

Prayer and Fasting Part 4: How Do We Fast? The Daniel Fast

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The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c70Clp6HohM>

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

In our last message, we broke into the second topic of our series, which is the fasting part. We began to look at the instructions Yeshua gave to His Apostles in that when they fasted they were not to do as the hypocrites. Yeshua did not want them being like the hypocrites who disfigured their faces and such because they wanted everyone to see how much suffering and sacrifice they were doing. They were drawing the attention of men. That was their focus.

That, however, is not how Yeshua wants us to fast. He wants our attention. The true spirit of fasting is to have that heart to want His attention not other people's attention. We should not want sympathy or for them to look at us and esteem us for being so pious. Whatever the case may be, this is not what we are called to. We need to have brokenness and that focus and desire to seek Him.

Today, we are going to build upon this concept and are going to talk about fasting. Actually, what we are going to do is answer a very simple question. The question of how do we fast. We will keep it very practical and simple.

How do we fast? I ask the question because when you peer into Christianity today, what we discover is we have a variety of different Christians fasting in a variety of different ways and from a variety of different things. For example, we have something called water fasting. The name can be deceptive in the sense of it is not fasting from water. It's actually just the opposite in that you fast from food entirely, and all you do is consume water. This is how some Christians actually fast today; they'll do water fasting. As some of you know, there are people who do water fasts not for spiritual reasons but for health reasons. There are documentaries being made about fasting today. There are corporations that are encouraging their employees to fast because of the health benefits and clarity that comes into the mind.

That is all interesting stuff, but our focus today is not what the world is doing in regard to fasting and how they interpret it. Our focus is specifically spiritual. Amen?

Another way of fasting that is very popular today is intermittent fasting. Some Christians are grabbing hold of this concept. So we have 24 hours in a day. There's this 16:8 rule in that 16 hours a day are totally blocked out when you don't get to eat but still drink water. During the remaining 8 hours, that is your time allotted to you to consume food. Most people eat from noon to 8 p.m. That's the block of time that they eat, and Christians are embracing this and calling it fasting.

Another way that Christians fast is what we call partial fasting. I would say, out of the three, this is probably the most popular type of fasting many Christians do. With partial fasting, you can fast from various things. It can be fasting from a meal, such as lunch. You don't fast any other part of the day. You're just simply going to skip lunch. Even during that time, a lot of people will continue to consume water.

With this fast, other people will take something out of their diet they are co-dependent on such as caffeine. So there are Christians who will say, "You know what? I'm going too fast from my coffee today." Sometimes they will do it for more than one day. As you know, when you fast from caffeine, there's a sacrifice because you're hurting. You love your caffeine. Some people actually fast from chocolate. They go through a chocolate fast when they'll abstain from partaking of chocolate (which my wife, to this day, is still trying to get me to believe chocolate is a vegetable). It comes from a bean, which is a vegetable. This gets additionally interesting because you make coffee from a bean, so now you have a cup full of vegetables. This is what she tells me. I don't buy it.

This is what some Christians are grabbing on to. Partial fasting can have nothing to do with food at all. Partial fasting can be where you fast from TV or some form of entertainment you're accustomed to and want to make that a sacrifice. It could be for a day. It could be for a week. I've heard of people doing it for a month where they're like, "No, I'm fasting from TV." So they're taking something out of their life.

Another form of fasting, which really falls into this category or subtext, would be a Daniel Fast. How many of you have heard of this. There are books and articles written on this fast. It is very common, in Christianity, for people to pick up the Daniel Fast. Some people have actually changed their diet permanently and said, "I'm going to remove meat from my diet. I'm just going to eat vegetables." They see this as coinciding with a Daniel Fast. Some look at it as going back to the Garden of Eden.

Traditionally speaking, and I mean historically, Eastern Orthodox Roman Catholicism promoted abstaining from meat on specific days such as Lent or Good Friday. What they'll do is they'll pull meat out of their diet, and they consider that a fast. In fact, some people will pull it out every Friday. When I was growing up, our neighbors actually fasted from meat every Friday.

So when we look at the gamut here, there are all sorts of ways Christians are embracing fasting today. It can be water fasting, intermittent fasting, and so on. This is pretty amazing. Whether you're partial to water fasting or intermittent fasting, or you want to embrace the Daniel Fast or simply take chocolate out of your life for a period of time, whatever you want to do, let me say this, it is profitable. It is good. Any time you tell me, "I'm going to fast from TV tomorrow, or I'm going to abstain from chocolate or something else from your diet you really enjoy, anytime you go against your flesh at any level, I will commend you. You're going in the right direction. It is a good thing. So whatever flavor you like listed here, I encourage you to embrace it. That is fantastic!



