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Hungry for More

**Fasting, Surrender, and the Pursuit of a
Deeper Life With God**

Introduction — The Hunger Beneath the Hunger

There are hungers that food cannot satisfy.

A full schedule cannot satisfy them. Success cannot silence them. Entertainment may distract from them, comfort may temporarily cover them, and achievement may provide a momentary sense of fulfillment, but somewhere beneath the noise of ordinary life remains a deeper longing. The soul was created for communion with God, and nothing else can permanently occupy His place.

Yet one of the dangers of a comfortable life is that physical appetites can become so loud that spiritual hunger becomes difficult to hear. Life becomes organized around what feels good, what is convenient, what brings immediate relief, and what satisfies the next desire. Without realizing it, a person can become remarkably attentive to the needs of the body while neglecting the condition of the soul.

This is one reason the ancient Christian practice of fasting remains so powerful. Biblical fasting is not an attempt to punish the body, impress God, or prove spiritual maturity. It is voluntarily abstaining from food for a spiritual purpose, turning attention away from an ordinary physical appetite so that the heart can focus more intentionally upon God. The physical hunger becomes a reminder of a greater hunger.

Jesus spoke about fasting in the Sermon on the Mount:

“Whenever you fast, don’t be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting isn’t obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

— *Matthew 6:16–18, CSB*

Notice the language: “Whenever you fast.”

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Jesus speaks about fasting alongside giving and prayer as an expected expression of devotion. The practice itself is never the destination. The destination is God.

That changes everything.

Fasting is not ultimately about how long someone can live without food. It is about discovering whether the soul desires God enough to temporarily say no to something good in order to seek Someone greater.

Chapter One

When the Soul Has Been Living on Snacks

Modern life is remarkably efficient at satisfying desire. Hunger appears, and food can arrive within minutes. Boredom appears, and a screen immediately offers entertainment. Loneliness appears, and social media provides instant interaction. Discomfort appears, and almost everything around us whispers the same message: *Make this feeling go away as quickly as possible.*

Over time, that pattern can train the heart to believe something dangerous: every desire deserves immediate satisfaction.

Fasting interrupts that pattern.

Food is not the enemy. Both source messages emphasize that biblical fasting concerns food precisely because food is good and necessary. Scripture celebrates meals, Jesus ate with people, and food is repeatedly presented as God's provision. Fasting is therefore not the rejection of something evil. It is the temporary surrender of something good for a greater spiritual purpose.

When hunger arrives during a fast, the body makes a perfectly legitimate request: *Eat.*

Fasting answers, *Not yet.*

That simple response begins teaching something profound. A desire can be real without becoming a command. Hunger can be

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felt without immediately being obeyed. The body can speak without becoming the master.

That lesson reaches far beyond food.

Anger says, *Say it.*

Fasting has been teaching the heart that every impulse does not have to be obeyed.

Lust says, *Look again.*

Bitterness says, *Hold onto this.*

Comfort says, *Choose whatever is easiest.*

Pride says, *Make sure people notice.*

Again and again, discipleship requires the ability to say, *No. That desire may be present, but it does not own this life.*

Paul expresses the principle powerfully:

“‘Everything is permissible for me,’ but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible for me,’ but I will not be mastered by anything.”

— *1 Corinthians 6:12, CSB*

Fasting becomes a physical practice of a spiritual reality: Jesus is Lord, and appetite is not.

Going hungry by itself accomplishes nothing spiritual. Someone can skip lunch and simply become irritable. Biblical fasting takes the hunger that would ordinarily lead toward food and allows it to become a signal to turn toward God. The time normally used for preparing and eating a meal can become time for Scripture, prayer, worship, quiet reflection, or simply sitting attentively before God.

Every hunger pang can become a prayer:

The body is hungry for bread. The soul is hungry for God.

That is where fasting begins to move beneath behavior and into desire.

Fasting does not merely reveal how much the body wants food. It can reveal how much the heart wants God.

Chapter Two

What Sacrifice Reveals

It is easy to say something matters when nothing has to be surrendered for it.

People say health matters, but priorities become visible when exercise requires getting out of bed early. People say relationships matter, but love becomes tangible when forgiveness costs pride, when listening costs time, or when reconciliation requires the first step.

Sacrifice has a remarkable way of revealing value.

