

THE BIBLICAL PRACTICE OF FASTING : PART 1

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Recently, one of my dear readers wrote to me regarding one of her friends who wished to perform a fast. This Christian sister asked me to point her to any articles I have written where I discuss this topic, so that she could advise her friend accordingly. While I have briefly discussed fasting in a few of my articles, I felt it would be appropriate to dedicate a complete article to this topic. Under normal circumstances, a fast is a voluntary abstention from food, and possibly from drink, for a determined period of time, in order that a person might achieve certain physical, and/or spiritual, benefits. In the KJV New Testament, the word "fast" is derived from the Greek word "nesteuo", pronounced nace-tyoo'-o, which is defined as abstaining as a religious exercise from food and drink: either entirely, if the fast lasted but a single day, or from customary and choice nourishment, if it continued several days.

Sadly, in our modern day, Satan has created a counterfeit fast to the religious fast, and there are those people who perform what we might refer to as a political fast, which serves as a form of protest, or passive rebellion, against a certain perceived injustice of some kind, either to oneself, or else to others. Some people also fast for health reasons, such as to purge a certain harmful substance from one's body. It is also because one does not eat food during the night hours while he is asleep, that in English-speaking countries, the first meal of the day is referred to as breakfast, because one is breaking his nightly fast.

As I point out in the article entitled "Famous Forties: One Of God's Special Numbers?", fasting was performed by some of the main characters of Biblical history. For example, Moses performed a complete fast during two forty-day periods when he received the Commandments twice from the Lord on the top of Mount Horeb, or Sinai:

"When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water . . . And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant . . . And I fell down before the LORD, as at the

first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger . . . Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the LORD had said he would destroy you . . . And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, and the LORD would not destroy thee."
Deuteronomy 9:9, 11, 18, 25, 10:10, KJV

In like fashion, the Prophet Elijah also fasted for a period of forty days and forty nights when he went to Mount Horeb as well, hundreds of years after the time of Moses. It was there that the Lord spoke to the Prophet in a still small voice after performing some rather amazing signs:

"And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God."
1 Kings 19:5-8, KJV

When wicked Haman conspired to have all of the Jews slain throughout the empire of Persian King Ahasuerus, Queen Esther, becoming aware of the evil plot, instructed all of her Jewish brethren to fast for three days and three nights before she appeared before the king in order to plead for the lives of her people:

"Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."
Esther 4:16, KJV

It was only after performing a fast for three full weeks, that the captive Prophet Daniel received his awe-inspiring revelations by way of the Angels Gabriel, Michael and The Watchers. We are told that during that time, the demon princes waged warfare against the Host of Heaven, in order to prevent the Prophet from receiving his Endtime visions and messages:

"In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."
Daniel 10:2,3, KJV

As most Christians know, in the Gospels, we are also told that Jesus likewise fasted for a period of forty days and forty nights in the wilderness prior to revealing Himself to Israel. It was at that time that He was tempted by Satan:

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred."
Matthew 4:1,2, KJV

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered."
Luke 4:1,2, KJV

As a final example, in the Book of Acts, we are told by Luke that after his life-changing encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus, the Apostle Paul also fasted for a period of three days until his sight was restored to him by Brother Ananias. Undoubtedly, Paul spent much of that time thinking and praying about his personal convictions regarding the young new faith, which in coming years would become known as Christianity:

"And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."
Acts 9:8,9, KJV

Thus we see that fasting is indeed a very Biblical practice. Concerning we modern Christians, how one chooses to perform a fast is a matter of personal faith and conviction. One can abstain from one meal, or one can fast for a day, or for several days, or for a week, or even longer. One can perform a partial fast by abstaining from certain foods, or a fuller fast by only eating bread and drinking water; or one can perform a complete fast by abstaining from all forms of food and drink. It all depends upon the reason and motivation which is prompting one to fast. From personal experience, I can honestly state that it takes a lot of self-control and self-denial to perform a full extended fast; and one must make sure that he or she is doing it for the right reasons. As I mention in the article "Why Doesn't God Heal Me?", I once performed a complete fast for a full week when I desired for the Lord to heal my eyes and give me perfect vision. This occurred some twenty years ago, and I have learned a lot since then. I fasted and prayed for seven days non-stop while I kept up my regular witnessing activities. Needless-to-say, by the end of that week, I was extremely weak; and was about ready to see my own kind of "heavenly visions" because of it.

