

The Practice of Fasting

Fasting can be difficult to understand and to practice. Sometimes it can get misconstrued and confused with dieting, but it has nothing to do with weight loss. Fasting is about self-denial, about saying yes to God by saying no to some other competing desire. This week, you'll do a daily fast from various things that compete for space in your heart and mind, reminding you of your true desire to give God your whole heart.

DAY 1: Fast from social media for 24 hours. Turn these apps off on your phone, and do your best not to go there on your computer. Notice any impulses you have to check your phone or the way you get on your computer and begin to type "Facebook" before you even realize it. As you sense those impulses, ask God to be the Lord of your life. Ask God for help to make social media a fun, "extra" thing in your life and not a distraction that keeps you from being, fully present with God and with your friends and family.

DAY 2: (If possible) Fast from food from sunup to sundown. (or perhaps from 8am – 5 pm) Ask God to be your strength as you go about your day, relying only on God. Be sure to drink plenty of water. Throughout your fasting day, notice your cravings, your stamina, and your clarity. Lean on God's strength, and ask God to help you depend on God each and every day. When you sit down to eat again, give thanks to God for God's strength in you and God's presence with you always.

DAY 3: Fast from words. As much as possible, refrain from speaking for a period of time. You may need to share your practice with family or coworkers ahead of time. This is a practice of being slow to speak and quick to listen. Pay attention to what you hear when you're not forming your own responses constantly.

DAY 4: Fast from using plastic. As best you can, refrain from using any quick-and-easy, throwaway products. Notice the extra effort of washing a glass or carrying around a reusable water bottle. Pay attention to what you throw away in a day, and consider how you could cut back on waste by making a few intentional choices.

DAY 5: Fast from excess. Super-sizing and going back for second helpings, retail therapy, and stockpiling can be second nature for many of us. Spend 24 hours practicing simplicity and moderation. Avoid second helpings. Don't buy anything that you don't need. Spend some time in your closet, purging unnecessary items and donating them to a thrift store. Spend this day taking only what you need from it and nothing more. Notice how it feels to deny yourself something that you want. Ask God to teach you to live simply and to depend on God.

DAY 6: Fast from complaining and criticism. Take on a spirit of gentleness and encouragement for a day. What happens to your mood? to your countenance?

DAY 7: Fast from technology. Go for a walk, take a nap, write letters, and cook a great meal. Let your eyes look at real things right in front of you, and be present where you are.

BY; Junius Dotson, **SOUL RESET – breakdown, breakthrough and the journey to Wholeness**, UPPER ROOM BOOKS, Nashville 2019, pages 115-117.