

## ***THE PRIVILEGE AND POWER OF FASTING – COREY STARK***

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### I. INTRODUCTION

A. There has been a resurgence of fasting in recent decades, as God calls His people to regular fasting as part of a normal Christian lifestyle in preparation for the escalating glory and crisis in the decades preceding His return. We must prepare ourselves to honor God and fulfill His purpose.

*“Fasting begets prophets and strengthens strong men. Fasting makes lawgivers wise; it is the soul’s safeguard, the body’s trusted comrade, the armor of the champion, the training of the athlete.” – Basil, Bishop of Caesarea (AD 330–379)*

*“Fasting... opens the way for the outpouring of the Spirit and the restoration of God’s house. Fasting in this age of the absent Bridegroom is in expectation of His return. Soon there will be the midnight cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ It will be too late then to fast and to pray. The time is now.” – God’s Chosen Fast, Arthur Wallis*

B. God established His Kingdom in such a way that those things which seem weakest are actually the most powerful before God. The natural mind argues, *“Why prayer and fasting? After all, we’re just telling God what He already knows without eating food.”* Without the mindset of Christ, it is impossible to understand the wisdom of a lifestyle of prayer and fasting. Yet, there is truly nothing more powerful in which to engage, as God’s Kingdom and creation itself is governed by prayer (Heb. 1:3). When we give ourselves to prayer and fasting it directly impacts the spiritual realm, including the activity of angels and demons thus, having a dynamic impact on the natural realm (Dan. 10).

C. Prayer transcends both time and distance. The Apostle Paul could impact and bring change to the Church in Ephesus while he was imprisoned far away in Rome. In fact, although our prayers may feel like they ascend in weakness sometimes, the truth is that they are answered in power from the throne of God, which is the governmental center of the entire universe (Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5). The reality is that the act of prayer is foreign to the human spirit unless we are experiencing God’s grace (Zech. 12.10). Therefore, the Christian life requires cooperation with God’s grace to be effective and so, God has graciously given us the *“gift of fasting,”* as a privilege to aid us in this noble pursuit.

D. God *will not* do our part and we *cannot* do His part. If we do not do our part, then some of the God-ordained blessing of His heart that He would have joyfully given us is withheld (Isa. 30:18-19; Jas. 4:2). Our part includes making quality decisions to deny ourselves (say no to sin and pride); to feed our spirit on God’s Word; to ask for divine help and intervention through prayer with fasting; and to embrace godly activities (giving, ministry, service) and relationships. God’s part includes releasing supernatural influences upon our hearts (power, wisdom, desires); on our bodies (healing); in our circumstances (provision, protection, direction); and our relationships (favor).

E. Fasting is a God-given gift and privilege; an invitation into a deeper revelation of God and experience of His power, love, affections and emotions. It is the road to encounter. Fasting does not earn us God’s favor but tenderizes our hearts to feel more of what He feels and positions us under the “waterfall” of God’s grace to receive more, having a deeper impact on our heart at an accelerated pace.

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F. The following gives both historical and biblical precedence, as well as general guidelines and helpful information for wise fasting to help prepare you for a successful and impactful fast.

### G. Fasting is Biblical

1. The practice of regular fasting as normal Christian behavior was taught by Jesus (Mt. 6:16–17, 9:15), exercised by the early church (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23), and has been the regular discipline of believers throughout church history (2 Cor. 11:27). The practice of fasting in Scripture includes abstinence from food (Dan. 10:3) for varying durations from one meal up to forty days.
2. Abstaining from all food for extended periods of time is biblical, but was more rare in Scripture (Ex. 34:28; 1 Kgs. 19:5-8; Lk. 4:2), and thus should never be undertaken without counsel and appropriate supervision. The same standard applies to an *absolute fast* (Esther fast—no food or water for three days) of any duration (Est. 4:16). The maximum length of an adult fast that is biblically supported is forty days without food for a male adult in good health, and three days without water. The Bible does not speak of children engaging in fasting food.

