

Agape House of Worship
Wednesday Bible Study – January 7, 2026

Study Series: Prepared for New Things: Fasting, Prayer, and the Pathway to Greater Works

Part 1: Preparation Before Manifestation

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What is Biblical Fasting?

Fasting is a significant biblical instrument that God uses for preparing people for new seasons, releasing divine power, and experiencing miracles by humbling the flesh, increasing spiritual sensitivity, seeking God's guidance, and strengthening faith for spiritual warfare and breakthroughs, seen in figures like Jesus, Esther, and Daniel, and practiced by the early church for breakthrough, deliverance, and revival.

Biblical Examples & Purposes

- **Esther:** Queen Esther called for a communal three-day fast, abstaining from food and water, for all Jews in Susa (Shushan) to pray for deliverance from Haman's plot to annihilate them, a pivotal moment demonstrating faith and courage before she approached the king, resulting in salvation for her people. (Esther 4:15-16)
- **Daniel:** Daniel practiced a form of partial fast, choosing vegetables and water over the rich foods and wine from the Babylonian king's table (Daniel 1), and also observed a stricter fast (no choice foods, meat, or wine) while seeking God's wisdom, which led to significant revelation, including understanding visions and dreams, highlighting his dedication to spiritual understanding over physical comfort. (Daniel 10)
- **Joel:** In Joel 2:12, God calls His people to a corporate fast for sincere repentance and restoration, urging them to "Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning," emphasizing genuine internal change (tearing their hearts) over outward religious acts (tearing clothes) to receive God's mercy and blessing, as He is gracious, compassionate, and slow to anger.
- **Jesus' Ministry:** Jesus began His public ministry by fasting for 40 days and nights in the wilderness after His baptism, a period of intense spiritual preparation where He was tempted by Satan, resisted with Scripture, and emerged to begin teaching and healing, demonstrating His authority and reliance on God before launching His mission. This event, detailed in Matthew 4, established His obedience and readiness for His work, fulfilling what Israel failed to do.
- **The Early Church:** In the Book of Acts, fasting is presented as a practice used by the early Christian community for spiritual focus and discernment. In Acts 13:2, the leaders in Antioch were ministering and fasting when the Holy Spirit instructed them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for missionary work. This instance highlights how fasting was used in conjunction with prayer to seek divine guidance and to commission leaders for specific ministries within the early church.

Question: Why does God use fasting as a form of preparation in the Bible?

Fasting precedes deliverance, revelation, and divine intervention.

- **Deliverance:** Fasting is linked to breaking spiritual strongholds, yokes of wickedness, and setting people free from oppression.
 - In Matthew 17:21, Jesus states that "this kind" (certain spiritual battles or demons) does not go out except by prayer and fasting.
 - The people of Israel fasting for deliverance from their enemies (1 Samuel 7:6) and Esther's fast that prevented a genocide.
- **Revelation:** Fasting is a way to achieve spiritual clarity, a heightened sense of God's presence, and receive guidance or a clear vision for one's purpose.
 - Daniel fasted to seek divine understanding and received a vision of the end times (Daniel 10).
 - Moses fasted before receiving the Ten Commandments, demonstrating a link between fasting and receiving God's commandments.

- **Divine Intervention:** Fasting humbles the believer and demonstrates dependence on God, which invites His supernatural power and intervention in human affairs. This practice is used during times of crisis to seek God's aid for complex problems or threatening situations.
 - Ezra's fast for a safe journey. In Ezra 8:21–23, Ezra and his people fasted and prayed for protection on their journey from Babylon to Jerusalem; rather than requesting royal guards, they relied on God, who granted them safe passage.
 - Nehemiah's fast for rebuilding the nation. Nehemiah's fast, prompted by Jerusalem's ruin, combined mourning and confession to seek God's favor. This spiritual preparation secured the divine favor necessary to rebuild the walls, proving that prayer and repentance are vital precursors to national restoration.
 - Jesus Himself fasted for 40 days, preparing for spiritual battles and empowering His ministry, setting a pattern for believers to strengthen their spirit and accelerate God's timing and intervention.

Question: Can anyone share their story of deliverance, revelation and divine intervention preceded by fasting?

Fasting expands spiritual capacity

Fasting is a discipline that shifts focus from physical desires to spiritual needs, fostering deeper intimacy with God, increasing spiritual alertness, sharpening focus on divine will, and building spiritual endurance through self-denial and heightened awareness. By temporarily setting aside earthly distractions, individuals aim to strengthen their spirit, overcome temptations, gain clarity, and experience renewal.

- **Revealing Internal Barriers:** Fasting often brings hidden character flaws, such as irritability or fear, to the surface. By exposing these "idols" or "shackles," fasting allows for more sincere repentance and the clearing of spiritual blockages that hinder growth.
- **Unlocking Spiritual Authority:** Both biblical examples and contemporary teachings suggest that fasting intensifies the potency of prayer, providing access to a dimension of spiritual power and authority needed for major breakthroughs and deliverance
- **Matthew 6:16-17** *“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”*

New wine requires new wineskins

- In all three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 9:14–17, Mark 2:18–22, and Luke 5:33–39), Jesus speaks about new wine and wineskins specifically to answer a question about fasting
- After He's gone, fasting becomes a spiritual discipline to express longing for His return and to seek Him humbly, requiring a new, pliable heart (new wineskin) ready for God's work, not just ritual
- **New Fasting:** Jesus indicated that after He (the Bridegroom) was "taken away," His disciples would fast, but it would be a "new kind of fasting"—one based on a relationship with Him and empowered by the Spirit, rather than mere ritual.
- New Testament fasting is not meant to "pay" for sin or "earn" God's love—Christ has already done that. Instead, it is a tool for deepening connection, spiritual sensitivity, self-mastery and expressing longing for Christ's return.
- Fasting is viewed as a way to "throw away the old wineskin" (old habits and carnal mindsets) so that God can provide a new one capable of holding more of His presence.

Question: What is your response to people who say fasting is not for today since Jesus paid it all?