If there is one thing that the Lord made clear in the Gospel message, it is that we should never be motivated to fast in order to impress others with how good and holy and righteous we are. We don't need to prove our degree of spirituality to anyone but God Himself. To boast of our own goodness, such as through the act of fasting, is not pleasing to the Lord. Such was the case with the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, in which the Lord teaches us how the religious person tries to impress God by his own self-righteousness works, instead of relying upon the righteousness which only comes through the Blood of Jesus Christ:

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
Luke 18:10-14, KJV

Notice how this man boasted that he fasted twice a week. It is for this very same reason, that in the Gospel of Matthew, when giving instructions regarding fasting, Jesus offered the following advice:

"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. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; 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."
Matthew 6:16-18, KJV

As I clearly point out in other articles, by this time in Jewish history, the so-called worship of the spiritual elders of Israel had been reduced to nothing more than a pitiful and hypocritical charade before both God and man. It is for this reason that the Lord thoroughly exposed the sins of the Scribes and the Pharisees in such discourses as that found in Matthew chapter twenty-three. In the Gospel of Mark, we also find the Lord saying the following to His self-righteous religious enemies:

". . . Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."
Mark 7:6b-9, KJV

One of these traditions also included fasting, but since hundreds of years earlier, in fact, since the days of the Prophets, the Lord had been rebuking the Israelites because of their dry, spiritless religion of dead works. This included their observance of feast days, as well as fasting, as we see by these verses:

"And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest."
Lamentations 2:6, KJV

"Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it."

Malachi 2:3, KJV

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

Isaiah 1:11-17, KJV

"Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?"

Isaiah 58:3-5, KJV

The Lord, through the Prophet Isaiah, is being rhetorical in the above verses; for He then answers His own questions by stating:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:"

Isaiah 58:6-10, KJV

In essence, what the Lord was saying to the Jews, is that all of their physical acts and traditions of worship were nothing more than self-righteous works of the flesh, because their hearts were far from the Lord. Not only did they not

place their faith in the one true Saviour, but they also did not back up their faith with real works motivated by love; for as James tells us, true faith, and true religion is not just in word, it is in deed. Notice the strong resemblance of his words to those of the Prophet Isaiah in this first set of verses:

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
James 1:25-27, KJV

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
James 2:14-26, KJV

In the opening verses to Matthew chapter twenty-three, the Lord warned the common people of the very same thing when he stated:

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."
Matthew 23:1-3, KJV

The main point I wish to stress here, is that there is absolutely nothing wrong with fasting; it is indeed a very Biblical practice; however, one must simply make sure that he or she is doing it for the right reasons. It must not, and should not, be performed as a personal act of vanity. There must be some great spiritual or physical need which, when met, will further the Kingdom of God, and give God the glory. Concerning fasting and His own Disciples, we also find the Lord saying the following in the Gospel of Matthew:

"Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? 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."
Matthew 9:14-15, KJV

Notice that in the previous verses, Jesus associates fasting with a period of mourning which followed His Crucifixion. As we know, this is because, despite all of the mighty signs and wonders which He performed during the course of His Earthly Ministry, even His own Disciples still doubted His Divine Sonship and Messiahship. Even they did not understand the coming Resurrection, as we see by the story of Thomas, and verses such as the following. Thus, until the Lord did rise from the dead, there was apparently a time of sadness, fasting and mourning:

"And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean."
Mark 9:10, KJV

Another possible reason why Jesus may have made the above statement regarding His Disciples fasting, is that, as I myself can testify, sometimes, fasting is a result of being so busy doing the Lord's Work, that one simply does not have the time to stop and eat. Following the Day of Pentecost, when the Disciples received the Holy Spirit, we know that they began to win literally thousands of Disciples at a time; so much so, that undoubtedly there were times when they barely had a moment to themselves, in order to sit down and enjoy a decent meal, or to rest, or to devote themselves to prayer and the Word so that they could properly lead the Lord's flocks. This is why we find the following verses in the Book of Acts:

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."
Acts 6:1-4, KJV

In other words, to paraphrase what the Apostles were saying, "Look; our most important task now is to devote ourselves to the Word and to receiving our instructions from Lord, so that we can direct the Church in the right direction. Regarding these other matters of administration, see ye to it".

