

Day 13

Fasting to Repent

Every Jew was commanded to keep the Yom Kippur Fast which was the Day of Atonement Fast, “On the tenth day of the seventh month of each year, you must go without eating to show sorrow for your sins” (Lev. 16:29, *CEV*). What new modern versions call “go without eating,” other versions call it “affliction.” The *King James* says, “Ye shall afflict your souls.” The *New Living Translation* says, “You must deny yourselves.” The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* says, “You are to practice self-denial.”

Therefore, fasting is not something to be enjoyed, but rather a time of self-denial, abstinence, or affliction. Fasting is repentance. In fasting you give up pleasure, and perhaps even necessities so you will pray with earnest or with more intensity.

Why do we do this? We don’t love pain, and pain itself does not please the heart of God. We fast or deprive ourselves for spiritual reasons. You are saying “no” to the old sinful nature. Isn’t this another way of showing repentance?

Afflicting yourself shows you want to get rid of sinful things in your life. Why? So you can get closer to God. Really, fasting gets answers to our *pray-asking*.

So in this 40-day fast are you saying “no” to something that is pleasurable? Perhaps you are only eating vegetables, or you’ve turned down sweets and your favorite snack. But really, aren’t you saying “yes” to God and His will for your life?

Sometimes we’re blinded to sin in our lives; maybe we’re controlled by a wrong attitude. Maybe we’ve gotten lax in our Christian commitment, or we’ve become hardened to the needs of other people. It’s the way termites get into our house—unnoticed.

Around twenty years ago a friend of mine discovered snakes had crawled inside the walls of his house and into his attic. He killed some with traps, but each time he soon discovered another. So he had to deal severely with the problem. He and his family had to live in a motel for almost a week, and a large tent was placed over his house and the snakes were gassed (and every other insect). Sometimes it takes severe actions to deal with a severe problem. Perhaps hidden sins have secretly slipped into your life. The Psalmist prayed, “Don’t let me sin ignorantly, and don’t let sin control my life” (Psalm 19:13, *ELT*). – by Elmer Towns©

-My Time to Pray-

- Lord, make me serious about fasting.
- Lord, I repent of sin to get closer to You.

Day 14

Saying No to Good Things

So why do we give up good things? We fast to put God first in our life. We say “no” to good things, so we can say “yes” to the best things.

When you say “no” to good things in your life, i.e., some food, it reminds you who’s the boss in your life. Perhaps you’ve gone through life thinking, “I’ve got a right to three square meals a day, delicious desserts, and entertainment.” You might even rationalize, “All of the other Christians are enjoying themselves, why can’t I?”

The issue is not whether these things are good, nor is the issue whether you enjoy them or whether you want them. The issue is who’s running your life? That’s another way of asking who’s sitting on the throne of your heart?

Rather than letting snack foods and treats control your life, we say “no” to our selfish desires when we make Christ first. “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33, *NKJV*).

There are two strengths you gain by saying “no” to some good things. First, you are strengthening your self-control; you are disciplining your life for the glory of God. Second, you put yourself on praying ground so that God can answer the request of your heart.

One last thing: if you tell yourself you can’t give up good food, you’re letting your passions control your life. So ask, “Am I really saying I don’t want to give up good food?” So the question is not about your ability to fast, but the question is about your desire.

Let’s bring our desires to the foot of the cross and say, “Lord I surrender my desires to You. I will follow the Daniel Fast and pray for 10 days to make a difference in our nation.” – by Elmer Towns©

-My Time to Pray-

- Lord, I give up good things to seek Your best in my life.
- Lord, as I fast, show me any sinful desires or wrong attitudes that are keeping me from getting answers to prayer.
- Lord, I don’t want anything hindering my prayer; I want to see miracles in my nation.