However, now we have the question; when I read in the Old Testament and New Testament, how do the Scriptures define fasting? What does it mean? Does it mean partial fasting? Does it mean water fasting? Is it intermittent fasting? How are we supposed to find out this answer? What are we supposed to do for a biblical fast, or is it choose your own adventure? I'm going to tell you right now, biblical fasting is none of these. Biblical fasting is this, no food and no water. I know what you are

thinking right now. You are thinking, “There is no way.” This, however, is biblical fasting. It is no food and no water. This is a time where you literally humble your flesh in such a powerful way. I always say, “Not a Tic Tac hits your tongue.” You starve it from everything it desires and from everything it actually needs to survive.

I want you to think about this. To survive, your body needs food and water. However, when you fast, you strip it of its very sustenance to survive. As a result, you are killing the flesh. That's powerful! You are doing this to feed the Spirit. This is why we embrace fasting.

I'll tell you something right now, and to this day it blows my mind, I marvel because the first couple of times I fasted I couldn't believe what I experienced. What I mean by that was not so much into the spiritual realm in the sense of there being supernatural healings happening, and they do during fasting, but it was nothing like that. What I marveled at was the power of my flesh. This is like Darth Vader's saying, “You do not know the power of the dark side.” You don't know the power of the dark side until you start too fast. That is when you will find out how much your flesh influences your day-to-day operation and decisions. You will find out in a very terrifying way how it controls you. It's unbelievable. The strength of your flesh is mind-blowing.

Think back to the book of Genesis in 4:7 where the LORD said something to Cain—**“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”**

If you want that Scripture, the reality of what God communicated to Cain, to come off the pages to where it becomes tangible to you, start fasting and you will see your flesh and its desire is to control you, destroy you, and bring you to death. That's its only desire, and it is relentless. Your flesh does not take a break. It does not give up. When you start to fast and you starve it, it starts kicking and screaming like you wouldn't believe. It starts crying like a little baby. It is like, “Wah, wah, wah. Give me this. Give me that.” It doesn't stop. It is incessant and relentless.

So we have this revelation of the power of the flesh and the importance of how truly important it is too fast and in a tangible way crucify your flesh so we can live in the Spirit. There is so much power in what we're dealing with regarding prayer and fasting. Paul said in I Corinthians in 9:27—**“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”** And to the Corinthians, the very same people, he said he was fasting often.

Paul knew how to discipline his body. Guess what? His flesh never stopped coming after him. Every single day you wake up, you will have to battle the flesh. You will have to battle spiritual hosts of wickedness that keep spinning lies at you to discourage you, put fear into you, and terrify you. They will try to get you to succumb to idolatry, lust, and covetousness. Every single day the flesh will show you these things of the world. You have to fight this. I don't know how we cannot fast being literally immersed in the world and stuck in a carcass of flesh. We have to fast. It's for our own benefit.

Going to Deuteronomy 8:3, we find Moses speaking about the LORD to the Israelites—**“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD”** (emphasis added).

When you fast, you understand this concept on a whole new level. When you fast, you proclaim war against your flesh. You tell it, "No! The way I survive is not you whining and telling me I need food and drink. That's not how I live. I live by every word of God. That is my sustenance. That's what gives me life." When you are fasting, you are literally embracing that reality. That's the power. There's power here.

In previous lessons we have talked about Psalm 119:50—**For Your word has given me life**. The word is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, right? We talked about John 1:1— **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God**. It goes on to say in John 1:4— **In Him was life**. He was life. The Word is life for us. It is not physical food or water. We are to operate on a completely different level. We are to operate on a spiritual level being spiritual beings who house the Holy Spirit. Amen?

With that said, what I want to do to support this concept that fasting is no food and no water is to take you to Scripture to show several great examples of the term fasting and how it's used. You will find the term is explicitly no food and no water. Deuteronomy 9:9—**When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water** (emphasis added).

Now we all know when Moses went up to the mountain he fasted, and it's very clear it was not a partial fast. He was not eating just vegetables. He was not fasting from chocolate. It was not a fast from TV even though he didn't have TV. It was no food and no water. What was he living on? He was living on the word. He was surviving on the word. He trusted in the word.