The same principle operates spiritually. It is possible to sing about wanting more of God while structuring life so that pursuing Him never interferes with anything else. Prayer can be squeezed into whatever time remains. Scripture can wait until the schedule becomes less crowded. Worship can become another item competing with entertainment, work, recreation, and comfort.

Fasting introduces a different question:

How deeply is God actually desired?

The purpose is not to earn His love. Neither source presents spiritual disciplines as a way of climbing toward God's acceptance. Grace cannot be purchased by hunger, and salvation is not a reward for religious sacrifice. The disciplines are instead ways of responding to grace and intentionally growing in awareness of and dependence upon God.

That distinction is essential.

Christianity does not begin with human beings sacrificing themselves for Jesus. It begins with Jesus sacrificing Himself for humanity. Before calling His followers into self-denial, Christ humbled Himself. Before asking anyone to carry a cross, He carried one. The movement toward God begins with grace.

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Fasting therefore does not say, *God, look at what has been given up. Now provide what is wanted.*

It says, *God, because You are worth more than what has been surrendered, teach this heart to desire You more.*

Jesus said:

"I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again."
— John 6:35, CSB

Physical hunger eventually returns after every meal. The deepest hunger of the human heart points beyond the table.

Sacrifice does not create love. It reveals what love considers valuable.

Chapter Three

Return. Seek. Depend.

Across the biblical examples highlighted in the source material, fasting repeatedly appears around three spiritual movements: returning to God, seeking God, and depending upon God.

Sometimes fasting accompanies return.

There are moments when God's people recognize that something has moved into the place that belongs to Him. Sin has been tolerated. An idol has been protected. The heart has wandered. In such moments, fasting can become an embodied expression of repentance.

The message is not merely, *Food will be avoided.*

It is deeper:

Sin will be turned from. God will be turned toward.

The empty plate becomes a physical reminder of an inward decision.

At other times, fasting accompanies seeking.

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Acts 13 describes the church at Antioch worshiping and fasting when the Holy Spirit directed them to set apart Barnabas and Saul. The moment reminds believers that significant spiritual decisions deserve more than impulsive reactions. Research has value. Wise counsel has value. Careful thinking has value. But there are moments when the deepest question is not simply, *What seems best?* It is, *God, what do You desire?*

“As 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.’”

— Acts 13:2, CSB

Yet seeking God does not always require a crisis. The source material also points to Anna in Luke 2, who served God with fasting and prayers. Sometimes the purpose is simply communion. There is no emergency to solve and no major decision demanding an answer. There is simply a heart saying, *God Himself is worth seeking.*

Finally, fasting expresses dependence.

Esther called for fasting as she prepared to enter a dangerous situation beyond her ability to control. Fasting did not become leverage by which God could be manipulated. It expressed human limitation and the need for divine help.

That remains one of fasting's greatest gifts.

It reminds strong people that they are not as self-sufficient as they imagine.

A few missed meals can reveal how dependent human beings are upon things outside themselves. Spiritually, that weakness can become an invitation to rediscover where true strength originates.

Fasting is not a way to make God dependent upon human sacrifice. It is a way of remembering human dependence upon God.

Return.

Seek.

Depend.

Those three words can transform an empty plate into a place of encounter.

Chapter Four

What Hunger Brings to the Surface

One of the surprising things about fasting is that removing food does not necessarily produce immediate serenity. Sometimes it produces irritation.

The normal comforts disappear, and what was hidden begins rising toward the surface.

Anger may become more noticeable. Anxiety may become louder. Impatience may appear. Bitterness that seemed buried can suddenly feel close. The source material emphasizes that fasting can expose what already exists within the heart. What initially appears to be nothing more than hunger may reveal deeper patterns that have been masked by ordinary comforts and routines.

That exposure is not failure.

It may be one of fasting's greatest gifts.

Spiritual growth requires honesty. What remains hidden is difficult to surrender. Fasting can create a space where the heart becomes easier to hear because one of its normal distractions has been temporarily removed.

Perhaps the irritability is not only hunger.

Perhaps there is unresolved anger.

Perhaps the restlessness is not merely the absence of a meal.

Perhaps silence has uncovered anxiety that constant activity normally suppresses.

Perhaps the craving for comfort has revealed how much security has been attached to convenience.

