

CONSECRATED

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# WHY WE FAST

*A guide to fasting and consecration*

*“Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”*

**JOSHUA 3:5**

## A Pattern We Keep Returning To

Whenever God prepared his people for something new, he first called them closer. Before Israel crossed into the promise, Joshua told them to consecrate themselves, “for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you” (Joshua 3:5). Before Jesus began his public ministry, he spent forty days fasting in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–2). Before the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas into the mission field, they worshiped, prayed, and fasted together (Acts 13:2–3). Scripture keeps repeating the same order: presence before purpose.

That is the heart behind these twenty-one days. This is not a tradition to keep or a challenge to finish. It is an invitation into his presence, because our greatest need was never a better strategy. It was him.

## Training, Not Trying

Fasting is not a formula. It is not a way to bargain with God, prove your sincerity, or force his hand. We willingly lay aside something good because we long for something greater. Not because withholding it moves God, but because making room for him changes us.

Dallas Willard spent much of his life pointing out that we do not become like Christ by trying harder in the moment we are tempted. We become like him by training: by practicing, ahead of time, the small habits that reshape what we want and how we live. Fasting is one of those habits. It will not manufacture a miracle. It makes room, slowly, for God to do what only he can do.

## What Actually Happens When You Fast

Set food aside for a day, a meal, or three weeks of something specific, and hunger shows up fast. But underneath the physical hunger, other things start to surface too: what you reach for when you are uncomfortable, what is actually running your life, how much of your day depends on comfort instead of God.

Isaiah 58 warns against a fast that changes nothing, going through the motions while ignoring the people around you. The fast God is after produces humility, repentance, generosity, and a heart fully given to him; it loosens the grip of injustice and turns your eyes toward the people he cares about (Isaiah 58:6–7). A true fast does not just empty your stomach. It reorders your loves.

## In Secret, for an Audience of One

Jesus assumed his followers would fast: “when you fast,” not “if” (Matthew 6:16–18). But he redirected the whole point of it. Do not look somber. Wash your face. Put oil on your head. Fasting is not a performance for other people, and it is not a way to earn a better standing with God; his love for us is already fully revealed in Jesus. It is something done in secret, for the Father who already sees you.

John Mark Comer describes practices like this as part of apprenticeship to Jesus: ordinary, repeated ways of arranging your life around him so that, slowly, you become like him. You do not fast to get God’s attention. You fast because you already have it, and you want to give some back.

## Fill What You Empty

If you only remove food and add nothing, you have changed your diet, not your soul. Whatever you set aside, replace it with time in his presence: read Scripture slowly, sit quietly before him, worship, journal what he is saying, and pray for your family, your neighbors, this church, and this city.

Before you begin, write down what you are believing God for this month: deeper intimacy with Jesus, freedom from habits that have held you back, wisdom, healing, unity, and the people around you who don’t yet know him. Carry it with you the way you would carry a page from the prayer guide.

## A Practical Framework

**FULL FAST** Liquids only (water, juice, broth) for a set period of time.

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**DANIEL FAST** No meat, sweets, or bread. Vegetables, fruit, and water (Daniel 10:2–3).

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**PARTIAL FAST** Give up a specific meal, food, or comfort: skip lunch, eat sundown to sundown, or set aside certain hours of the day.

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**OTHER FAST** If food isn’t wise for your body, fast from something else: media, shopping, scrolling.

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Choose your form before day one. If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, nursing, diabetic, or take medication that requires food, talk to your doctor first, or fast from something other than food; wisdom and faith belong together. A broken or imperfect fast is not a failure; begin again the next day.

Tyler Staton and the community at Bridgetown Church build fasting into ordinary life with a simple baseline: one weekly fast until sundown. Small and repeatable beats intense and unsustainable.

## For These Twenty-One Days

You do not need to attempt the hardest version of this. Choose one practical form of fasting and pair it with the prayers in this season: a skipped meal, a full day, a week eating simply. Let your hunger become a

prompt to pray rather than a problem to manage.

When your fast ends, do not rush back to old rhythms. If you have completed a longer food fast, reintroduce meals slowly. More importantly, hold on to whatever practices drew you near to him. That is the whole point.

Consecration was never a one-time decision. It is a practice, repeated, until it becomes a life. “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (James 4:8). May this season be marked not by what we gave up, but by the One we encountered.