You see, there's an element of faith involved here. I have had conversations with Christians and Christian pastors who are astounded anybody would go without food or water for a day. They're like, "Food. Yeah. But not water. You will die. If we don't drink water, you die." When you tell them about fasting from water for two or three days, they say "You're going to be dead for sure." This concept is so out of the realm of reality for them, but what you do is you trust in the LORD.

Having said that, I want to be clear there are exceptions for people who have medical conditions. Yes, there are exceptions. What I advise them to fast is depending on a case by case basis. If you're dealing with medical issues, you have different issues. But even in those cases, there are certain things you can do to embrace the spirit of the reality of it, right?

Moving on Luke says this in Luke 5:33—**Then they said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?"** (Emphasis added). Did you catch this? They are looking at John's disciples and notice they are fasting. Then they look at Yeshua's disciples and notice they are eating and drinking. Do you understand how they understood fasting is abstaining from food and drink? I can take you to the Old Testament, and I can take you to the New Testament; the testimony is consistent across the board.

So we've looked at one from the Old Testament, and we have looked at the New Testament. Let me take you to the Mishnah. The Mishnah hails back to the time period of Yeshua. So now we have a Jewish source outside of the New Testament. Look at what it says in Yoma 8—**On the Day of Atonement**. I want to stop here because what you need to understand is there's only one Divine instruction, one God given instruction, God mandated instruction, in regard to fasting. That is in regard

to Yom Kippur. That is the day we are required to fast. In short, we simply call it, the fast. That is what we read in the book of Acts. It simply refers to Yom Kippur as the fast.

So, what are the requirements on Yom Kippur? Well, this is what we read in Yoma 8—**On the Day of Atonement it is forbidden to eat, drink** (emphasis added). Why is that? Because, as we have already learned, that's what fasting is. There's no food. There's no water.

Let me take you to the book of Esther 4:16, and we will continue to build upon this—**Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me** (emphasis added). Now, you'll notice the Hebrew for fast is צוּם (*tsuwm*), which is the verb form. Everywhere you go in the Tanakh, this is the word you come across explicitly used for fasting, צוּם.

So here you have Esther telling Mordecai, “Listen. Have everyone, our entire nation, fast for me.” How does it describe fasting? **Neither eat nor drink**. Here is the verse in its entirety—**Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise** (emphasis added).

Acts 9:8-9—**⁸ Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank** (emphasis added). As soon as Paul had an experience with Yeshua, he went into fasting. He didn't end the fast until he was healed. That's when Ananias came and prayed for him to receive his sight. Saul was then baptized. That is when he ended his fast.

Let me go back to the Old Testament in Jonah 3:4-8—**⁴ And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. ⁶ Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. ⁷ And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water** (emphasis added).

Do you understand this is a fast they proclaimed? In my modern day interpretation, the king told them, “Not a Tic Tac is to hit your tongue.” You don't get to taste anything lest your flesh be satisfied on any level. It is to receive no satisfaction because you are crucifying it in a tangible way. This is about humbling yourself before God.

The whole situation in Nineveh, when they fasted, was they didn't trust in food or water to keep them alive. Judgment has been proclaimed against them. The only way they can survive is by removing those things of the flesh and petitioning the LORD. They saw the value in it. These are people who understand spiritual warfare, and you know the outcome of that.

Now, you know a lot of people are very accustomed to their hybrid versions of fasting. That is how they want to express it. The reality is, it is no food and no water. In reality, you are not supposed to like this. That's the point. You're actually supposed to hate it. Your flesh is going to despise it. That's why you need to embrace it. The more you think about it, and the more time you give your flesh to think about the idea, your flesh will tell you why you can't fast. I'm going to Grandma's so I can't do that.

Grandma's going to feed me. I'm going here. I'm going there. You will just keep putting it off. I just challenge you to try doing it and see what happens.

I want to expound a little bit on this notion of the Daniel Fast. This is very important, and I want to talk about what it is and what it isn't. I want to show you the actual passages, while keeping in mind context is important. So there's a little bit of historical context I'm going to take you to in the first chapter in Daniel. The backdrop here is King Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, has come up against Jerusalem and has besieged it. He is taking articles out of the temple, and he is going to be taking these things back and putting them in the temple of his god. That's pretty significant, and you'll see why in a moment.