### H. Fasting Is Always Voluntary

1. Though spiritual leaders may invite others to join in corporate fasting with a specific goal in mind and for a specific time, fasting can never be forced or made compulsory. In light of this, fasting is not a mandatory requirement for joining the HPC staff or community, but we do promote and encourage it as a biblically and historically proven means of obtaining God’s grace in the context of commitment to prayer and to the Word (Joel 2:15).
2. The level at which a person engages in fasting (particularly food) should be determined according to age and with regard to any physical limitations. Those with a known or suspected physical disability or illness, or those with any history of an eating disorder, should never fast, except in consultation with, and under the supervision of a qualified doctor.

### I. Minors, Mothers and Elders

1. Minors should never engage in fasting without express parental consent and oversight. Those who desire to fast are encouraged to consider limiting their fast to a partial day, or partial foods (meats, sweets, etc.), along with non-food abstentions, such as entertainment and other forms of media. If older teenager’s fast food under their parents’ supervision, we encourage them to use juice and protein drinks to sustain them, out of consideration for their health and metabolism.
2. Pregnant or nursing mothers should not fast food or drink as it could negatively affect the health and development of their baby and their own personal health.
3. There is biblical precedence for those in their elder years to fast, such as Moses, Daniel, and Anna (Lk. 2:36-38). However, as with any age the level at which a person engages in fasting (particularly food) should be determined by health and with regard to any physical limitations.

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### J. Regular Fasting

1. Participation in regular fasting as a lifestyle necessitates a healthy lifestyle on days when food is not being fasted, and should include exercise and proper nutrition and supplementation.
2. A “fasted lifestyle” is a disciplined lifestyle, in which we steward our bodies and time with wisdom and diligence. Fasting is not only abstention; it is an exchange where we abstain from the lesser things in order to “feast” on the greater things, such as God’s Word and prayer, whereby the abundance of His grace is made more readily available to us. When undertaken with this type of commitment, a fasted lifestyle is sustainable on a long-term basis, just as it was for Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1).

***Dan. 1:8 Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies [meats, sweets], nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself... 15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies. 16 Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables. 17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.***

### K. Benefits of Fasting

1. While the physical impact of fasting is real, the spiritual benefits of fasting are undeniable. Any fast undertaken must be done with spiritual wholeheartedness and wisdom when dealing with our physical body; we must count the cost honestly and honor the temple of the Holy Spirit. Whether we are partaking or abstaining, everything should be for the glory of God.
2. See section II “Seven Biblical Purposes for Fasting” below.

## II. SEVEN BIBLICAL PURPOSES FOR FASTING

### A. Power in Ministry

1. We can fast for a greater release of God’s power in our ministry. There are many biblical examples of fasting for this purpose. When the disciples could not set a demonized boy free, Jesus told them that the demon involved was the kind that would not go out except by prayer and fasting (Mt. 17:21). The great power with which John the Baptist preached was undoubtedly connected to his fasted lifestyle (Mt. 11:18; Lk. 1:15, 80). The same can be said of the power that was seen in the apostle Paul’s ministry, as fasting was a regular part of his life (Acts 9:9; 2 Cor. 6:5, 11:27). Early church writings confirm that they fasted twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays to experience more of the power of God as well.

***Mt. 17:19 ...the disciples ...said, “Why could we not cast it out?” 20 So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief... 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”***

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2. Throughout church history many anointed men and women have practiced regular fasting as they led great revivals - Charles Finney, George Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, Charles Wesley, Marie Woodworth-Etter, Aimee Simple McPherson, John G. Lake and Mahesh Chavda are but a few.

B. *Prophetic Revelation of the End Times*

1. It takes supernatural help to understand the deeper things in God's heart for the end times (Eph. 1:17-19; 1 Cor. 2:9-12). We will not gain this understanding by natural means. It will take spiritual understanding of God's Word to grasp His end time plan (Jer. 23:18-22; Dan. 11:32-33; Acts 2:17-19).

