

FELLOWSHIP CHRISTIAN CENTER CHURCH

2012

“PERFECTING PURPOSE”

21 DAY DANIEL FAST

Introduction

Scripture does not command Christians to fast. God does not require or demand it of Christians. At the same time, the Bible presents fasting as something that is good, profitable, and beneficial. The book of Acts records believers fasting before they made important decisions (Acts 13:2; 14:23). Fasting and prayer are often linked together (Luke 2:37; 5:33) (Mark 9:20). Fasting is a way to demonstrate to God, and to ourselves, that we are serious about our relationship with Him. Fasting helps us gain a new perspective and a renewed reliance upon God.

Fasting is not intended to punish the flesh, but to redirect attention to God. Fasting should not be considered a “dieting method” either. The purpose of a biblical fast is not to lose weight, but rather to gain deeper fellowship with God. Fasting is not an end in itself, it is a means by which we can worship the Lord and submit ourselves in humility to Him. We don’t make God love us more than He does by fasting and afflicting ourselves. Fasting is not a way to get God to do what we want. Fasting changes us, not God. As we change and draw closer to God we tap into more of the Holy Spirit’s power through Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest spiritual benefits of fasting is becoming more attentive to God. Fasting is one of the means God has provided for deepening our relationship with Him. Through fasting we become aware of our own inadequacies and His adequacy. The ultimate purpose of all fasting, including the Daniel Fast, is to change us in ways that have social and interpersonal impact and as a result opens us up more to the Power of the Holy Spirit.

But Daniel determined that he would not defile himself by eating the king’s food or drinking his wine, so he asked the head of the palace staff to exempt him from the royal diet. Daniel 1:8 (NIV)

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 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.” Daniel 10:2, 3 (NIV)

Background of the Daniel Fast

The Daniel Fast is for those who want to honor God by fasting from certain foods for a designated length of time. This fast offers great health benefits, but is primarily a spiritual experience.

The reason Daniel's "diet" is called a fast is because Daniel gave up certain foods to honor God. He was fasting from "Royal Food" that would defile his own body, and also defile God. In doing this Daniel honored God with his body, mind and soul.

Daniel had been taken into captivity by the Babylonian army as a young man, and transported to the city of Babylon. He and his three friends from Judea were being trained as diplomats/bureaucrats to serve in the Babylonian government. It was probably King Nebuchadnezzar's plan to have them carry out his administration policies over the Jewish remnant.

The plan included immersing Daniel and his friends into Babylonian culture by giving them the finest delicacies and wine from the king's own provisions (see Dan.1:5). Daniel proposed to the king's servants that they be allowed to "fast" from the king's sumptuous fare and to eat only vegetables and drink only water (v. 12). If, after 10 days, they were not in better health than their Babylonian counterparts, Daniel promised that they could be **dealt** with as the Babylonian guards wished.

At the end of the 10-day test period, Daniel and his friends were healthier in body and mind than the men who were served food from the royal palace (v v. 19, 20). As a result of his faithfulness, Daniel lived a long and useful life. Through his choice of food, Daniel sacrificed temporary satisfaction for **long-term** benefits.

As we, Fellowship Christian Center Church, operate in the spirit of "**Perfecting Purpose**" in 2012, I believe GOD is going to release HIS "Favor" anointing over us like never before. We must remain steadfast, unmovable always abounding (**working**) in the works of the Lord. As members of the body of Christ it is imperative that we labor in the spirit of excellence, allow the Holy Spirit to order our steps and seek GOD's power through fasting and prayer.

The Daniel Fast Prescription

Step 1: Fast as a Spiritual Commitment

The Daniel Fast consists of more than just a diet adjustment or the withholding of food. It involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (Dan1:8). Although he bargained with his overseer, the whole process began with a spiritual commitment to God. The Daniel Fast requires a spiritual equation, not just a physical solution.

Step 2: Reflect Inner Desire by Outer Discipline

Many people have a desire for spiritual health, but they struggle with disciplining themselves to avoid those activities that are destructive **to** their spiritual health. If you want a strong physical body, you must make a wholehearted commitment to discipline your body. You must say no to improper food and yes to healthy food. **Out of Daniel's** deep spiritual commitment he said to his overseer, "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink" (*Dan 1:12*).