So he takes those articles and puts them in the temple of his god. That's not all he takes. He uproots the children of Israel and takes some of them back with him. He selects certain intelligent men who were gifted, and he takes them into the king's palace to work in his court. This reality is one of the oldest things we know about the art of war. To the victor go the spoils, which include the men who can make this nation better.

Now you understand what the king, in his mind, is doing. He's taken Daniel and these wise men because he's going to advance his kingdom. If you ever studied World War II, and you know the fall of Nazi Germany, what did America and Russia do? America ran a secret OPS program known as Paper Clip. This is where we did not jail the scientists of Nazi Germany. Instead, we employed them. Over 1600 of these scientists, engineers, and technicians were brought from Nazi Germany into America because of the race against Russia. Because of that race, Russia did the same thing. So this is the art of war.

This is what King Nebuchadnezzar is doing with the servants of God such as Daniel. Daniel is one of these guys; he's been taken. This is Operation Paperclip. He's been taken so he can advance Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. Little did he know, God's hand is upon Daniel. Right?

So with this backdrop, we go into Daniel 1:5—**And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.** Moving to verse 8—**But Daniel purposed in his heart.** I want to stop right there. Daniel made a resolution in his heart that he was going to make a stand. This is important. And what would that be? **That he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies.**

You need to understand something. This text is explicit. You can read it in the Hebrew and it says—**he would not defile himself.** This tells us for Daniel to eat of the King's food he would have to break Torah. He would have to break the commandments God had given him, and he had already resolved in his heart he would do no such thing. That's a powerful thing because I'm going to tell you if you, knowing the days we are living in right now, don't make this resolve in your heart, and this is not just about food, this is about the totality and reality of spiritual holiness, you will not make that stand when you get confronted with this situation. The pressure is too high.

This is a reality. The beauty of Daniel is he resolves in his heart he's not going to defile himself with the portion of the King's delicacies. The verse continues in Daniel 1:8—**nor with the wine which he drank.** Now, this is interesting because there's no debate here Daniel is abstaining from food because he would have to become defiled and break the dietary laws (Leviticus 11 or Deuteronomy 14) within Torah. However, this is where it gets interesting. Why did he abstain from the wine? There's nothing in Torah prohibiting wine. There is Scripture that prohibits excessive wine consumption. In fact, as you get into

the New Testament, it says drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God. However, to partake of wine is not a sin nor will you be defiled. The only one who is prohibited scripturally from drinking wine is someone who took a Nazarite vow (Numbers 6). Do I think Daniel took a Nazarite vow? Oh, no. That would have been mentioned here explicitly. The fact that it is absent is significant.

So, why doesn't Daniel drink the wine? Well, here's what's highly probable. In understanding the context, remember Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, loots the temple in Jerusalem and brings these holy articles and put them in the temple of his god. He feared his god.

Now, if you study the history of Babylon, scholars will tell you during this time Babylon was almost a monotheistic religion. I say almost because Babylon had a pantheon of gods, but one God surpassed them all and was so revered and so worshiped that none of the other ones even compared. There was one god above all whose name was Beel or Mar Duke. This is most likely the one the king of Babylon served.

Why is this important? It's important because when you have a pantheon of gods, each God has specific attributes they carry. This specific god, who was above all these other false gods and is a false god himself, was the god of agriculture.

That's significant. He was the god of agriculture, healing, and the god of magic. He had characteristics, but he was the god of agriculture. This means when you're in Babylon, if you're going to reap the harvest, you will most likely offer your meat to your god as a thanksgiving, and you will pour out an oblation of wine to your god. The Freemasons do this today. They pour out wine and oil.

So we see Daniel does not want to defile himself. This situation may be it wasn't swine put before him. It may be the fact it was cow, but it had been offered to an idol, and Daniel would not eat it in accordance to Leviticus 17. Equally so, if that wine was poured as an oblation, he would not drink it. One thing we know for certain; whether it was swine lying before him or clean meat offered to an idol, it makes no difference. Either way, it's unclean. One thing we know for certain; Daniel would not defile himself. This is the context of the first chapter of Daniel. It has nothing to do with fasting.

