

# **Fasting: Pitfalls & Benefits**

Hazen Stevens - Sunday, October 8, 2017

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## *I. Spirit, Soul, Body*

### A. Our being consists of 3-parts

1. 1Th 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - (a) We are intended to live with our Spirit man in dominion over the other parts of our being. It is in our Spirit man that the Holy Spirit resides.
  - (b) We can strengthen our ability to live our of our inner man by a variety of spiritual disciples, one of which is fasting.
2. Eph 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with might** through His Spirit in the inner man,
3. Joh 7:37 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**

## *II. Pitfalls of Fasting*

### (A) Legalism

- A. Luk 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 **I fast twice a week**; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
  1. We do not earn things through fasting, we position ourselves to experience what is already ours.
- B. Col 1:21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled **22** in the body of His flesh through death, **to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—**
  1. God does not love us any more or less based on our faithfulness in fasting.
- C. Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin...24 **being justified freely by His grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
  1. Fasting does not bring us into the favor of God, the work of Christ has already earned you God's favor.

### (B) Condemnation

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A. Rom 8:1 There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them that are in Christ Jesus.

1. We should never feel guilt or condemnation for failing in fasting. God is pleased with our efforts in weakness. Condemnation is counterproductive to the Christian walk because it pushes us away from God, and diminishes our hope and faith that he can transform us.

### *III. Benefits of Fasting*

A. Longing for intimacy

1. Mat 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" **15** And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come **when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.**

B. Submission to God

1. Luk 4:1 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, **2** being tempted for forty days by the devil. **And in those days He ate nothing**, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry...**14** Then **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee**,
2. Jas 4:7 Therefore **submit to God**. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

C. Faith to do the work of God

1. Joh 4:32 But He said to them, "**I have food to eat of which you do not know.**" **33** Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?" **34** Jesus said to them, "**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.**" **35** Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! **36** And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. **37** For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' **38** I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."
2. Mar 9:28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" **29** So He said to them, "**This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.**"