2. As we approach the end of the age, God will again increase the sending of angels to His end-time messengers like Daniel (Jn. 1:51; Rev. 10). We must set our hearts to seek prophetic revelation by praying with fasting for supernatural revelation and understanding.

***Dan. 9:3 I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer with fasting... 21 while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel... 22 talked with me, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand... 23 consider the matter, and understand the vision" (Dan. 10:2-3; 12, 14)***

C. *Fulfillment of God's Promises*

1. The Lord has prophetic plans, related to His end time strategy for each city upon the earth and therefore, has given the church in every region prophetic promises. We must not attempt to passively receive these promises with an idle faith, but rather actively petition Him, pressing in for the full measure of His heart for our day. To this end God ordained unified corporate engagement in intercessory worship with fasting.

2. Scripture is full of examples of men and women of faith used by God to usher in the next season or completion of His promises, such as Daniel, Nehemiah, Simeon, Anna, John the Baptist, Paul and Jesus.

***Dan. 9:2 ...I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet... seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer ...with fasting (Dan. 11:1)***

D. *Deliverance from Crisis (Sacred Assemblies)*

1. Fasting to avert a national crisis, when there was no human solution was common in the Old Testament. God consistently intervened in Israel's history when they turned to Him in wholehearted prayer with fasting. In Joel's day, Israel faced escalating crisis through natural disaster (Joel 1) and military invasion (Joel 2). In response, Joel called for a Sacred Assembly, proclaiming that God might minimize, reverse, delay, or they could possibly avert the entire crisis, if they humbled themselves in wholehearted prayer with fasting (Joel 1:13-14; 2:12-15).

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2. Other examples Nineveh (Jon. 3:3-9), Moses (Dt. 9:7-21) and in Ezra's day (Ezra 10:1-6).

***Joel 2:15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; 16 gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes...***

***Joel 2:12 "...therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. 14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him... (Zeph. 2:1-3)***

3. Fasting for national deliverance has been practiced throughout history. England's leaders have called national days of prayer and fasting at several notable times of crisis. In 1588, the nation fasted when the Spanish Armada threatened their security. Later, they fasted for God's help as Napoleon prepared to invade England. Again, during World War II, George VI called a day of prayer and fasting while the Battle of Britain raged, asking God to stop the Nazis from invading. On each of these three momentous occasions God spared England from a great national crisis in response to national prayer with fasting.

E. Protection from Enemies

1. Fasting for personal protection is very scriptural, as seen by Daniel when thrown in the Lion's den (Dan. 6:18-23), by Esther and Israel under threat of death (Est. 3:13; 4:3, 16-17; 5:1-6; 9:1) and by the early church for Peter while in prison (Acts 12:1-9). Church history is filled with examples of how prayer and fasting led to the deliverance of God's servants from peril and danger. The church will be summoned to fast often as we enter the unfolding events of the end times (Ps. 91).

2. After the Jewish captives from Babylon returned to Israel to begin rebuilding their nation, they needed help. Ezra the priest led a group of people back to Israel to help them rebuild Jerusalem. However, the dangers of travel in the ancient world were serious because bands of thieves attacked traveling groups and robbed them of their gold and supplies, killing all the people and selling their possessions. Not wanting to request an escort of soldiers from the Persian king, because he had said that God's blessing would be upon them, Ezra led the nation in fasting and prayer to ask God for supernatural protection and direction as they passed through foreign lands (Ezra 8:21-23).

***Ezra 8:21 Then I proclaimed a fast... that we might humble ourselves before our God... 22 For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him." 23 So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.***

F. Direction and Guidance

1. Immediately after Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, he fasted for three days, waiting to receive clear direction from the Lord (Acts 9:9). Throughout the New Testament, we

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see the church fasting for supernatural wisdom and direction. While in Antioch, Paul and his team fasted and prayed for prophetic direction that would result in changing history through a strategic missions assignment to reach the Gentiles (Acts 13:1-2).