Now, I want to show you the second passage where we ultimately get this Daniel Fast. Reading from Daniel 10:2-3—² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. ³ I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

This is an interesting passage. Clearly, there is symmetry. One thing I want to be clear on is if you were to go back to chapter 1, the text actually goes on to say Daniel consumed vegetables and water. So there is clearly symmetry between chapter 1 and chapter 10. However, are we dealing with the same set of circumstances? It would be tough to get that idea because nowhere in chapter 10 does Daniel say he abstained from pleasant food, meat and wine because he did not want to defile himself. You don't find that anywhere in the text. What makes it more interesting is you will notice it was temporary. He did it for three whole weeks. He only did this for a set time.

I want to be clear about this because when you go to Daniel chapter 1, there was no set time. Daniel was never going to defile himself. Yes, they took him and tested him for ten days, but there was no set time. Daniel simply refused to take the King's delicacies or to alter his diet from what God had ordained. He wouldn't do it, and there was no set time or end to it.

So, you'd have to ask yourself, if Daniel is doing the same thing in chapter 1 as in chapter 10, then why did it expire after three weeks? Are we saying Daniel is going to defile himself after three weeks? The very thought is ridiculous. So it appears we are actually dealing with a situation where Daniel has chosen simply to take these delightful things, meat, wine, and whatever other delicacies, out of his diet and return to vegetables and water. Also, keep in mind the verse says he was mourning. So Daniel is intentionally afflicting his flesh here. I mean that much is clear when you read this, but let me point this out. Nowhere in this passage do you find he is fasting. The word is not used in this verse.

Why is that important? Because you will notice when Daniel fasts, it specifically uses the word צוּם (*tsuwm*). There's a distinction made. What's interesting is it's just from chapter 9 to chapter 10 here that distinction is made. In fact, let me take you there right now in Daniel 9:3—**Then I set my face toward the LORD God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting** (emphasis added).

Do you understand a distinction was made in chapter 9? Now keep in mind, and this is important, do not conflate these two stories. Some might think Daniel made this fast and refers to what he did. It doesn't because Daniel chapter 10 is years after this activity in chapter 9. When Daniel fasts, there is a distinction made, yet when we go to chapter 10 there is no mention made about a fast. This is simply Daniel removing delightful things out of his diet.

Now, let me be clear. Is what Daniel doing profitable? Absolutely. Was it commendable to God? Absolutely. The question is; is it biblical fasting in the purest form? No. He was simply afflicting his flesh, but this was not biblical fasting.

If we're going to address this topic and attempt to define fasting, we have to know what it means biblically. We're going to answer this question. How do we fast? We have to understand this because think about coming to Yom Kippur. Could you imagine on that day you decided you were going to just fast part of the day? What if you decided you were going to simply take chocolate or caffeine out of your diet that day? What if you decided to only eat vegetables and drink water? None of those things would qualify. None of those things would be accepted on that day except no food/no water.

Now there are other things that need to be in line with your heart for it to be truly accepted, but I'm talking about the physical reality and what your flesh gets and what it does not get. This is just the reality behind it.

So now we know how we are to biblically fast. It is no food/no water. Having said that we're going to build on this by going to Isaiah 58:1-2—**¹Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. ²Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching God.**

That should terrify you. The context is these men, in their minds, are sold out and radical for the LORD. They say I'm hungry for you. I am seeking you.

It goes on in Isaiah 58:3—**Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?' "In fact, in the day of your fast **you find pleasure**** (emphasis added).

I'm going to tell you something. If you want to make your fasting completely in vain in that you starve yourself and give yourself no drink and have it mean nothing at the end of the day, embrace your

pleasure during the time of your fast and that is what the result will be. Embrace the things of the world; sit yourself down and watch these mindless and worthless TV shows if you think that's how you should be fasting. Fasting is not a time to grab hold of the things of the world. If you think these are the ways to spend your time as you fast, you are delusional. Do not think for a moment you're going to enter into the throne room of God while holding aspects of the world you refused to let go of. He is not going to let you in the throne room. It is not going to happen.

This is a huge aspect to fasting. You may get the food and water part right, but at the end of the day, it doesn't mean anything unless your heart is broken. Unless your heart is literally purged of all the iniquity, all the filth of the world, all the things the world has to offer, and you cast them to the wayside and focus on Him to honor Him, that is the only time it's going to be acceptable.

There is one little catch to this in regard to this pleasure mentioned in the Isaiah verse. There's actually one pleasure we're actually commanded to embrace in Scripture except when we fast. The Apostles and the rabbi's were very clear to lay these stipulations out. I want to show you what this is because this is an important aspect of fasting. 1 Corinthians 7:5—**Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer** (emphasis added). Paul is talking about married couples. Even though we're commanded to be fruitful and multiply, we are to abstain from this during fasting. This is not conducive to what the spirit of fasting is all about.

