

## “FASTING FOR A BREAKTHROUGH”

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**TEXT: Matthew 17:14-21 (Mark 9:17-29)**

**INTRO:** Your flesh is going to hate this message! Would you be willing to fast if it lead to a breakthrough? Jesus casts out a stubborn demon (Matt. 17:14-21). Jesus’ disciples asked him why they couldn’t cast out the demon (Matt. 17:19). Jesus said it was because of their unbelief (Matt. 17:20) and that this kind only comes out by prayer and fasting (Matt. 17:21). Are you willing to fast for “*this kind*” of opposition to come out? Fasting helps us overcome unbelief (Matt. 17:17a; 20a).

**I. WHAT IS FASTING?** To abstain from all foods (not water).

- A. Fasts can be regular or occasional.
- B. There are about 35 recorded fasts in the Bible, 15 of them of unrecorded length, with the other fasts lasting for 1 (9), 3 (3), 7 (2), 14 (1), 21 (1) and 40 (4) days.

**II. WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES & BENEFITS OF FASTING?**

[In addition to increasing our faith according to our text]

- 1. To worship and draw closer to God (Lk. 2:37; Acts 13:2).
- 2. To humble yourself before God (Ps. 35:13; Ezra 8:21).
- 3. To repent (1Sam. 7:6; Neh. 9:1-2).
- 4. To seek God for direction (Ezra 8:21; Acts 13:2).
- 5. To seek God for protection and obtain victory in battle (Ezra 8:21-23, 31; 2Chron. 20:1, 3).
- 6. To overcome temptation and attacks (Matt. 4:1-2, 11).
- 7. To gain more control over the flesh (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 8:6).
- 8. To set apart for ministry (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23).
- 9. To experience many varied blessings (Isaiah 58:3-14).
- 10. To be openly rewarded by God (Matt. 6:16, 18).

**III. HOW DO YOU FAST AND WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT?**

- A. Prepare to Fast (decide why and how long, free up time).
- B. Some shouldn’t fast (diabetics, the pregnant, children).
- C. Tips on fasting (Matt. 6:16-18). Don’t draw attention.
- D. What to expect:

**CONCLUSION:** There are some breakthroughs that will only come by prayer and fasting (Matt. 7:21)! Will you fast?