2. Fasting and praying for the selection and appointment of ministers is also found throughout Scripture. Jesus prayed all night to receive direction before selecting His twelve apostles (Lk. 6:12-13). Paul and his team again prayed with fasting when they needed to select and commission the elders of the new churches in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (Acts 14:23).

***Acts 14:23 When they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.***

### G. Encounter and Intimacy - The Bridegroom Fast

1. Jesus introduces the highest expression of fasting in Matthew 9:14-17 (Zech. 8:19)

***Mt. 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?” 15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast”.***

2. The disciples felt cherished and loved by Jesus as they rejoiced in the intimacy of His friendship. He said the joy in His nearness that they were experiencing would soon turn to mourning in His absence when He was taken from them at His death. The Bible describes this as “lovesickness” (Song 2:5; 5:8).

3. Jesus invites us into a new kind of fast based on His joy and identity as the Bridegroom God. It is no accident that the *only time* God describes the nature of His joy, it is as a Bridegroom (Is. 62:5). It is also no accident that the first time He introduces Himself as the Bridegroom, He knits it to fasting! He saved the best wine for last, as we can only experience this deep affection by the Holy Spirit (Eph 3:16-19).

## III. DEFINING BIBLICAL FASTING - FIVE TYPES

A. Biblical fasting is an abstaining from food, whether partially or absolutely, for various lengths of time, ranging from a *single meal* up to *forty days*. Below are five different types of fasts.

1. Regular Fast - We go without food, drinking only water or liquids without calories.
2. Liquid Fast - We go without solid foods and drink only light liquids, such as fruit juices.
3. Absolute Fast - We abstain from all food and water.

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4. Partial Fast - We abstain from tasty foods and eat only certain things like vegetables or nuts (Dan. 1:8-21; 10:2-3). John Wesley often fasted on bread and water alone.

5. Benedict Fast - We eat only one meal a day, established by Saint Benedict of Nursia, Italy (525 AD).

B. However, beyond simply abstaining from food, the fast that we are after is more than just denying ourselves physical nourishment. Our fasting is driven by a *hunger for intimacy with the Bridegroom God* that is far greater than our hunger for anything else, including food. We seek a food that transcends the natural realm (Jn. 6:27) and gives life to our souls. It is the “friends of the Bridegroom” that fasted (Mt. 9).

***Jn. 6:27 Labor for the food that comes from above.***

***Jn. 4:31 ...His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” 32 But He said... “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” 33 Therefore the disciples said... “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?”***

C. Throughout history, many have fasted with the wrong focus, seeking either to earn God’s favor or prove dedication to Him, but we can never manipulate God. Even extreme self-debasements found in many of the false religions cannot earn anything from God. However, what God does delight in, is our *sincere desire of intimacy* with Him and *pursuit of obedience* to Him. Therefore, if greater intimacy or empowerment for obedience is our aim we will surely be met. Conversely, sacrifice without sincerity of obedience is fruitless.

***1 Sam. 15:22 So Samuel said: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.***

D. Regular fasting is part of the normal Christian life. It is quite literally “Christianity 101.” Twice in Matthew 6:16-17 Jesus used the phrase, “when you fast”, not “if you fast”, emphasizing the implication that fasting was meant to occur in the normal course of *every* disciple’s life. Jesus promised God would openly reward those who approach fasting with the right spirit (Mt. 6:18).

***Mt. 6:16 “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.***

E. Some ask me, “How do I know that I am fasting for the right reason?” My answer is simple and freeing. *Don’t fast until you cannot stand not to!* Now you’re free to do it for the right reason ☺

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IV. NINE BIBLICAL DURATIONS OF FASTING

A. I want to give dignity, honor and value to the short fasts, as well as the long ones. In fact, one meal given to God with the right motive is far better than 1000 meals given to God without it.

