THE BIBLE SAYS IT'S 'WHEN YOU FAST'...NOT 'IF YOU FAST'"

NOTES ON FASTING

JOHN WESLEY SAID THAT EATING "MOVES ONE AWAY FROM GOD" WHEREAS FASTING "BRINGS ONE CLOSER TO HIM"

***MATTHEW 6:16-18

16 ¶ Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;
18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

MOREOVER WHEN YE FAST..THAT'S NOT AN "IF" THAT IS A WHEN.

THAT PASSAGE ALSO STATES SOME "GUIDELINES" OF FASTING:
1. DON'T DO IT AS "APPEARING TO FAST" AS HYPOCRITES
2. DON'T ANNOUNCE YOUR FASTING...EITHER WITH OR WITHOUT WORDS
3. FAST IN SECRET...AND YOU WILL BE REWARDED OPENLY

DEFINITION OF FASTING:
1. TO ABSTAIN FROM FOOD
2. TO EAT SPARINGLY OR ABSTAIN FROM SOME FOODS
3. THE PERIOD FOR WHICH YOU ABSTAIN FROM FOODS

**FASTING IS A SACRIFICE THAT WE CAN MAKE UNTO THE LORD THAT TRULY IS A "SACRIFICE"

**FASTING IS SAYING TO GOD, "YOU SUSTAIN ME WHILE I GET OUT OF THE WAY"
ISAIAH 55:8-9 TELLS US:
8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**FASTING IS SAYING TO GOD, "I'M NOT GOING TO DO WHAT MY BODY WANTS ME TO DO BECAUSE I WANT WHAT YOU WANT WANT MORE THAN IT DOES"

**IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE HEARING GOD OR NOT SENSING THAT IS AS NEAR TO YOU AS YOU WOULD LIKE HIM TO BE: CLEAR OUT THE CHANNELS THAT HE FLOWS THROUGH
**FASTING SHOWS THAT WE ARE GOING TO DO SOMETHING "OTHER THAN NATURAL" IN ORDER TO GET SOMETHING "OTHER THAN NATURAL"

- THERE ARE 36 DIFFERENT SPECIFIC FASTS IN SCRIPTURE. THE TIME FRAMES ARE:

  ONE MEAL--1 REFERENCE  
  ONE DAY--8 REFERENCES  
  THREE DAYS--3 REFERENCES  
  SEVEN DAYS--2 REFERENCES  
  TEN DAYS ("DANIEL FAST" IN DANIEL 1:8-20)--1 REFERENCE  
  FOURTEEN DAYS--1 REFERENCE  
  TWENTY ONE DAYS--1 REFERENCE  
  FORTY DAYS--4 REFERENCES

- FIFTEEN OF THE 36 FASTS ARE FOR PERIODS OF TIME THAT ARE NOT MENTIONED. THIS LEAVES THE DOOR OPEN FOR FASTING FOR WHATEVER LENGTH OF TIME YOU FEEL GOD LEADING YOU TO..

WHAT DOES FASTING ACCOMPLISH?:

- HUMBLES THE SOUL BEFORE GOD

  PSALM 35:13-14
  13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.
  14 .................I bowed down heavily.........................

- KILLS THE FLESH AND IT'S DESIRES

  PSALM 109:24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness...

- CRUCIFIES THE FLESHLY DESIRE FOR FOOD...GLUTTONY IS SINFUL AND FASTING CAN HELP ANY GLUTTONOUS TENDENCIES BE "NIPPED IN THE BUD"...

- SHOWS GOD THAT YOU ARE SEEKING HIM AND NOT OTHERS

  1 CORINTHIANS 7:4-5
  4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.
  5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time,
that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together
again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

- **GIVES THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM A REST PROVIDES VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION (NOT JUST IN THE AREA OF FOOD) AND AIDS IN PRAYER (MATTHEW 4:1-11)**

- **HELPS TO OBTAIN POWER OVER DEMONS (MATTHEW 17:14-21)**

  VERSE 21: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

**WHEN SHOULD YOU FAST?**

- **WHEN YOU CANNOT DO IT YOURSELF AND NEED GOD TO INTERVENE (JONAH 3:4-10)**

  THIS SHOWS YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU ARE FASTING CONCERNING

  VERSE 5: "FROM THE GREATEST TO THE LEAST OF THEM"...WHEN IT IS A CORPORATE FAST ALL SHOULD BE INVOLVED TO SEE GOD WORK DRAMATIC, POSITIVE RESULTS

- **WHEN YOU FEEL THAT GOD IS LEADING YOU TO FAST**

  JOEL 2:12-13
  
  12 ¶ Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

  THIS IS GOD PUTTING HIS OFFICIAL STAMP ON FASTING. THIS IS HIS COMMAND TO DO IT!

  THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR A FORTY DAY FAST...YOU'D BETTER KNOW THAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO THAT!!

- **TO BE PREPARED FOR SPIRITUAL CONFLICT (MATTHEW 4:1-11)**

  AFTER A GREAT FAST, THE DEVIL WILL USUALLY SHOW UP TO SEE "IF YOU REALLY MEANT IT"

- **WHEN THE MAN OF GOD INSTRUCTS THE PEOPLE TO DO SO (MATTHEW 9:14-15)**
MATTHEW 9:14-15
14. Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?
15. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

THIS SHOWS US THAT JOHN CALLED FASTS AND HIS DISCIPLES OBEYED THIS SHOWS THAT THE PHARISEES FASTED OUT OF RELIGIOUS DUTY AND NOT RELATIONSHIP

THIS ALSO SHOWS THAT JESUS SAID FASTING WAS GOING TO BE FOR WHEN HE WAS NOT HERE...WHICH MEANS THAT IT IS FOR TODAY!!

- WHEN FACING AN OBSTACLE THAT HAS NOT BEEN OVERCOME BY PRAYER ALONE

THIS GOES BACK TO THE MATTHEW FASTING PRINCIPLE (MATTHEW 17:14-21)

AND KEEP THIS VERY IMPORTANT THING IN MIND: FASTING IS NOT TO BE USED TO "CHANGE THE MIND OF GOD"!!! THAT'S LIKE A LITTLE KID THROWING A TANTRUM IN ORDER TO SEE IF HE CAN GET HIS OR HER WAY WITH MOM OR DAD!!

WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF FASTING?

- THE WORD OF GOD COMES TO YOU (DEUTERONOMY 9:9-10)

- INSTRUCTION OF GOD COMES TO YOU (DEUTERONOMY 9:11-12)

- ANSWERED PRAYER AND DIRECTION (EZRA 8:21-23) P. 646

- FAVOR IN SITUATIONS THAT LOOK IMPOSSIBLE (NEHEMIAH 1:3-11, 2:4-8)

- GODLY INSIGHT ON MINISTRY MATTERS (ACTS 13:1-3 ACTS 14:23)

- KNOWLEDGE YOU WOULDN'T GAIN OTHERWISE (ACTS 27:9-11)

- BOLDNESS (ACTS 27:18-22)

- THE PRESENCE OF GOD RIGHT WITH YOU (ACTS 27:23-25)
THE ISAIAH 58:6-14 BLESSINGS FROM OBEDIENT FASTING

1. LOOSE THE BANDS OF WICKEDNESS
2. UNDO THE HEAVY BURDENS
3. LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE
4. EVERY YOKE BE BROKEN
5. BE ABLE TO FEED THOSE THAT ARE HUNGRY
6. TAKE CARE OF THOSE THAT ARE POOR
7. CLOTHE THOSE THAT ARE NAKED
8. YOU WON'T HAVE TO HIDE OR COVER UP YOUR OWN FAULTS
9. HAVE LIGHT AS DAY
10. YOUR HEALTH WILL SPRING FORTH SPEEDILY
11. YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL GO BEFORE YOU AND GOD'S GLORY WILL BE YOUR REAR GUARD
12. YOU WILL CALL AND RECEIVE ANSWERS TO PRAYER (OVER TIME)
13. YOU WILL CRY AND GOD WILL ANSWER YOU (IMMEDIATE)
14. YOUR LIGHT WILL RISE IN OBSCURITY
15. YOUR DARKNESS WILL BE AS THE NOON DAY
16. THE LORD WILL GUIDE YOU CONTINUALLY
17. HE WILL SATISFY YOU IN DROUGHT
18. HE WILL MAKE YOUR BONES FAT
19. YOU WILL BE LIKE A WATERED GARDEN
20. YOU WILL BE LIKE AN UNFAILING SPRING OF WATER
21. YOUR WASTE PLACES WILL BE BUILT
22. YOU WILL RAISE UP THE FOUNDATIONS OF MANY GENERATIONS
23. YOU WILL BE CALLED "THE REPAIRER OF THE BREACH"
24. YOU WILL BE CALLED "THE RESTORER OF PATHS"
25. YOU WILL DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD
26. HE WILL CAUSE YOU TO RIDE UPON THE HIGH PLACES
27. YOU WILL RECEIVE OF THE HERITAGE OF JACOB...FOR HE HAS SPOKEN IT

