

"Who does not know that the fast of the fourth and sixth days of the week (Wednesday and Friday) are observed by Christians throughout the world?" – Epiphanius, 310-403 AD

"Fasting is a God-led, Spirit-driven activity. It is not just your own idea. It is not a legalistic requirement. It is not a work we perform. It is not a weight-loss technique. It is not a hunger strike. No, it is a God and Spirit work, a response to the leading and driving of the Godhead. In fact, fasting begins with a hunger for more of God's direction in your life. Fasting is born of an appetite for more of God's presence, wanting God to lead, wanting the Spirit to drive. And what He often leads us and drives us into is a fast." – Mark Buchanan

Matthew 4:1-4
1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Deuteronomy 8:1-3
1 Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors. 2 Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

➤ **Fasting humbles us by exposing our frailty and neediness.**

Matthew 6:16
"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting..."

"I can run on my own strength for long stretches. I can forget my limits and become self-reliant, cocky, swaggering, thinking that apart from me Jesus can do nothing...I need a holy habit to prove to myself that the opposite is true—to move me from self-imposed worship to real worship, to move me from false humility to genuine humility, to move me from self-glorifying treatment of my body to a recognition of my frailty." – Mark Buchanan

➤ **Fasting tests us by revealing our hearts.**

False Imperative Narrative (FINS)	Kingdom Narrative
I am alone.	You are never alone. Jesus is with you always.
Things always have to go as I want them.	God's ways are infinitely higher than my ways.
Something terrible will happen if I make a mistake.	Mistakes happen all of the time, and things usually work out fine.
I must be in control all of the time.	Jesus is in control.
Life must always be fair and just.	Life is not always fair and just, but God gets the last word.
I need to anticipate everything that will happen to me today.	God is with me and will help me through whatever this day holds.
I need to be perfect all the time.	Jesus accepts me—even though I am not perfect.



"We may lose sight of God, but God never loses sight of us. God gives us space to experiment, grow, and mature; God never intrudes. But this doesn't mean God is not with us, is not watching us, is not intimately familiar with our comings and goings...Jesus' narrative is that God permits nothing to happen to us that he cannot redeem and use for good."

– James Bryan Smith

➤ **Fasting teaches us to feast on God.**

Deuteronomy 8:10-14

10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. 11 Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. 12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God..

"Gluttony is an appetite suppressant for the things of God." – Cornelius Plantinga

Isaiah 55:2

*Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.*

"Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the Invisible; fasting, the other, with which we let loose and cast away the visible." – Andrew Murray