to forgo food and intercede to change America. Praying first of all for governing authorities (1 Tim. 2:1-4), we watched as before our very eyes for the first time in U.S. history a sitting president and vice president were removed from office as unrighteousness was exposed!

Fasting has a preeminent place throughout Scripture, yet scores ignore or avoid it. It does bring discomfort, yet we desperately need it. The benefits far exceed the drawbacks, so stay engaged to learn 15 specific, scriptural benefits to motivate you.

I Hate Fasting!

Who said these words?

Would it surprise you to discover the individual is one of the foremost advocates for fasting in America today? I'm talking here of a unique man of God I've known as a friend for 40 years, Lou Engle.

Years ago, I sat in a California living room with senior leaders and some dear friends. We all stocked our plates with delicious food and sat down to fellowship.

While I hunkered down on the couch, Lou sat next to me. Previously someone had whispered to me that he was in the middle of an extended fast, so I twisted my posture to avoid having the sumptuous delights in his line of vision.

Suddenly my revivalist buddy startled me by saying, "Larry, don't worry, I'm OK. Enjoy your dinner! I hate fasting but, ya' know, I love what comes from the investment."

Face it; fasting is not natural. It runs counter to our desire for comfort, pleasure and self-satisfaction. It entails discipline like the apostle Paul described in I Corinthians 9:27, "I buffet my body." He wasn't speaking here of a food buffet!

Jesus Promised an "Open Reward"

When we humble ourselves through fasting to abstain from nourishment in order to seek God and His promised blessings, we position ourselves to be recipients of the "open reward" Jesus promised in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:16-18, KJV). As long as we abide by His instructions and cautions to steer clear of legalism and outward show, plus stay in expectant faith, we can be confident of blessings and breakthrough like those promised in Isaiah 58 ("the Lord shall guide you" [v11, MEV]... "your healing will quickly appear" [v8, NIV]).

In Matthew 9:14-15, Jesus told some inquirers that His disciples weren't fasting while He, as the Bridegroom, was present with them but after He left, "then they will fast." Richard Foster in his classic work, "Celebration of Discipline," said, "This is perhaps the most important statement in the New Testament on whether Christians should fast today."

Multitudes don't fast today because of bad religious experiences (raised Catholic, I was forced to fast weekly and hated it); or believe it's a discarded Old Testament practice associated with sin, sorrow and mourning. Manufactures of Mrs. Paul's fish sticks loved the mandatory Friday fasting but scores of us detested it and celebrated its discontinuance!

Today we have the privilege of willingly engaging in a "bridal

fast” not out of legalism but a longing for greater intimacy with Jesus. We eagerly await the return of our Bridegroom, the consummation of the Age and the “new heaven and new earth” (Rev. 21:1).

Inspiration From Leaders

Before he died at 81, I had the honor to pray with Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright. His countenance was like that of a 30-year-old, yet without any Botox! He once received the Templeton Award for Religious Progress and donated the entire \$1.1 million to promote the benefits of prayer and fasting.

Bill told us, “Fasting prepares us for the deepest and richest spiritual communion possible. It clears and liberates our minds to understand what God is saying to our spirits. It conditions our bodies to carry out His perfect will. When we persevere through the initial mental and physical discomfort, we will experience a calming of the soul and cooling of the appetites. As a result, we will sense the Presence of the Lord more than ever before.”

Richard Foster said, “In a culture where the landscape is dotted with shrines to the Golden Arches and an assortment of pizza temples, fasting seems out of place, out of step with the times. In fact, fasting has been in general disrepute both in and outside the church for many years. For example, in my research, I could not find a single book published on the subject of Christian fasting from 1861 to 1954—a period of nearly 100 years!”

Returning to Your First Love

Years ago, a pastor in Pennsylvania was convicted of wasting time on frivolous late night TV when he should’ve been seeking the Lord. “Lord, if you’re behind this, I’ll put an ad in the newspaper to sell the TV but You bring a buyer a half hour after it hits the streets.”

Twenty-five minutes after the newspaper came out, David said

to his wife, "Gwen, maybe this was not..."Then the phone rang and a man said he'd come by in 15 minutes to make the purchase!

Because of this change, David Wilkerson sought the Lord earnestly, became aware of teen gangs in New York, then shortly thereafter relocated to the Big Apple. In time the most successful drug rehab program in the world, Teen Challenge, was birthed and notorious gang leader, Nicky Cruz, was converted. David's "Cross and the Switchblade" and Nicky's "Run Baby Run" reached millions worldwide with the gospel.

My wife's parents were converted through Nicky's testimony, which led to seven other family members living at home all being born again!

Are you a candidate for greater intimacy with God? Do you have a lost loved one? Are you in need of a miracle, healing or divine intervention? Derek Prince said, "Deliverance is for the desperate" –does that describe you?

I encourage you to read some practical information on the practice of fasting and, if needed, consult with your doctor if you have medical issues. As this new year is underway and multitudes are accepting the challenge of fasting, review these potential benefits God can bring your way.

Rediscovering 15 Rewards

- Renews spiritual vision
- Brings a holy brokenness
- Purifies our hearts
- humbles our souls
- Releases spiritual guidance
- Subdues our flesh

- Heightens spiritual awareness
- Deepens communion with God
- Clears our minds to hear God
- Bring supernatural refreshing
- Adds power to prayer
- Brings deliverance
- Enables greater fruitfulness
- Facilitates breakthroughs
- Cleanses the physical body

Here's the Deal: Desperate times require desperate measures so in this new year, will you unite with Christians reengaging in the rhythm of regular fasting? Join Jesus, the early church, Paul, Jonah, Esther, Moses, David, Elijah, Nehemiah, Daniel and countless others who have recognized fasting's potential.

Remember Jesus began His first recorded fast “filled with the Spirit” and ended “in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:1,14). Are you a candidate to receive a similar blessing? {eo}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.