OPPOSITION (DANIEL 10:2-3, 10-13)

THE PRAYER WAS HEARD THE FIRST DAY...BUT THE FIGHT TOOK 21 DAYS FOR THE ANSWER TO BE REVEALED. YOUR FIGHT WILL COME FROM SATAN...WHO DOES NOT WANT YOU TO BE MORE POWERFUL.

FRIENDS, CO-WORKERS, AND OTHERS WILL TRY TO DETRACT YOU FROM FASTING.
WHAT TYPES OF FASTS ARE THERE?

- **DANIEL FAST (DANIEL 1:5-20)**

  THIS IS BASICALLY EATING ONLY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AND DRINKING WATER. THERE MUST BE NO EXTRAVAGANT PREPARATION IN EITHER THE FRUITS OR THE VEGETABLES TO MAKE THEM "TOLERABLE"...JUST THE BASIC NATURAL ITEMS FOR PREPARATION (SALT, PEPPER, VINEGAR, OIL).

  KEEP IN MIND THAT DANIEL AND HIS MEN THAT ELECTED NOT TO PARTAKE OF THE "KING'S MEAT" ALSO DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE KING'S SERVANTS, EITHER. THIS MEANS THAT THERE WAS NO WAY TO HAVE WHAT THEY CHOSE TO EAT PREPARED IN ANY WAY OTHER THAN BASICALLY CLEANING AND HEATING...THEY DID NOT HAVE A "KITCHEN STAFF ON HAND" TO TURN THE FOODS THEY ELECTED TO EAT INTO ANOTHER ITEM...

- **NO FOOD AT ALL FAST (1 KINGS 19:6-9)**

  THIS IS WHERE ELIJAH FASTS FOR FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS. NOTICE AGAIN HOW THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO HIM WHEN HE WAS FASTING.

  IF DURING THIS FAST, YOU DRINK JUICES AND ACCEPTABLE LIQUIDS, YOU ARE JUST "FASTING"...*IF YOU DRINK JUST WATER* DURING THIS FAST YOU ARE ON WHAT IS CALLED A "SUPERNATURAL FAST".

- **NO INTAKE AT ALL FAST (ESTHER 4:15-17)**

  THIS FAST SPECIFICALLY STATES NO FOOD OR NO WATER!! THIS IS KNOWN AS AN "ABSOLUTE SUPERNATURAL FAST", WHERE YOU ARE TOTALLY RELYING ON GOD FOR EVERYTHING.

  ALSO NOTE THAT THE RESULTS OF THE FAST WERE FAVOR AND A FEAST!! THAT SHOWS REWARD IN BOTH THE SPIRITUAL AND THE NATURAL!!

- **ABSTAINING FROM NON-NUTRITIONAL ITEMS (1 COR 7:5 TLB)**

  "SO DO NOT REFUSE THESE RIGHTS (OF A MARRIED MAN AND WOMAN) TO EACH OTHER. THE ONLY EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE WOULD BE THE AGREEMENT OF BOTH HUSBAND AND WIFE TO REFRAIN FROM THE
RIGHTS OF MARRIAGE FOR A LIMITED TIME, SO THAT THEY CAN GIVE THEMSELVES MORE COMPLETELY TO PRAYER. AFTERWARDS, THEY SHOULD COME TOGETHER AGAIN SO THAT SATAN WON'T BE ABLE TO TEMPT THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR LACK OF SELF CONTROL".

FASTING GUIDELINES

MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE LIVING RIGHT YOURSELF BEFORE YOU START FASTING. PSALM 66:18 SAYS "IF I REGARD INIQUITY IN MY HEART, THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR ME".

SEE A MEDICAL DOCTOR IF YOU FEEL YOU THAT THERE ARE ANY MEDICAL PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT ARISE OR BE COMPLICATED BY YOUR FASTING. THIS IS WHERE FASTING OF A CERTAIN PLEASURE OR ACTIVITY MAY COME IN TO PLAY.