Even the rabbi's have stated so in the Mishnah—**And they are forbidden [when they fast] to work, bathe, anoint, put on a sandal, and have sexual relations** (emphasis added, The Mishnah, Taanit). This is the reality. This is one of the things listed.

Last lesson we looked at some of these things the Pharisees listed as forbidden, which are in the list above such as anointing and bathing. Isn't it interesting that Yeshua went after them for listing these things, but he didn't go after them for sexual relations? He doesn't mention anything about it. He tells us the rabbi's are not bathing or anointing themselves, but we are not to do at they do. But in regard to abstaining from sexual relations during fasting, Yeshua does not say anything. Even the Apostle Paul makes mention of it.

So in regard to finding our pleasure on the day of fasting, this is one thing that needs to be abstained from in addition to all the other worldly things that have no place in your life. Period.

Now the statement continues in Isaiah 58:3—**and exploit all your laborers**. Now when you look at this word exploit in the Hebrew, it's נָגַס (*nagas*). It means to oppress. How ironic is that? These people who delight to know God are oppressing their fellow men. That's ironic because do you know what the purpose of fasting is? It's to go into the throne room and get deliverance from oppression. That's literally what you're seeking. You are seeking to be delivered from oppression, and yet you yourself are doing that very thing.

Let's go back to the LORD's prayer again—forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. We are to release that bitterness and bondage. We are to quit oppressing.

There's a fascinating parable in Matthew 18 that refers to a king who is calling his accounts due with his servants. One servant owed ten thousand talents of silver. It's an unimaginable amount of money.

So in this parable, the servant comes before the king and says, "Master, I can't pay you." The king tells him because of that the man's wife, children, and the man himself were to be sold to pay off the debt. The servant threw himself on the ground and begged for mercy. The king has compassion and shows mercy to the man. What does the man then do? He goes out and grabs one of his servants by the throat that owes him a hundred denarii. That amount is nothing. It's not even a crust of bread compared to the debt that he had. Because this man could not pay that debt, he too begged for mercy and patience promising to pay all he owed. The first man, however, had him thrown into prison. This is the attitude.

I'm going to tell you right now, if you have that kind of attitude, character, or that kind of heart when you go into fasting and think you're going to receive anything, like the man in the parable who received nothing, you also will receive nothing. In fact, it is abominable. Like the passage in Isaiah, the LORD is offended you would do that.

Now we continue on in Isaiah 58:4-6—⁴ Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as you do this day, to make your voice heard on high. ⁵ Is it a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? ⁶ 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 [this is what the fast is called for], and that you break every yoke? If we do this, we are to forgive men their debts.

Continuing in Isaiah 58:7—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?

Does this sound familiar because it's almost virtually identical to what Yeshua says in Matthew 25:35-36—³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. These are the people to whom Yeshua said— Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34).

You think of the power of authentic fasting with total brokenness of heart? Remember what we read in regard to those principles in 1 John 3:22? And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. What are the Commandments? "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

If we get that aspect, where we change our hearts and open our hearts to where we're concerned about the interest of others, and we don't hold bitterness against them, you have no idea how much power you are going to unlock when you go to prayer and fasting. It's powerful.

Finishing the statement in Isaiah 58:8-9—⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily. Let's be clear. God is not limited in His ability to heal. There is nothing he cannot accomplish when we do things His way. He can do anything when He decides to go to bat for us. When He speaks the word, it's over. Whatever you're dealing with is going to go away. It's going to be healed. Think about what it says in Psalm 107:20—He sent His word and healed them. This is the reality.

Picking up again in Isaiah 58:8-9—**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.'

The moment the LORD says—**Here I am**—whatever you're asking for, it's over. It's done. The word that comes forth from His mouth does not return to Him void. This is what we're seeking when we go into the throne room. We are seeking Yeshua to say—**here I am**.

Finishing Isaiah 58:9—**If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness.** One thing the enemy manages to do and our flesh manages to do so well is evil speech. It's a hellish thing that plagues us; speaking evil against our brother. I want you to think about something, and you have to remind yourself of this constantly, when you do this, you're cursing yourself. You are prohibiting the LORD from saying—**here I am**. The devil wants nothing more than for you be kicked out of the throne room. We do not want to get caught up in that.

