

1. Fasting is a powerful tool that can be used to greatly benefit all believers. Fasting is for today.
2. Voluntarily abstaining from any good gift from God has great spiritual benefit for the believer.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, "Fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose."
3. There is a danger in fasting wrongly, Matthew 6:16-19; Colossians 2:20-21; 1 Timothy 4:1-3.
4. Fasting is a spiritual discipline that reaps these benefits:
  - a. Adds vitality to prayer. Fasting walks arm in arm with prayer, Matthew 6:9-18; Ezra 8:23; Joel 2:13; Acts 13:3.
  - b. Aids in our passion, direction, and endgame for missions, Acts 13:1-3; Matthew 24:14.
  - c. Assists our heart hunger for delighting in God, Matthew 6:9-18.
  - d. Assists in humility and self-examination, Psalm 35:13; 1 Kings 21:27-29; Psalm 35:13.
  - e. Assists in confession and true sorrow over sin, Nehemiah 9:1-2, Psalm 35:13; Isaiah 58:3-5.
  - f. Assists in gaining mastery over the flesh, overcoming temptation and dedicating yourself to God, Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Corinthians 9:26-27; Philippians 3:7-8; Psalm 63.
  - g. Aids in discerning God's will and guidance, Judges 20:26; Acts 14:23.
  - h. For help in trouble, 2 Chronicles 20:1; Esther 4:16; Ezra 8:21.
5. We must fast because our God is too great and our Book is too poignant and our lives don't match our confession, Revelation 3:14-22.
6. Jesus includes fasting in His primer for Christian character because it will aid in our growth in grace.
7. Jesus includes fasting in His primer for Christian evangelism because we need to be fundamentally different in our deepest character: we need to grieve, to be humble, to want the right things, to be merciful, and to love peace, James 4:1-10.
8. Jesus includes fasting because we have possibly grown accustomed to awesome things.
9. Jesus includes fasting because we live in a wealthy society, in a wonderful climate, and have all our needs met easily. We become presumptuously accustomed to great blessing.
10. Jesus includes fasting because the first request in the model prayer must be the goal of our lives. The Bible knows nothing of lukewarm Christians, of those who use prayer, the war-time communication tool, for room service.
11. We should fast because we get spiritually stuck. We can become distracted, pulled down, undone. God feels distant and irrelevant. Seasons of spiritual darkness are common — even when many pretend it's an anomaly. Even when indifference pirates our most pious intentions, and we surrender ourselves to isolation in our lack of holy zeal, don't be deceived: gloom in the Christian's heart is common.

## **Conclusion**

At TACC we are being called to seek God, to prayer and fast and study the Word, to re-discover the wonder of who God is, in a more invigorating biblical way, to know our own hearts better, so that we can repent, and with gratitude to our King celebrate on January 31, with great joy and hopeful hearts.

- Fast if you are feeling spiritually hungry for God and His presence.
- Fast if your prayers feel dry and flat, passionless.
- Fast if you need special guidance in difficult times.
- Fast if you have a big decision to make.
- Fast if you are struggling with discipline.
- Fast for God's work in the world, in your neighborhood.
- Fast if food is an idol (or for other idols: computer, sin, phone, person, home).
- Fast if the beauty of God has evaded you.
- Fast if you are grieving over your own sin or other's sins.
- Fast if you are being persecuted and need protection.
- Fast if you need to express deep repentance and sorrow.
- Fast if you need to return to the covenant community after separation.
- Fast purposely not mechanically.
- Fast to repent for your lack of spiritual vitality.