From another perspective, imagine if the Lord were to bestow upon you the Gift of Divine Healing as He did upon His early followers. Imagine also that the word was spread abroad that you possessed such a wonderful Gift. It is very likely that you would be in high demand, and your personal life would

probably be almost non-existent. In like manner, we know that Jesus was thronged by great multitudes who sought to hear His Words, or to be fed, or to be healed. Sometimes the Lord grew tired, and had to depart into the mountains with His immediate followers in order to rest and recuperate. In certain instances, He even went alone to rest, or to receive instructions from His Father. While Jesus was, and is, the Son of God, we need to remember that He was nevertheless in a weak body of human flesh. Consider the following verses:

"Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour."
John 4:6, KJV

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
Matthew 26:41, KJV

"And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray."
Mark 6:45,46, KJV

"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."
John 6:15, KJV

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"
Philippians 2:5-9, KJV

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
Hebrews 4:14,15, KJV

What we have seen thus far, is that the act of fasting can be instrumental in preparing us for our chosen ministry, or for a certain mission, such as was the case with the Lord Himself during His forty-day trek through the wilderness of the Jordan River Valley, and possibly with the Prophet Elijah on his way to Mount Horeb. In the Book of Acts, prayer and fasting was also used to prepare the new Elders of the Church for the job ahead of them:

"And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."
Acts 14:23, KJV

Sometimes, fasting is also a precursor to receiving great

visions, revelations and instructions from the Lord, as in the case of Moses and Daniel. In the Book of Acts, we also see that it was during a time of prayer and fasting, that Cornelius was visited by an Angel who informed him of his coming encounter with Peter:

"And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,"
Acts 10:30, KJV

At other times, fasting accompanies a period of mourning and sadness, as was the case with the Disciples following Jesus' Crucifixion. Soon after His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to Cleopas and another Disciple as they walked along the road to Emmaus. During that encounter, Jesus questioned them regarding the deep sadness which filled them:

"And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"
Luke 24:17, KJV

With the Apostle Paul, fasting appears to have been associated with his period of repentance following his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus. I am reminded of the words of James in the fourth chapter of his Epistle:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
James 4:7-10, KJV

Fasting can also be a by-product of simply being too busy doing the Lord's Work. Sometimes it is necessary to put the needs of others, and the needs of the Spirit, above the needs of the flesh. This thought is crystallized for us by verses such as the following:

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."
Job 23:12, KJV

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
Matthew 4:4, KJV

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful:

and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."
Luke 10:38-42, KJV

In the case of Queen Esther, fasting was used as a means of showing devotion to the Lord, in order to petition Him for the salvation of her people. In the Gospels, we discover that fasting is also employed in spiritual warfare. Jesus plainly said that prayer and fasting was necessary in order to cast out certain demons. As I point out in such articles as "Why Doesn't God Heal Me?", sometimes it is when we are weakest in the flesh, that the Lord can work more mightily through us, in order to perform great miracles. As I share in that article, the Apostle Paul wrote:

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
2 Corinthians 12:9,10, KJV

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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THE BIBLICAL PRACTICE OF FASTING : PART 2

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Fasting And Spiritual Warfare, Casting Out Demons, Fasting Is Not For Everyone, Fasting Is For The Physically Strong

We know that the power to cast out demons was indeed given to the Lord's Disciples, so this may be another reason why the Lord said that they would fast after He had returned to His Father; because they would need that extra spiritual power, acquired during fasting, in order to perform many mighty works. In other words, fasting can be an essential part of our spiritual warfare, such as casting out demons. Consider the following verses:

"And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation,

how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

Mark 9:17-29, KJV

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

Luke 10:17-20, KJV

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Mark 16:17,18, KJV

As we can see then, there are all kinds of good reasons for fasting; however, fasting is not recommended for everyone, as it might do them more harm than good. It is my view that fasting should only be performed by those who are of good health, and whose bodies can endure the lack of food. Even Jesus expressed concern for those whom He knew were not fit to undertake such self-denial to their flesh. In the Gospel of Matthew, we find the following verse:

"Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."

Matthew 15:32, KJV

The lesson here is that those people who are capable of enduring a period of fasting, should not look down upon or condemn those who cannot do the same; but rather, like Jesus, they should have compassion upon their weaker brethren. As the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Romans:

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
Romans 15:1-3, KJV

These verses can be applied, not only to those who are weak in faith, but also to those who may be weak in the flesh as well; and indeed, there are many of us who find ourselves in this state. In conclusion then, if we are going to fast, let us make sure that we are doing it for the right reasons, and that it will glorify the Lord, and help to promote His Kingdom in some way. Let us not do it for vainglory, or to impress others with our false spirituality. I pray that this article has been a blessing to many.

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