I want to close today by taking you back in time. I actually want to take you back to March 30, 1863. This is right smack-dab in the middle of the Civil War, which was the bloodiest war in American history. Over 600,000 men died in war. There was unbelievable carnage.

It was during this time President Lincoln signed a proclamation. I want you to see somebody who actually understands what Biblical fasting looks like. Here was a guy that embraced this. Also, keep in mind this is where our American government used to be. This proclamation Lincoln signed, which we are going to read, was actually given by the Senate. It was written and introduced by a man by the name of James Harlan. He had this idea to proclaim a national day of prayer and fasting. That is what he wanted to do. I want to read this to you because it is very powerful.

Whereas, the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the Supreme Authority (emphasis added). Could you imagine today our Senate stepping up and declaring, “We recognize the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God who sent His Son to save.” Can you fathom that for a moment? We are a long way from home.

Continuing—**and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for National prayer and humiliation.**

What a fantastic thing Abraham Lincoln had behind him. He had a senate prompting him to embrace righteousness whereas today we have a House of Representative and much of the Senate prompting the president today to do wickedness. It's vile. Fortunately we have an amazing president right now who is trying to hold ground.

Going back to the previous statement and continuing—**and just Government of Almighty God, in all the affairs of men and of nations, has, by a resolution, requested the President to designate and set apart a day for National prayer and humiliation. And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon** (emphasis added).

I'm going to tell you out of this entire proclamation this is the most powerful line out of it all. Do you understand how carefully James Harlan had articulated his idea and thought? Do you know how biblically sound this is? He said—[assured hope](#). This means it is guaranteed. If we repent, we will have mercy. This is the promise over and over again in the word of God. You have to believe it.

What does God tell us in Jeremiah 3:22—[Return, you backsliding children, And I will heal your backslidings](#). James Harlan's declaration is a declaration of faith. This is a declaration that the word of God is true. Everything that is spoken by God and recorded in Scripture is truth.

I'm pointing this out because you must have this heart of faith where you believe without doubting, and you know for a fact if you truly embrace genuine repentance you have hope, you have forgiveness, and you will be healed and restored. This is a biblical fact; and to read this proclamation in the history of our country is a mind-blowing thing.

Continuing in the proclamation—[and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the LORD](#). Now, he's quoting Scripture from Psalm 33. Unbelievable! He is now coming forth with Scripture saying this is a scriptural fact. We can only be blessed if He is our God.

Moving on—[And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine Law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People?](#)

Like Daniel the Prophet, Abraham Lincoln signing this proclamation does not justify the thoughts and hearts Americans in that we are to look at all the righteousness we have done. No! It is a proclamation to declare we have sinned; we are guilty. He humbles the nation. He humbles himself. The Senate is humbled. This is powerful! This is the key to unlocking power.

Continuing—[We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God](#) (emphasis added).

Keep in mind he said this in 1860. If they had forgotten God back then, where are we now?

Continuing—[We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.](#)

Can you imagine this? In other words, he's saying, "If you think for a moment all this prosperity that has come to the country is because of your hard labor, you're delusional. It's a lie. It's the grace of God. It's total mercy."

Continuing—[Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness. Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views of the](#)

Senate, I do, by this my proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April, 1863, as a **day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer** (emphasis added).

That is powerful! Then he ends with this—**And I do hereby request all the People to abstain, on that day, from their ordinary secular pursuits** (emphasis added). Does this sound like somebody who understands what biblical fasting is? Does he tell us take the world just as it is? Does he tell us to continue as all things are? No! He tells us to eradicate, and get rid of everything the world is. You're doing this is a time of reverence and holiness.

Continuing—**and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the LORD, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.** (March 30th, 1863, Proclamation).

What an amazing articulation! This is what fasting is. This is what we are called to embrace.

We have a great need for this proclamation today. More than ever we need this prayer and fasting. We just this beautiful National Day of Prayer coinciding with the remembrance of the Holocaust. We need prayer and fasting, confession, and humility. We need all of these things, and it needs to come out of the halls of Congress. However, what's happening right now is anti-Semitism coming out of the halls of Congress. Pure wicked legislation of evil. Murderous evil is coming out of the halls of Congress.

Do we have cause to pray and fast today? If I look at your individual life, I promised you, I would find a cause for you to pray and fast. It would not take me long. Amen?