1. One Meal – Fish and loaves

***Jn. 6:9 There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish...***

2. Part of a Day – Either night or day

***Dan. 6:18 Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and... his sleep went from him.***

***Judges 20:26 The children of Israel... sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening.***

3. One Day

***Neh. 9:1 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads. (1 Sam. 7:6; 14:24; Jer. 36:6)***

4. Three Days

***Esther 4:16 Go gather all the Jews... and fast... neither eat nor drink for three days. (1 Sam. 30:12; Mt. 15:32; Mk. 8:2-3; Acts 9:9)***

5. Seven Days

***1 Chr. 10:12 All the valiant men arose and... fasted 7 days. (1 Sam. 31:11-13; 2 Sam. 12:15-18, 21-23)***

6. Ten Days

***Dan. 1:12 Test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.***

7. Fourteen Days

***Acts 27:33 And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing.”***

8. Twenty-One Days

***Dan. 10:2 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.***

9. Forty Days – Moses x2, Elijah, Jesus

***Ex. 24:28 So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water... (Ex. 34:28; Dt. 9:9, 18; 1 Kgs. 19:8; Mt. 4:1-2; Lk. 4:1-2)***

## V. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### A. Physically Preparing for a Fast That Extends More Than Two Days

1. Prepare your body for the fast and prevent constipation during and after the fast by eating certain preventative foods at least two days beforehand (even longer before an extended fast), such as: fresh fruit and raw vegetables, fruit or vegetable juices, oatmeal, etc.
2. Eat smaller meals a few days prior to the fast. Avoid high-fat and foods containing excessive sugar, flour or caffeine before the fast. It's definitely not advisable to make your fast more difficult by detoxing due to your choice of food on last few days before you begin. Make your commitment and determine the length. You can fast in many different ways. Pray and ask God what he will give you faith for in terms of the duration of the fast.
3. A "Daniel fast" with vegetables and water, is good for those carrying a heavy workload. A *fruit or vegetable juice* fast allows you to enter into fasting but still gives enough energy to function. Many people have done a 40-day juice fast. If you have sugar sensitivities or problems (e.g. diabetes), consult your doctor before attempting this (or any other) fast. A *water-only fast* has been undertaken by many people. We would not encourage this without strong medical supervision, particularly in the case of young people. Depending on your weight and metabolism, you can go forty days on water alone. A *total fast* is without food or water. Do not go beyond three days without water. Discuss your plans with your doctor, church leaders, and spouse or parents. We do not encourage this type of fast without specific confirmation from the Lord through your church leadership or parents.

### B. Helpful Hints for Your Fast (Physical)

1. Drink plenty of non-tap water. Drinking at least half of your body weight in ounces of water per day is a good rule of thumb whether you are fasting or not. Distilled water is most beneficial, but filtered and purified water also work well.
2. It is wise to abstain from strong stimulants such as caffeinated and sugary drinks during a fast, including the artificial sweeteners found in diet drinks. Also, avoid soy protein drinks, which have been known to cause health problems during a fast.
3. If you are on a juice fast, drink raw fruit juices such as apple, grape, and pineapple, which are excellent sources of necessary natural sugar to stabilize blood sugar and keep energy levels up. Orange and grapefruit juice are also good, but they are not recommended for arthritis or allergy sufferers. Monitor juice acidity carefully as it can cause canker sores (mouth ulcers). Raw vegetable juices such as carrot, celery, beet, or green vegetable combinations are excellent as well. Fresh fruit and vegetable juices can be made in a juice extractor or purchased ready-made (be sure to buy juices without any added sugars). Some of the benefits of drinking raw juice versus bottled are that it does not stimulate digestion (hunger) and it maintains all of its enzymes and nutritional value.

