

One Tough Step to Blasting Open Doors for Your Life

The Guillens were a bright, young, cheerful couple—cheerful despite the fact that their daughter was born with a large lump on the side of her neck. The child was beautiful, but the massive growth drew attention away from her pretty features.

Along with our church, they prayed diligently for her healing. Yet their prayers, including ours, did not seem to avail.

Then one day I received a call from this couple. “Pastor, our little girl is healed! The growth is gone!” The next day they shared their wonderful testimony with our church. With my own eyes I could verify this healing. There she was. Perfectly healed! No trace of the growth was there.

The thing that impressed me the most was not the healing, but *how* the healing took place.

This is the Guillens’ testimony:

“The Lord laid upon our hearts to fast for our daughter. We didn’t know much about fasting but we did it anyway. Our daughter began to complain that her neck was hurting. Soon she was screaming in pain. The soft growth turned hard. We were concerned, but we knew God had called us to fast for our daughter, and we knew she would be healed. One morning we noticed that the growth was a little smaller. The next day it shrank more. Finally, the growth disappeared altogether.”

The thing that struck me the most about this testimony was the Guillens’ fast. I’m convinced that their fasting produced the healing.

There are some problems too large for our faith alone to handle. This is when we need to fast. Fasting enlarges the

capacity for faith. Faith does not come by fasting, but fasting can open your heart wider to receive more faith. Faith comes only by hearing God's Word, but fasting can make you more sensitive to listening to God's Word. The result is more faith.

Fasting is a dirty word among us American Christians. We don't like to hear sermons on deep down inside we know it is important.

Few understand the link between power and fasting.

After failing to drive out an evil spirit from a boy, the disciples asked the Lord why they were unable to cast it out. Jesus answered, "This kind of spirit can come out only by prayer and fasting " Prayer alone could not heal this boy; it would take fasting too.

Someone may ask, "Tom, what is the point of fasting, since fasting doesn't change God?"

It's true that fasting does not change God, but neither does prayer. God is always the same before and after we pray. Yet no one would suggest that we stop praying. Prayer, after all, prompts God to do things for us that He may not have done without our praying. The same is true of fasting. Prayer with fasting will accomplish much more than simply praying.

Three Kinds of Fast

Before we consider why fasting works, we should first understand the different kinds of fast.

The first kind is a "complete fast." A complete fast is described in Esther 4:16: "...Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day..." A complete fast is abstaining from both food and water. Notice carefully that Esther proclaimed a complete fast for three days and nights. You should never go on a complete fast for more than three days. Three days is the

limit, because you cannot go without water for more than four or five days.

The second kind is a “regular fast.” This is when you abstain only from food. You may drink as much and as often as you like. Some find it helpful to drink fruit juices. You can maintain a fairly long fast this way.

The third kind of fast is a “partial fast”—sometimes called a “Daniel fast.” This is found in Daniel 10:2-3: “At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.” Daniel said that he ate no choice food. This means he ate, but not tasty foods like enchiladas, tacos, chile rellenos, and all those good foods we like to eat. This is why Daniel could fast for three weeks—a long time. We should not attempt a lengthy fast without some food.

The only fasts that were longer were supernatural fasts. Moses on Mount Sinai and Jesus in the desert are the famous fasts we think of. But these were supernatural fasts, and we should not attempt these on our own.

Why Fasting Works

Why does fasting work? The answer is found in understanding how God answers prayer.

Ephesians 3:20 clues us in: “Now to him [God] who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ACCORDING TO his power that is at work within us.”

This scripture does NOT promise that God answers our prayers immeasurably more than what we ask. It only says that God is ABLE to do more than what we ask or imagine. The key phrase to understanding this scripture is the phrase “according to.”

The words “according to” suggest that prayer is answered in

proportion to something. That “something” is “God’s power that is at work within us.” In other words, God will answer your prayers according to the amount of power that is currently at work within your spirit. God uses the power working within you to answer your own prayers!

