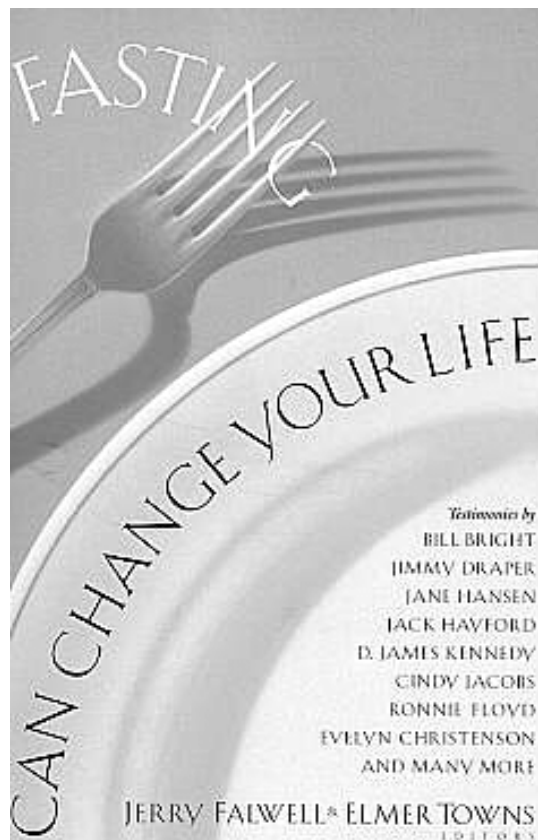




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Fasting Can Change Your Life

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INTRODUCTION

Some fast privately, as Jane Hansen fasted agonizing for a son addicted with drugs. God heard, the son was saved and delivered from drugs. Some fast corporately and publicly, as 5,000 students at Liberty University shut down the food service center because they dedicated a day to pray for Dean of Students Vernon Brewer's healing from cancer. The congregation of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Ft. Pierce, Florida, was able to sell their property after fasting for a sale.

Jimmy Draper, President of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention was so touched by God that he couldn't eat for days. To him, fasting was not to get something, but he fasted for a week *after* experiencing the presence of Christ and God's assurance of salvation. Gene Mims, a Vice President didn't want to accept a position at the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention until he fasted, and in that experience knew God was calling him to a new area of service. Larry Bowen, a staff pastor at an Assembly of God church committed himself to fast 40 days for the salvation of his dying father. He was able to see the conversion of his father a few days before he died.

The term fasting *some* originally was associated with emergency or distress, people losing their appetite out of anguish or fear. When you're rushing to the hospital because a loved one had an accident, you don't pull into McDonald's for a hamburger because it's lunch time. The emergency pushes the thought of food out of your mind. All you want to do is get the problem fixed. When a problem is bigger than life, you fast until it's solved. Gary, Jr., with a Ph.D. in Hebrew from one of the most prestigious institutions in the world, i.e., Chicago University, rid himself of fear by fasting.

Fasting was originally commanded of God's people on the Day of Atonement, a fasting day for the Jews. Now a one day fast is called by its Hebrew term, a *Yom Kippur Fast*. Many fasted from sundown to sundown following God's designation that He gave in Genesis 1, i.e., "The evening and the morning were the first day," (Gen. 1:5). They fasted during the meals of that day giving mealtime to prayer. Fasting does not become effective when you stop eating, it begins when you start praying. Your effectiveness in fasting is measured by your ability to touch God and be touched by Him.

Study carefully what people drink when they fast. (You should not go without liquids for more than one to three days, as there can be brain damage from dehydration and/or loss of liquids). Some drink only water, as did Jerry Falwell; some blend fruit and/or vegetables into a drink. Some drink Slim-Fast others Ensure, both commercial products. Falwell says fruit or vegetable drinks are not acceptable, he only take *non-nutrients*. On the other hand, some won't drink fruit juice, because they like it, saying the rule should be *non-enjoyable*.

However, after interviewing many who fasted successfully, it seems God looks at the heart, not the liquid intake. He answers many prayers, recognizing many expressions of fasting. Remember the law of silence: *When God hasn't spoken, don't make rules*. (So don't make rules what others should or should not drink during a fast. Before you criticize them, try going 40 days or 7 days just drinking Slim Fast or Ensure or juice). What you should do is let the Holy Spirit lead you in what to drink. First, immerse yourself in Scripture, second, yield your understanding to God, and third, follow the urgings from the Holy Spirit.

Fasting is hard, especially for the first two or three. After that time it gets physically easier, but the mental pressure begins to build. After awhile your body doesn't demand food, but there is pressure from your family. They are eating, why can't you? There are luncheon meetings you have to attend, prayer breakfasts where everyone but you is eating. There are banquets where you are expected to attend.

But when you get in the presence of God, you don't think about physical food, you feast spiritually on God. When you're talking to God, you forget about eating anything. You fast when prayer is not enough to get the answers you need. You fast for an emergency that could "kill" you, and you are scared. Jerry Falwell thought he might lose the University he began, so he fasted for 40 days; but God told him not to ask for money. God impressed on Falwell to get his focus right and to position himself for an answer. Falwell ended the 40-day fast without his answer, and began eating. Twenty-five days later, God impressed upon him to fast and pray for money. He entered another 40-day fast (he didn't eat 80 days out of 105 days and lost 82 pounds), then God gave the University \$27 million dollars and other things necessary to stave off bankruptcy and loss of accreditation. Liberty University had all sanctions removed by the accreditation agency and was voted re-affirmation for another 10 years.

Others fasted for healing such as Cindy Jacobs, Les Ayars, and David Rhodenhizer. Troy Temple fasted when he and his wife couldn't produce children. Did God answer their request by fertilization? No! But during the time Troy was fasting, a young lady conceived, and the Temple's were able to adopt this child a little more than 9 months later.

This book wasn't intended to be a practical manual on fasting, but you will learn many *how-to* principles to make your fast more meaningful. Watch for the "Take-Aways" section at the end of each testimony. They are a summary of a great lesson you can learn from that testimony.

People who do exploits challenge us by their example. These stories are included to stretch your faith. If you're discouraged about the work of God in your life or church, this book is written to challenge you to fast about it. If you will trust God for greater things, then this book has served its purpose.

Notice what stories we've included. We haven't included just stories about fasting for money or church buildings, but a few are included to challenge you to fast for things. We haven't included just great illustrations of healing through fasting, but a few were chosen to inspire you. We haven't included just reports of fasting for the salvation of lost people, but the ones included should challenge you to fast and pray for lost people.

Also notice we have included testimonies of well-known Christian leaders like Bill Bright, and D. James Kennedy. But fasting is not just for those who are in the spotlight. We've included the stories of lesser known individuals who took a step of faith—even when it wasn't in the spotlight—but lesser known believers took steps unknown to others—and God answered.

The stories were read by each individual to insure reliability. We did not use all the individuals we interviewed, but chose the stories that best reflected the areas where believers fast and pray. Thank you to each for allowing us to include a glimpse of your life in this book.

All royalties for this book go to Liberty University to train young champions for Christ and not to the editors or individuals whose stories are told.

May the testimonies of this book challenge us all to know Christ and make Him known.
Sincerely yours in Christ,
The Editors