SEE GOD ON HOW LONG TO FAST, IF HE HAS NOT SPOKEN AN EXACT LENGTH TO YOU ALREADY. REMEMBER, HE WILL NOT CALL A BEGINNING FASTER TO FAST MORE THAN ABLE OR A SEASONED FASTER TO MORE THAN HE CAN STAND AT THE TIME.

SEEK GOD FOR GUIDANCE, POWER, DISCERNMENT, AND STRENGTH FOR YOUR LIFE DURING THE FAST. REMEMBER THAT A FAST IS TO GET "YOU" OUT OF THE WAY AND LET GOD HAVE MORE OF YOUR LIFE.

SEEK GOD'S LEADING ON WHAT YOU ARE ALLOWED TO CONSUME DURING THE COURSE OF THE FAST. MOST ONE TO THREE DAY FASTS CAN BE WATER ONLY. FASTS OF LONGER DURATION (OR ONE TO THREE DAY FASTS TO THOSE WHO ARE NEW TO FASTING) REQUIRE THE INTAKE OF SOME OTHER TYPE OF LIQUID...USUALLY JUICES (PREFERABLY 100% JUICE AND LESS ACIDIC JUICES) AND POSSIBLY SOME BROTH (BUT MAKE SURE IT'S THE LOW SODIUM KIND!!)

JUICES SUCH AS SUNNY DELIGHT AND MANY OCEAN SPRAY PRODUCTS ARE NOT 100% JUICE. IF YOU CANNOT SQUEEZE OR CREATE YOUR OWN, MAKE SURE THE LABEL SAYS 100%. THE LESS ACIDIC JUICES, WHICH ARE BEST, ARE JUICES LIKE APPLE, GRAPE, AND CRANBERRY.

REMEMBER THAT MILK IS A FOOD AND IS NEVER ALLOWED DURING A FAST.

IF YOU ARE DOING A "DANIEL FAST", VEGETABLES MAY NOT BE "PREPARED" WITH BUTTER, SAUCES, OR OTHER CONDIMENTS. ONLY "NATURAL" ITEMS MAY BE USED TO AUGMENT THE VEGETABLES (OLIVE OIL, VINEGAR, SALT, PEPPER, AND OTHER ITEMS...NO RANCH DRESSING, STEAK SAUCE, KETCHUP, OR STUFF LIKE THAT).
TRY TO AVOID ANY FOODS THAT CONTAIN HIGH AMOUNTS OF MAN-MADE ADDITIVES.

HIDE "RITUALISTIC" FOODS SUCH AS BOWLS OF CANDY, BAGS OF CHIPS OR PEANUTS...ANYTHING THAT COULD BE SNACKED IN HABITUAL FASHION. A LOT OF TIMES THINGS LIKE THESE CAN BE A GREATER TEMPTATION THAN A MEAL!

DO NOT CHEW ANYTHING WHILE FASTING! THE DIGESTIVE PROCESS IN MOST FOLKS STARTS WHEN THE MOUTH IS CHEWING. THUS, IF WE CHEW GUM DURING A FAST...IT WILL BEGIN THE PROCESS OF DIGESTIVE FLUIDS ENTERING INTO OUR SYSTEM FOLLOWED BY: NO FOOD!! THIS CAN BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH, MAYBE EVEN FORMING AN ULCER-LIKE SITUATION.

NO BREATH MINTS ARE ALLOWED DURING A FAST. THEY ARE A FORM OF FOOD AND ARE CHEWED...PLUS YOU MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO "MAKE A MEAL" OUT OF A ROLL OF LIFESAVERS!!! MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOME AEROSOL BREATH SPRAY OR DISSOLVING BREATH STRIPS ON HAND DURING A FAST.

DO NOT BE ALARMED WITH HEADACHES, FOUL BREATH, INCREASE IN OR CHANGE OF BODY ODORS, AND CHANGES IN BODY WASTE. THIS IS YOUR BODY’S WAY OF LETTING YOU KNOW THAT THE TOXINS IN YOUR BODY ARE BEING EVICTED. TAKEN INTO THE SPIRITUAL, IT CAN BE TAKEN AS A SIGN THAT "THE WORLD" IS BEING REMOVED FROM US.

