

**Agape House of Worship**  
**Wednesday Bible Study**

**Study Series: Fasting: The Key that Opens Doors**  
**Part 1: Fasting: The Key to a Deeper Walk**

**Wednesday, January 8, 2025**  
**Teacher: Pastor Jide Lawore**

**Understanding Biblical Fasting**

The Greek work for fasting is “Nēsteuō” comes from the root word “Nēstis” which simply means “not having eaten”. Hence, biblical fasting is abstaining from food and sometimes water, to focus on a period of spiritual growth. From Daniel 10: 1-2, we also know it can sometimes mean abstaining from pleasant food, drink, meat etc. In addition to food fasting can include abstinence from other pleasure of life like sex (1 Corinthians 7:5), lotions (Daniel 10:3) etc.

- Fasting and prayer are often linked together (Luke 2:37; Luke 5:33). By denying yourself of food you are denying something of the flesh to glorify God, enhance our spirit, and go deeper in our prayer life.
- In the Scripture, fasting is almost always fasting from food or some types of food. Some contemporary Christians promote fasting from things other than food (chocolate, internet etc). I believe you could abstain from any of these in addition to food, but abstaining from them alone cannot be called fasting.
- The focus of fasting is not on the lack of food but what we are engaged in during fasting. Fasting without prayer and/or other spiritual activities is hunger strike.
- The purpose of fasting is to take our eyes off the things of this world and instead focus on God and to develop a closer walk with Him.
- Fasting is a way to demonstrate to God and that we are serious about our relationship with Him.

**Is Fasting for Believers Today?**

\* Do you think fasting is a requirement for believers today?

***When, (Not If) You Fast***

**Matthew 6:16-18** - *“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

\* What is the implication of Jesus using the word when and not if in the passage below?

***And On That Day, They Will Fast***

**Mark 2:18-22** - *Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, “How is it that John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?” 19 Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. 20 But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast. 21 “No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. 22 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.”*

\* What are the reasons Jesus gave for excusing His disciples from fasting?

\* Do you think verses 21 and 22 are connected to the subject of fasting?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that has been practiced for centuries to draw closer to Him. Based on the scriptures above, I believe it’s fair to say that it is almost impossible to go far and deeper in our relationship with God without fasting and prayer. Fasting indeed opens the door to a deeper, more intimate, more powerful relationship with God.

**Jeremiah 29:13** “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (NIV)

*Psalms 84:2* My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. (NIV)

*James 4:9* “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. (NIV)

Let’s look at seven ways that fasting can open doors into a deeper, more intimate, more powerful relationship with God:

1. Fasting creates space for God (spiritual hunger)

- Fasting is a powerful way to create spiritual hunger. To deny your body a desired pleasure. Fasting says “I need God more than I need food.
- By temporarily setting aside physical needs or distractions, fasting allows you to make room for prayer, worship, and reflection.
- It helps you focus more on God and less on the world.

2. Fasting strengthens your dependence on God

- Fasting reminds you that your ultimate sustenance comes from God, not from food or material things.
- It teaches reliance on Him for strength, comfort, and provision.

3. Fasting deepens your prayer life

- Fasting and prayer go hand in hand. It intensifies your prayers, creating a sense of urgency and focus.
- During a fast, you can dedicate the time you would normally spend eating or engaging in other activities to pray and seek God.

4. Fasting promotes spiritual clarity

- Fasting helps quiet the noise of daily life, making it easier to hear God’s voice.
- It can bring clarity to decisions, direction, or struggles as you seek His will.

5. Fasting encourages humility and repentance

- Fasting is an act of self-humbling, acknowledging your need for God.
- It often leads to self-examination and repentance, deepening your awareness of His grace and forgiveness.
- *James 4:10* “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (NIV)

6. Fasting heightens spiritual awareness

- Many people find that fasting sharpens their spiritual senses, making them more aware of God’s presence and guidance.
- It creates a heightened sensitivity to His Spirit working in and around you.

7. Fasting demonstrates commitment and faith

- Fasting is a physical expression of your desire to seek God wholeheartedly.
- It shows a willingness to sacrifice comfort to prioritize your relationship with Him.

## Conclusion

You will agree that many of the factors or issues discussed above are conditions necessary to develop a robust and powerful relationship with God. These conditions are either created or catalyzed by fasting. Hence, I want to encourage you to participate in corporate fasting and to also incorporate fasting into your regular routine.