If there is little power working in your spirit, then God does little for you. If there is a lot of power working in you, then God does a lot for you. It’s that simple!

The key to answered prayer is having power working within your spirit!

What does this have to do with fasting?

Very simply this. Your spirit and your flesh are in opposition to each other. One will win and gain control, and the other will lose and forfeit control. Either your flesh wins, or your spirit wins. If your spirit wins, then you become stronger in the spirit. This will enable more spiritual power to work within you. The result is obvious: Your prayers are answered.

And how does your spirit get strength? The same way your flesh gets strength. By catering to it.

Your reborn spirit gets stronger when you furnish what the spirit desires. Your spirit desires the Word of God, prayer, holiness, Christian fellowship, etc. The more you give your spirit these things, the stronger the spirit will become. The same is true with your flesh.

The primary desires of the flesh are food, water, sleep—yes, even sex. Satisfy these cravings, and the body will want more.

The flesh gains strength when it gets what it wants. We call this result “habit.” A habit is formed by repeating a behavior.

Let me illustrate. I have developed a certain habit of taking a nap at about two in the afternoon. At around that time, I

get sleepy. The ironic thing about this is that if I don't get my hour's nap, I still feel refreshed at around 3:00—as if I had taken my nap.

I have realized that my body has developed a habit of getting sleepy at this time, because I have catered to it by giving it sleep. At times I have broken this habit and not taken a nap because I had too much work to do. After a few days of going without a nap, my body no longer gets tired at 2:00.

We can develop habits such as eating at a certain hour, sleeping at a specific time, smoking at a designated period, and so forth.

The reverse is also true. The flesh loses strength when it does not get what it wants. This is where fasting can aid you in defeating the power of the flesh.

Fasting deprives the flesh of its desires, thereby crippling its strength.

Fasting causes the flesh to lose ground. Add prayer to fasting, and you can readily see the result: The flesh loses ground while at the same time your spirit gains ground.

Imagine your flesh and spirit are in a race against each other. Every time you do something for them, they move forward. So here you are. You pray, read the Word, go to church—and as a result your spirit moves forward. Yet at the same time you feed your body food as usual. So your flesh races forward, keeping up with your spirit. This goes on continually in most people's lives. And we wonder why we are not making spiritual progress—growing in faith, love, grace and power.

What's the solution? FAST. Fasting makes your flesh go backward, while praying will rocket your spirit forward, leaving your flesh way behind.

Your Stomach Will Growl

Finally, let me mention one important thing about fasting. YOU WILL GET HUNGRY!

People sometimes are surprised to find how hungry they get when they fast. Even Jesus got hungry when He fasted.

This is when Satan will come to tempt you to get off your fast. He'll say, "Now, why are you fasting? Isn't it to get your mind on God?! Well, what are you thinking of right now. F-O-O-D!!! This fast is not doing you any good, because your mind is on eating. I tell you what. Give your body a Big Mac, and I'll let you read the Bible and pray twice as long."

Oh, those thoughts will be so enticing. But don't fall for them. Your ravishing appetite is only proof of how strong your flesh has become. The devil will fight you for the first three days. This is how long it takes for the body to lose most of its hunger. When this happens, WATCH OUT! There is no greater spiritual high than breaking the hunger barrier. And you will break it, if you will fast longer than three days.

Your body becomes liberated after three days of fasting. Your spirit is free to worship God without the hindrance of the flesh. Your spirit is transformed like "Arnold Schwarzenegger," ready to "terminate" the works of hell and reach into heaven to effortlessly pull down every blessing belonging to you!

Tom Brown is best known for his deliverance ministry. He was featured on MSNBC, which did an hour-long documentary on his ministry, highlighting his success in dealing with the spiritually oppressed. He also has appeared on the History Channel and ABC 20/20. He founded Word of Life Church with only seven members. Now it numbers hundreds of families.