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4. Expect some physical discomforts because of the detoxification process, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains or dizziness. Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches, but it is a part of the detoxification process. Physical annoyances may also include edginess, weariness, tiredness, nausea, and sleepiness.

5. During a fast, four major areas of the body are going through a detoxification process. Take care to attend to each of these:

- The bowels/colon/large intestines: During a fast of three days or more, taking an herbal laxative (inquire at your local health store) or an enema before bedtime will help eliminate solid waste products; these can cause headaches and sluggishness if left in the body during a fast. This should be done early during the fast and then intermittently throughout the rest of the fast. The body begins detoxifying during a fast, depositing the toxins into the intestines. If you do not take a laxative or an enema, the toxins can hurt your intestines or reabsorb into your bloodstream, making you feel nauseous.
- The kidneys: Drinking fruit juices, vegetable juices, broth, or just plenty of water will remove many toxins via the kidneys.
- The lungs: If strength permits, walk half an hour during the day to help cleanse the lungs. Also do some deep breathing throughout the day by inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth.
- The skin: Since one-third of the waste products eliminated during a fast are removed via the skin, adequate bathing is essential. Use a natural bristle body brush or loofah sponge on your skin prior to bathing, to help cleanse the skin.

### C. Helpful Hints for Your Fast (Spiritual)

1. Seek advice and confirmation before the fast. If you are under 18 years of age, discuss your desire to fast with your parents. Spiritual covering, submission, and unity are important factors when fasting. Remember, fasting is an attitude of the heart! Do the fast with someone else. Discuss your plans with your church leaders and ask them if they would consider fasting with you. Two are better than one! We encourage parents and kids to consider fasting together. Several generations fasting together has a powerful impact.

2. Don't boast about fasting. Let people know you won't be eating *only* if necessary (Mt. 6:16-18).

3. Have a clear target as your prayer focus. Purchase a journal and write down your goals, so you can run with it (Hab. 2:2). Take time to pray and read the Word. This may seem obvious, but busyness and distractions can keep you from devotions. Reading books with testimonies of victories gained through fasting will encourage you, too. *Shaping History through Prayer and Fasting* by Derek Prince, *Fast Forward* by Lou Engle, and *God's Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis are just some of the books about fasting that are available.

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4. Expect to hear God’s voice in the Word, dreams, visions, and revelations. Daniel prepared himself to receive revelation through fasting (Dan. 10:1-2). There is a fasting reward (Mt. 6:18).
5. Prepare for the possibility of opposition. On the day of your fast you can bet that donuts will be at the office or in class. Your spouse (or your mom) will suddenly be inspired to cook your favorite meals. Press through. Many times you may feel more tension build at home. Satan tempted Jesus on His fast, and we should be prepared for the same. Discouragement may come in like a flood, but recognize the source and take your stand on the victory of Christ.
6. If you fail, don’t give in to condemnation. This can be a major tool of the enemy. Even though you may fail several times, God always extends grace. Just hit the “delete” button and continue on your fast. Feel free to rest a lot and continue to exercise with supervision.
7. Remember, breakthroughs often come *after* a fast, not during it. Do not listen to the lie that nothing is happening. It is my conviction that every fast done in faith will be rewarded.

#### D. How to Successfully Break Your Fast

1. Break your fast gradually. At this point you will need to exercise watchful self-control. Break your fast on a meal that is light and easy to digest (i.e., a pound of grapes, a shredded apple, watermelon, or steamed vegetables).
2. When breaking a fast of ten days or more, the break-in period should be extended one day for every four days of fasting. A fast of three days or more should never be broken by eating a normal meal (including animal proteins, bread, sugar, dairy, and processed foods) because these heavy foods put a severe strain and shock on the digestive organs which have been resting throughout the fast. Eating too heavily after a fast can produce serious discomfort (stomach cramps, nausea, and weakness) and can nullify the physical benefits of fasting; it can also cause serious irreversible complications or even death. After breaking an extended fast, continue drinking fruit or vegetable juices because the stomach is continuing to detoxify.
3. During any fast exceeding two days, your stomach will shrink. Do not over-expand it again by overeating. If you have been prone to eating too heavily, guard against going back to this habit. If you train yourself to eat more lightly, your stomach will adjust itself accordingly.
4. While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following:
  - 1st-3rd day after the fast (increase amount of days for extended fast): Eat fruit and raw/steamed vegetables only. Example meals for the first few days are a pound of fruit, a baked or boiled potato without butter, steamed vegetables, or a vegetable-only salad without oil-based dressing. Avoid bananas for the first few days; they have no juice in them and can easily cause constipation.

