

Preparing for 2019 with a Daniel Fast  
12.6.2019

## **Introduction**

Many churches today begin the year with a time of fasting and prayer.

I think we all realize that we are living in days of extreme conflict:

Social conflict.

Nations in conflict.

Cultural conflicts.

Political conflict.

And perhaps most of all, spiritual conflict.

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NLT)

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. (11) Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. (12) For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

And since the conflicts we face are spiritual in cause, what better way to counteract them than with spiritual resources?

We are living in a day of extremes on every side.

Isaiah mentions strong extremes in Isaiah 60:

Isaiah 60:1-3 (NKJV)

Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. (2) For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. (3) The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

So, the best way to prepare for 2019 is to get ready spiritually.

Put spiritual things first place.

Matthew 6:33 (ESV)

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:33 (GW)

But first, be concerned about his kingdom and what has his approval. Then all these things will be provided for you.

## **The Daniel Fast**

I am encouraging you to go with us on a 21-day *Daniel Fast*.

Let me explain it briefly.

Daniel 10:1-3 (ESV)

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision. (2) In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. (3) I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks.

Daniel 10:3 (NLT)

All that time I had eaten no rich food. No meat or wine crossed my lips, and I used no fragrant lotions until those three weeks had passed.

Daniel 10:4-13 (NLT)

On April 23, as I was standing on the bank of the great Tigris River, (5) I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen clothing, with a belt of pure gold around his waist. (6) His body looked like a precious gem. His face flashed like lightning, and his eyes flamed like torches. His arms and feet shone like polished bronze, and his voice roared like a vast multitude of people. (7) Only I, Daniel, saw this vision. The men with me saw nothing, but they were suddenly terrified and ran away to hide. (8) So I was left there all alone to see this amazing vision. My strength left me, my face grew deathly pale, and I felt very weak. (9) Then I heard the man speak, and when I heard the sound of his voice, I fainted and lay there with my face to the ground. (10) Just then a hand touched me and lifted me, still trembling, to my hands and knees. (11) And the man said to me, "Daniel, you are very precious to God, so listen carefully to what I have to say to you. Stand up, for I have been sent to you." When he said this to me, I stood up, still trembling. (12) Then he said, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. (13) But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia."

Daniel simply denied himself rich tasting food and meats, and spent extra time focusing on the Lord. He wanted to hear from God about Israel and what was next on God's agenda for them.

And here we are, in a new year.

What is ahead?

Are you ready?

Are spiritual things first?

Are priorities in order?

Beginning Thursday, January 10th, I am encouraging you to come with me on a 21-day semi-fast.

During this time, we will focus on praying and preparing for the upcoming year.

Together, we will get our priorities in line.

### **Practical tips**

In a Daniel Fast, we only eat what comes from the ground. No processed food, sweets, meats etc.

Be practical with yourself. On what level can you participate?

If you have a highly physical job, you may need extra protein. Use wisdom.

Ask yourself, what can I abstain from for the next 3 weeks?

Again, we will start this Thursday, January 10 and end on Wednesday, January 30.

We will meet each night at church here from 7:00 to 8:00 Monday through Friday beginning on the 10th and ending on the 30th (we will not meet on the weekends).

Lights will be low, and music soft. Come in and begin to pray.

We have prayer guides.

### **Some Thoughts about Fasting**

In the Epistles, not one time is the church told to fast.

Mention is made of fasting, but no rules are laid down.

Fasting is to be as the occasion arises.

Fasting does not change God!

He's the same before you fast, while you fast, and after you fast!

Fasting changes you, and helps you keep the flesh under.

It helps you to be more sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

When you're under lots of pressure, it's good to fast.

Or the Lord may lead you to fast on occasion.

3 New Testament reasons to Fast:

To minister to the Lord (Acts 13:1)

To lay hands on ministers (Acts 13:3)

To draw close to God in times of danger (Acts 27)

You don't need to fast to defeat the devil!

Jesus defeated him for us! Colossians 1:13

Matthew 17:19-21

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"(20) So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. (21) However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

This kind of unbelief comes out by fasting and prayer.

Old Testament Fasting

Fasting has been entered into in history among all peoples during times of testing, sadness, or grief.

In the Bible, there are no examples of fasting prior to Moses.

We presume that the men and women of God in the Old Testament fasted.

The only time fasting was commanded in the Old Testament was on the day of Atonement.

Leviticus 23:27

Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall \*afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.

\*Afflict your souls – Hebrew:

You shall humble yourselves before God inwardly by sorrow and by judging and loathing yourselves and outwardly by fasting and abstinence from all carnal comforts and delights.

### Other Examples of Fasting

Joshua 7:6 – Joshua and the elders of Israel fasted morning and evening – laid on their faces until midnight – after the defeat at Ai.

Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.