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Fasting does not magically remove those things. It can, however, bring them into the light where they can be offered to Christ.

The goal is not simply an emptier stomach.

It is a more surrendered heart.

This is why fasting and prayer belong together. Hunger becomes an invitation to ask, *What is happening inside? What has been controlling this heart? What has been receiving more attention than God? What needs to be confessed, released, forgiven, or reordered?*

Sometimes God uses the absence of something familiar to reveal the presence of something hidden.

Chapter Five

Devotion, Not Display

Jesus' strongest warning in Matthew 6 is not against fasting incorrectly in a technical sense. It is against fasting for the wrong audience.

Some people wanted their sacrifice to be visible. Their appearance communicated misery so others would recognize how spiritual they were. Jesus' response is strikingly practical: wash your face, take care of your appearance, and stop turning devotion into theater.

The principle reaches far beyond fasting.

Spiritual disciplines can become another form of self-promotion. Prayer can become performance. Generosity can become branding. Bible knowledge can become a means of establishing superiority. Even sacrifice can become something displayed in order to receive admiration.

Jesus asks a penetrating question beneath all of it:

Who is the audience?

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If the goal is human attention, Jesus says human attention becomes the reward. The person wanted to be noticed and was noticed. Transaction complete.

But secret devotion is different.

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting isn’t obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

— *Matthew 6:17–18, CSB*

The issue is not absolute secrecy. The biblical accounts themselves show people fasting together, and practical circumstances may require others to know. The issue is motive.

Is the practice directing attention toward God or toward the person practicing it?

That question matters because spiritual disciplines are meant to weaken pride, not feed it. Fasting should make a person more aware of dependence, not more impressed with personal spirituality.

A discipline designed to make the heart smaller before God should never be used to make the self larger before people.

Chapter Six

The Father, Not the Fast

Eventually every spiritual discipline must answer the same question: What is the goal?

The goal of fasting is not fasting.

The goal is not accumulating hours without food. It is not testing endurance. It is not becoming impressive. It is not convincing God to cooperate with a preferred outcome.

The goal is God Himself.

The source material expresses this distinction clearly: fasting is not about getting God to move toward human desires; it is about allowing the heart to move toward God.

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That is why Jesus' language in Matthew 6 repeatedly points toward the Father. The Father sees. The Father knows. The Father rewards. The spiritual practice is meaningful because of the relationship into which it draws the believer.

A few verses later, Jesus addresses anxiety:

“So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”
— Matthew 6:31–32, CSB

Fasting deliberately steps away from food for a time and declares something the anxious heart desperately needs to remember:

The Father knows what is needed.

There is freedom in that truth.

The world continually trains people to seek satisfaction in what can be consumed, possessed, achieved, or controlled. Fasting pushes in the opposite direction. It says that life is more than consumption. The soul cannot live on possessions, applause, comfort, success, entertainment, or even bread alone.

There is a deeper nourishment.

There is a greater satisfaction.

There is a Father who knows.

And there is a Savior who said He is the Bread of Life.

Conclusion

Let Your Hunger Become a Prayer

Fasting begins with an empty place, but the purpose is not emptiness.

It is making room to notice the hunger that has been there all along.

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The body knows how to announce its needs loudly. The soul is often quieter. It can remain neglected beneath crowded calendars, constant entertainment, relentless responsibilities, and immediate gratification. Fasting temporarily lowers one voice so another can be heard.

The practice should be approached wisely. Both source messages explicitly caution that medical conditions, pregnancy, diabetes, dietary requirements, medications, or other health circumstances may require modification or make food fasting inappropriate without medical guidance. There is nothing spiritually mature about recklessness.

For those medically able to practice it, the beginning does not need to be dramatic. The length of a fast does not determine its spiritual value. What matters is what happens with the hunger and the time created by it.

When the meal is absent, open Scripture.

When hunger arrives, pray.

When irritation surfaces, become curious about what it reveals.

When weakness becomes noticeable, remember dependence.

When the desire to quit becomes strong, remember why the practice began.

Return to God.

Seek God.

Depend upon God.

And when the body says, *"I am hungry,"* allow the soul to answer with something deeper:

"So am I—for more of God."

Because ultimately, fasting is not about becoming better at being hungry.

It is about becoming hungry for something better.