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- Thereafter, you may return to heavier foods such as animal proteins, but maintaining a healthy diet after the fast will promote lifelong health and allow you to fast correctly in the future.

5. Take extra care in breaking a water fast. Begin with drinking fruit or vegetable juices and gradually ease into eating fruit and steamed vegetables. It is important after a fast to begin to discern between real hunger and cravings so you do not feed your cravings.

#### E. Important Medical Information

1. Years of fasting incorrectly can cause permanent physical damage to your body. These negative effects are not typically felt at a young age, but they will accumulate after years of fasting. In their zeal, some people have begun fasting in an extreme way before understanding how fasting physically affects the body; increasing your understanding and taking care of your body while both fasting and eating will ensure your ability to live the fasted lifestyle for many years to come.

2. Pregnant or nursing mothers should never fast all food and/or drink, as fasting could be very dangerous to their baby's development and health, and their own personal health. Pregnant or nursing mothers could engage in types of fasting such as giving up certain kinds of food. However, women who are nursing or pregnant must always maintain a balanced diet. Any kind of fasting which leads to detoxification could be dangerous to the baby as the toxins can affect the baby via the mother's milk or her bloodstream.

3. People who have struggled with eating disorders in the past should undertake any fasting with wisdom and caution. Fasting should not be used as a motive for weight-loss; it is important to enter back into "normal" healthy eating after a long fast (as described in the previous section).

4. If you have a diagnosed illness and/or are taking prescription medicine, fasting should only be done under the direct supervision of a doctor or healthcare professional.

5. Some people have trouble fasting and become extremely hungry, dizzy, and nauseous because they have undiagnosed low blood sugar, so they should drink fruit and vegetable juices to help keep the blood sugar stable during short fasts. If the juice contains too much sugar for your system, dilute it by 50 percent with water or drink a "green drink" (made by juicing carrots, celery, spinach, and parsley). If these or any symptoms persist, you should stop fasting and seek immediate professional help from a doctor or healthcare professional.

6. If you have digestive trouble after breaking a fast (e.g., diarrhea), mix a cup of unsweetened applesauce with a cup of cooked brown rice. This should stop the diarrhea. Also, take digestive enzymes (inquire at your local health store) to aid your stomach's digestive transition.

## ***THE PRIVILEGE AND POWER OF FASTING – COREY STARK***

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### **This Handout Is for Informational Purposes Only**

*The information in this handout reflects only limited opinions, experience, and suggestions and is not meant to substitute the advice provided by your doctor or other healthcare professional. You should not use this information for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease, or prescribing any medication. Additionally, this information is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. These tips have been found to be helpful and successful, but they are no guarantee that you will fast without experiencing any difficulties. You will need to do your own research, talk with health experts and those experienced in fasting, and continually ask the Lord for increased discernment and wisdom concerning fasting and healthy living.*

### **Additional Resources on Fasting and Healthy Living**

*The Rewards of Fasting*, Mike Bickle and Dana Candler

*Fast Forward*, Lou Engle

*Shaping History through Prayer and Fasting*, Derek Prince

*The Genesis Diet*, Dr. Gordon Tessler

*God's Chosen Fast*, Arthur Wallis

*Hunger for God*, John Piper

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