The Daniel Fast will allow you to deepen your spiritual commitment through constant prayer during the fast. It is not enough to do without food; you must pray during your Daniel Fast that God will give you the strength of your commitment to stay on the fast.

Be sure to fulfill your fast to the conclusion of your commitment. You made a spiritual commitment to God for **21** days; therefore don't violate your fast. In all things, "We are God's fellow workers" (*1 Cor. 3:9*). As you do your part by sticking to your fast commitment, God will do His part in completing the good work that He has begun in your life.

Your participation in a Daniel Fast is a statement of faith to God that you are committed to seeking "the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Daniel's objection to the Babylonian diet was an act that had social and political implications and may well have cost him his life. The exact reason Daniel refused to eat the king's meat is not clear, but it is evident that "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" with Babylonian culture (v. 8).

Step 3: Fast as a Statement of Faith to Others

Most people define faith in the words of Scripture, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

Faith may also be defined as “affirming what God said in His Word.” Daniel was making a statement of faith when he asked for only vegetables to eat and water to drink, then dared to ask the overseer to compare the appearance for the four sons of Israel with the young men who ate the royal food (see Dan. 1:13). Daniel’s statement of faith, therefore, was not just a private act. Faith is acting on God’s Word. When you modify your diet for a biblical goal to accomplish the will of God, you are acting on faith, and expressing your willingness for it to be a public act.

There are times when fasting makes a statement of faith to other Christians and to the world. “The official told Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king... Why should he see you looking worse?” (*Dan. 1:10 NIV*). When you modify your diet over a period of time, others will notice.

It is important that you have the right attitude about being about a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Daniel’s refusal of the king’s delicacies was a clear statement that he was not impressed with Babylonian culture. When you clearly know that you are royal citizen of God’s kingdom, nothing the world has to offer will impress you.

Step 4: The Daniel Fast Will Lead to Spiritual Insight

The results of fasting were ongoing in the lives of Daniel and his three friends. “To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding” (*Dan. 1:17, NIV*). The knowledge God gave them was apparently the reward of their fast. Withholding food does not make us smart. God gives wisdom and knowledge to those who have the self-discipline to withhold food and to spend their time praying, reading His Word and seeking His will.

After Daniel and his three friends completed their fast, “The king talked with them, and he found none equal to [those who fasted]” (*v. 19, NIV*). These men who had self-determination, “In all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found ten times better than all” (*v. 20*).

Step 5: Pay Attention to the Spiritual

- Submit your spirit to the Holy Spirit. (see Acts 9:26)
- Search with your whole heart. (see Jeremiah 29:13)
- Allow the Lord to search you. (see Psalm 139:23-24)
- Allow the Holy Spirit to teach you. (see John 14:26)
- Study God’s Word diligently. (see 2 Timothy 2:15)
- Pray without ceasing. (see Acts 9:26)

One of the great things about the Daniel Fast is that you are not limited to any specific amount of food, but rather to the kinds of food you can eat. The Daniel Fast is limited to vegetables (includes fruits) and water.

Special Note: if you have health issues, **please contact your health** professional for advice before committing to any fast including the Daniel Fast. If you would like a list of the foods included and excluded in the Daniel Fast to show your doctor, just copy the contents of this document.

Foods to include in your diet during the Daniel Fast

All fruits: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include, **but are not limited to**, apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon

All vegetables: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include **but are not limited to** artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

All whole grains: Including, but not limited to, whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

All nuts and seeds: Including, but not limited to, sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

All legumes: These can be canned or dried. Legumes **include but are not limited to** dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

All quality oils: Including, but not limited to, olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

Beverages: 100% juices, spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

Other: tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

Foods to avoid on the Daniel Fast

- All meat and animal products including but not limited to beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and fish.
- All dairy products including but not limited to milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.
- All sweeteners **and artificial sweeteners**, including but not limited to, sugar, raw sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, and cane juice, Equal, Sweet and Low, and Splenda.
- All leavened bread including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.
- All refined and processed food products including, **but not limited to**, artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.
- All deep fried foods including but not limited to potato chips, French fries, corn chips.
- All solid fats including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat.
- Beverages including but not limited to coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

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