

Foundations In Fasting
30 Hours
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Lesson 1: Fasting and the Christian Life

Topic 3: Why and When Should Christians Fast? – Class Notes

3.1 – Topic 2: Summary

- Self-Indulgence
- The Downfall of Pride
- Our Physical Appetite
- Not Only About Food

3.2 – Topic 3: Why and When Should Christians Fast?

- 9 Reasons Why Christians Should Fast.
- Jesus said, “When You fast”.
- Fasting and Divine Intervention.
- Biblical Situations Where Fasting Occurred.

3.3 – Why Should Christians Fast? - Elmer L. Towns

- Nine (9) reasons why Christians today need to practice the spiritual discipline of fasting.

3.4 – Why Should Christians Fast? - Elmer L. Towns

1. “More than ever before, believers are in bondage to demonic powers and need strength to stand against sin”.
2. “Believers throughout the world need solutions to many complex problems and threatening situations they are facing”.

3.5 – Why Should Christians Fast? - Elmer L. Towns

3. “The Church is in desperate need of revival, and every tribe and tongue and nation is in desperate need of evangelization”.
4. “The world in general and the Church in particular are crying out for people of character and integrity—people who have found in Christ the emotional healing and strength to overcome sinful and destructive habits”.

3.6 – “When You Fast . . .” (Mt. 6:16)

- “**When you fast**, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full”.

3.7 – “When You Fast . . .” (Mt. 6:17-18)

- “But **when you fast**, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Mt. 6:16-18).

3.8 – When We Need Divine Intervention

1. personal issues.
2. difficult temptations.
3. serious illness of a family member or friend.

3.9 – When We Need Divine Intervention

4. (Acts 14:21-23).
5. sending out missionaries.

3.10 – Fasting When Faced with Overwhelming Circumstances

- Protection, Repentance and Blessing: “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning” (Joel 2:12; 2:13-32; Ezra 8:21-23, 31).
- Direction and Guidance (Acts 13:1-3) – Barnabas and Saul set apart for ministry.
- Illness / Severe Illness / Grief: (2 Sam. 12:15-19) David’s son with Bathsheba died.

3.11 – Fasting When Faced with Overwhelming Circumstances

- Humility (Ps. 35:13; 1 Kgs. 21:25-27).
- Communication with God and the Holy Spirit (Ex. 34:28, Acts 13:1-3).
- Fighting evil / casting out demons: Jesus heals a boy with an evil spirit. Jesus responds to His disciple’s question privately; “why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer [and fasting]” (Mk. 9:28-29).

3.12 – Fasting Was Practiced in the Old Testament

- a. In times of war or threats of war—Israel (Jdg. 20:26; 1 Sam 7:6;).
- b. When a family member was sick and / or died (2 Sam. 12:16-23)—David’s son with Bathsheba died (cf. 1 Sam. 31:13; 2 Sam. 1:12; 1 Chr. 10:12).

3.13 – Fasting Was Practiced in the Old Testament

- c. David fasted for his enemies (Ps. 35:11-13).
- d. Seeking forgiveness: Moses (Deut. 9:15-18) – Daniel (Dan. 9:3-5) – King Ahab (1 Kgs. 21:17-29) – Nineveh (Jon. 3:4-10) – Ezra reading the Law (Neh. 9:1-3).

3.14 – Fasting Was Practiced When Faced with Imminent Danger

- a. When faced with imminent danger: Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 20:3). Ezra’s seeking the favour of God and returning from exile (Ezra 8:21).
- b. Nehemiah fasted over the state of Jerusalem (Neh. 1:4).
- c. The Jews fasted over the threat of annihilation (Est. 4:3).
- d. Esther and Mordecai fasted before she went before the king – (Est. 4:16).

3.15 – Fasting Was Practiced To Commemorate Calamities

- During and after the Exile special fasts were observed on the days the calamities had befallen Jerusalem (Jer. 52:12-13; 2 Kgs. 25:23-95; Jer. 41:1ff.; 2 Kgs. 25:1; 2 Kgs. 25:3-4).

3.16 – Fasting Was Practiced in the New Testament

- a. when confronted with temptation – Jesus (Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:9-13; Lk. 4:1-13).
- b. when selecting and appointing elders – Antioch (Acts 14:21-23).
- c. when starting a new mission – Antioch (Acts 13:1-3).

3.17 – Fasting Was Practiced in the New Testament (Acts 13:2-3)

- “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off”.

3.18 – Topic 4: Seven Factors That Inhibit Christians from Fasting

- Ignorance
- Selfishness
- Lack of Self-Control
- Misguided Priorities