

Why You Might Suffer From a Distorted View of Fasting

God told me not to diet, then He told me to fast. This would seem a contradiction; both are a restriction of food. The difference lies in the purpose or motive that inspires them. A diet is designed to help you lose or gain weight. A change of diet may also be initiated to improve or correct health problems. Dieting is a natural physical application that alters our physical well-being, weight or health. It changes the way we look or feel.

Fasting is not for weight gain or loss. Nor is it limited to natural healing. It is not designed to change the way we look and feel but to change the way we perceive and live. A diet may change the way you look, but a fast will change the way you live. A diet may change your appearance, but a fast will change the way you see; it will alter your inner perspective. The world has perverted and reduced the fast, diminishing it to a diet. As such, it is not a spiritual renewal but a physical one. The deepest transformations are wrought from the inside out.

Before my confrontation with truth, I'd only fasted to lose weight. Granted, I might have done a combination of fast and diet, using reasoning such as this: I need to lose weight, and I need direction, so I'll fast and accomplish both. But on this type of fast, food and weight are still the focus. I have searched the Scriptures and found no reference in God's Word to a fast prescribed for weight loss. Your focus or motive on a fast will be your reward. If God isn't the center, it will be reduced to merely a time of denial.

The fast God led me to in the weeks prior to my wedding was not really about food at all—it was about faith. I previously placed my faith in my weight. During my fast, I learned to

transfer my dependency to God. I wanted to know Him; I wanted His truth in my innermost being. I wanted transformation—not weight reduction. Some of you do not need to lose weight, but you do need to break the tethers of its hold upon you. You do not need to lose weight; you need to be loosed from weight.

For too long you've measured your self by your bathroom scale, allowing it to dictate your moods and actions. You haven't been Spirit led—you've been weight led. I was weighed down by weight. My fast was not the turning point for my weight loss; it was the turning point of my faith. I had trusted in my self, only to be disappointed. I needed a spiritual and emotional overhaul. When I saw my idolatry, "I wept and chastened my soul with fasting" (Ps. 69:10, NKJV).

David chastened his soul. It is your soul that rose up and gave weight prominence. The soul confused slim with success. My soul longed for my father's approval and for the approval of men. My soul distorted my vision and perceptions until my physical size, shape and weight dominated my thought life. I allowed my soul to lead me away from truth and moderation. My soul had to be chastened, and I had to be the one to do it. I had to rise up in the spirit and subject my soul to a chastening fast.

To chasten is to "discipline, purify, refine, clarify and improve." Discipline is training, and I had to be reprogrammed. Chastening was necessary to educate and cultivate a new me. This chastening by fasting began a purification and refinement of my soul and motives. This clarification brought insight so I could once again see clearly. Just as parents discipline their children to help them grow and learn right from wrong, my soul had to be chastened so it could improve and become wiser.

This refinement of my soul worked its way out and overtook my natural body and appetites. It was refined and purified by denial. Once the cravings of my soul were mastered, the

cravings of my flesh followed. I was no longer enflamed with passion for food. My body was denied salt and sugar, and the use of these came back into balance.

When I could no longer comfort my self with food, I ran to God for comfort. I recovered all the lost thought-time and productivity that I had lent to my obsession with food and weight. All the hours of research and study were redirected. I had been relieved of the relentless burden of worry and fear over my weight. I felt the lightness of a captive set free from a hard and unforgiving taskmaster. My efforts were never good enough before, and I was never thin enough.

My emotions tipped back into balance. They were no longer tied to the fragile and fickle red arrow of my scale. Before, I hated my self when I was fat, and I loved my self when I was thin. My whole self-image could be shattered with the slightest changing of the indicator of the scale.

Fasting changed my perception by changing my focus. After the fast, I saw everything differently. My eyes were illuminated by God's Word and truth. My eyes shifted off me and onto my Father God.

God is challenging us to fast so that we might become women who are transformed. Whenever Israel truly fasted and turned to God for His assistance, He heard them. He responded with protection, provision, direction and healing.

There is not one of us who in our own strength could provide all this. No matter how much money or wisdom we have, it will always fail us if we trust in it. God will never fail those who trust in Him. {eoa}

This article is an excerpt from You Are Not What You Weigh by Lisa Bevere. Copyright 2007, Lisa Bevere.

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