DO NOT END A FAST AT AN "ALL YOU CAN EAT" BUFFET RESTAURANT!! THIS IS POSSIBLY THE MOST SERIOUS TIP LISTED HERE. THIS COULD BE VERY DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH BECAUSE IT "SHOCKS" YOUR SYSTEM THAT HAS NOT HAD AN INTAKE OF FOOD FOR A LENGTHENED PERIOD OF TIME.

IF GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO FAST A CERTAIN "PLEASURE" (TV, RADIO, SPORTS, VIDEO GAMES, SHOPPING, FRIENDS, ETC.), DO NOT FILL THE TIME UP WITH DOING OTHER THINGS. FILL THE TIME UP WITH GOD!! READ THE WORD DURING THE TIME. PRAY DURING THE TIME. PRAISE HIM DURING THE TIME.

FASTING WILL BECOME OBVIOUS TO SOME OF THOSE AROUND YOU. DO NOT BE BOASTFUL IN WHAT YOU ARE DOING. IF THEY ASK YOU WHAT YOU ARE DOING, TELL THEM PLAINLY AND DON'T "BROADCAST" OR GO INTO A LENGTHY DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT.

KEEP THE OBJECTIVE OF THE FAST IN MIND AND IN PRAYER AT ALL TIMES DURING THE FAST. SPEND "NORMAL EATING TIME" HOOKED UP WITH THE LORD IN SOME WAY. WE ARE TO FILL OURSELVES UP WITH HIM WHILE WE ARE NOT FILLING OURSELVES UP WITH THE WORLD AND OUR OWN DESIRES. REMEMBER: "IF YOU DON'T SPEND THE TIME WITH GOD YOU WOULD NORMALLY SPEND EATING DURING A FAST, YOU'RE JUST ON A DIET"!
SOME NOTES FROM JOHN WESLEY...

IN 1855 HIS WORK "A COMPELLING CASE FOR FASTING" WAS PUBLISHED...

- "FULLNESS OF BREAD INCREASED NOT ONLY CARELESSNESS AND LEVITY OF SPIRIT, BUT ALSO FOOLISH AND UNHOLY DESIRES...YEA, UNCLEAN AND VILE AFFECTIONS"

IN OTHER WORDS, IF YOU ARE "GORGING" YOURSELF ON THE "FOOD OF THE WORLD" YOU ARE PROBABLY TAKING IN TOO MUCH OF WHAT ELSE THE WORLD HAS TO OFFER, TOO!!

WESLEY ALSO NOTED THAT WE ARE NOT TO: RENDER OURSELVES USELESS TO OUR CALLING BY FASTING TOO MUCH. THIS COULD MAKE US UNFIT TO WORK...WHETHER IT IS IN THE MINISTRY OR NOT. "WE ARE TO OFFER GOD A SACRIFICE...NOT A MURDER".

- IF YOU WANT YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE TO FALL INTO PLACE ON THE OUTSIDE...TAKE THE STEPS TO MAKE IT FALL INTO PLACE ON THE INSIDE!!!

OTHER RESOURCES CONTAINING INFORMATION REGARDING FASTING:

- "BIBLICAL FASTING AND PRAYER" BY R.D. FLORY
A SMALL BOOKLET THAT HAS A VERY SCRIPTURALLY BASED OUTLINE ON THE DO'S AND DON'T'S OF FASTING.

- "FASTING FORWARD" BY BILLY WILSON
A GUIDE FROM THE HOST OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY'S WEEKLY "VOICE OF SALVATION" BROADCAST. THIS BOOK FOCUSES ON FASTING AS A MEANS TO GO FURTHER IN YOUR PERSONAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

- "GOD'S CHOSEN FAST" BY ARTHUR WALLIS
THIS IS A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FASTING...MAINLY FOCUSING ON THE "RIGHT WAYS" TO DO IT AS OPPOSED TO THE "WRONG WAYS" TO DO IT.

- "THE COMING REVIVAL" BY DR. BILL BRIGHT
WHILE NOT NECESSARILY A BOOK ON FASTING ALONE, WHAT THIS BOOK DOES COVER IS UNPARALLELED. THE AIM OF THE BOOK IS TO FAST FOR REVIVAL IN THE WORLD, OUR NATION AND OUR LOCAL MINISTRIES...BUT IT ALSO PROVIDES MANY, MANY TIPS ON HOW WE ARE TO PREPARE FOR, CARRY OUT AND END A FAST IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES. PERSONALLY, THIS IS THE BOOK WHERE I LEARNED THE MOST ABOUT FASTING IN ONE PLACE.