Judges 20:26 – Fasted all day until evening

Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

2 Samuel 12:16 – David fasted for ill child

David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground.

### 40-day fasts

Exodus 34:28 – Moses on Mount Horeb

So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

He was sustained by the presence of God.

This 40 days most probably seemed short to Moses.

1 Kings 19:7-8 (NLT)

Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you." (8) So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God.

Elijah went on strength of angel's food 40 days.

You could too if angels sustained you!

Jesus fasted 40 days – led by the Spirit – ministered to by angels.

Matthew 4:1-2

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

### New Testament Fasting

Jesus never commanded the disciples to fast.

Paul said he fasted - never told the church to fast.

Jesus inferred that His disciples would fast:

Luke 5:33-35 (NLT)

One day some people said to Jesus, "John the Baptist's disciples fast and pray regularly, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. Why are your disciples always eating and drinking?" (34) Jesus responded, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. (35) But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

Matthew 6:16-18 (NLT)

And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. (17) But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. (18) Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Acts 10:30 – Cornelius

Acts 10:30 (NKJV) So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour (3:00 pm) I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

Acts 13:1-3 (NLT) - Paul

Among the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch of Syria were Barnabas, Simeon (called "the black man"), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (the childhood companion of King Herod Antipas), and Saul. (2) One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them." (3) So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way.

Acts 14:23 (NLT)

Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 27:9-11 (NLT)

We had lost a lot of time. The weather was becoming dangerous for sea travel because it was so late in the fall, and Paul spoke to the ship's officers about it. (10) "Men," he said, "I believe there is trouble ahead if we go on—shipwreck, loss of cargo, and danger to our lives as well." (11) But the officer in charge of the prisoners listened more to the ship's captain and the owner than to Paul.

Acts 27:20-21 (NLT)

The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone. (21) No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, "Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage and loss."

Acts 27:33-38 (NLT)

Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. "You have been so worried that you haven't touched food for two weeks," he said. (34) "Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish." (35) Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it. (36) Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat—(37) all 276 of us who were on board. (38) After eating, the crew lightened the ship further by throwing the cargo of wheat overboard.

1 Corinthians 7:5 (NKJV)

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

2 Corinthians 6:4-5 (NKJV)

But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, (5) in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

In the New Testament, the church is never told to fast, but as you can see, it is mentioned as something they do when needed.

## **Isaiah 58**

Receive the answer before you fast.

Have a purpose in your fast.

Our purpose here is to put spiritual things 1st place and prepare for 2019.

Isaiah 58:6-11 (NKJV)

Is this not the fast that I have chosen:

To loose the bonds of wickedness,

to undo the heavy burdens,

To let the oppressed go free,

And that you break every yoke?

(7) Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,

And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;

When you see the naked, that you cover him,

And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

(8) Then your light shall break forth like the morning,

Your healing shall spring forth speedily,

And your righteousness shall go before you;

The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

(9) Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;

You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'

"If you take away the yoke from your midst,

The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

(10) If you extend your soul to the hungry

And satisfy the afflicted soul,

Then your light shall dawn in the darkness,

And your darkness shall be as the noonday.

(11) The Lord will guide you continually,

And satisfy your soul in drought,

And strengthen your bones;  
You shall be like a watered garden,  
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

### **Fasting brings our spirit nature to the forefront.**

We are so involved in daily busyness, that we need to take extra time on occasion to bring our spiritual nature to attention, to set aside the natural things we do, and focus on God through His Word and through prayer.

#### **Our spiritual nature responds to the Word:**

Time with God reshapes our perspectives and life motivations. It prepares us on the inside for what may come on the outside.

Matthew 4:4 (NLT)

But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Job 23:12 (NKJV)

I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

Jeremiah 15:16- NKJV

Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.

Psalms 19:7-11 (NKJV)

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;  
8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.  
10 More to be desired are they than gold,  
Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned,  
And in keeping them there is great reward.

Psalms 40:8 (NKJV)

I delight to do Your will, O my God,  
And Your law is within my heart.”

Psalms 119:11 (NKJV)

Your word I have hidden in my heart,  
That I might not sin against You.

James 1:21 (NKJV)

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

James 1:21 (NLT)

So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

John 6:63 (AMPC)

It is the Spirit Who gives life [He is the Life-giver]; the flesh conveys no benefit whatever [there is no profit in it]. The words (truths) that I have been speaking to you are spirit and life.

Proverbs 4:23- NKJV

Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

Proverbs 4:23- NLT

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

Proverbs 4:23- Message

Keep vigilant watch over your heart;  
that's where life starts.

### **Action Points:**

1. Decide ahead of time how you will participate.
2. Take extra time to read and pray.
3. Meet with us Monday through Friday 7-8 pm, this begins on Wednesday.
4. Write down before you start your perceptions. Keep a journal of what you sense God is saying to you.

