

The Right Kind of Fasting?

Unfortunate False Fasting

Part 4b

Jeremiah 14:11-12 (NKJV) 11 “Then the LORD said to me, “Do not pray for this people, for their good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them.”

“There are times before us that will try the souls of men, and there will be need of ... the right kind of fasting.” ST July 14, 1898, par. 5

Unfortunately there are also false forms of fasting.

1 Pharisaic Legalistic Forms To Gain Merit With God and the People

2 “[The Pharisees] seasons of fasting were occasions of outward ceremo-
3 ny. They did not humble their hearts before God. They were filled with
4 bitterness, envy, malice, strife, selfishness, and self-righteousness. While
5 their heads were bowed in pretended humiliation, they were covetous,
6 full of self-esteem, self-importance. They were oppressive, exacting,
7 proud in spirit. {ST July 14, 1898, par. 5}

8 Copying Others (Like the disciples of John)

9 “The disciples of John had not a clear understanding of Christ’s work;
10 they thought there might be some foundation for the charges of the Phar-
11 isees. They observed many of the rules prescribed by the rabbis, and
12 even hoped to be justified by the works of the law. Fasting was practiced
13 by the Jews as an act of merit, and the most rigid among them fasted two
14 days in every week. The Pharisees and John’s disciples were fasting
15 when the latter came to Jesus with the inquiry, “Why do we and the
16 Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?” {DA 276.4}

17 Papal Confession and Penance

18 “Instead of teaching the people to look to Christ alone for pardon
19 through faith in his merits, the priests professedly grant it to them
20 through penitential works. Fasting and mortification of the flesh is en-
21 joined, while the inward work, the regeneration of the heart, which con-
22 stitutes true conversion, is deemed unnecessary. It is easier to the natural
23 heart to confess and do penance than to put away sin; therefore there are
24 few who do not choose to gratify unholy passions at the expense of a lit-
25 tle confession and penance.” {RH June 1, 1886, par. 11}

26 “The conditions of obtaining mercy from God are simple and reason-
27 able. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order to
28 gain forgiveness. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or
29 perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven
30 or to expiate our transgression. He that “confesseth and forsaketh” his
31 sin “shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13. {AA 552.1}

32 National Fasts (In this case the Civil War.)

33 “A great share of the volunteers enlisted fully believing that the result of
34 the war would be to abolish slavery. Others enlisted intending to be very
35 careful to keep slavery just as it is, but to put down the rebellion and pre-
36 serve the Union. And then to make the matter still more perplexing and
37 uncertain, some of the officers in command are strong proslavery men
38 whose sympathies are all with the South, yet who are opposed to a sepa-
39 rate government. It seems impossible to have the war conducted suc-
40 cessfully, for many in our own ranks are continually working to favor
41 the South, and our armies have been repulsed and unmercifully slaugh-
42 tered on account of the management of these proslavery men. Some of
43 our leading men in Congress also are constantly working to favor the
44 South. In this state of things, proclamations are issued for national fasts,
45 for prayer that God will bring this war to a speedy and favorable ter-
46 mination. I was then directed to Isaiah 58:5-7: “Is it such a fast that I
47 have chosen? ... I saw that these national fasts were an insult to Jehovah.
48 He accepts of no such fasts. The recording angel writes in regard to

49 them: “Ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wicked-
50 ness.” {1T 257.1}

51 Self-justifying Fasts

52 “When fastings and prayers are practiced in a self-justifying spirit, they
53 are abominable to God. The solemn assembly for worship, the round of
54 religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposed sacrifice,—
55 all proclaim to the world the testimony that the doer of these things con-
56 siders himself righteous. These things call attention to the observer of
57 rigorous duties, saying, This man is entitled to heaven. But it is all a de-
58 ception.” {1888 1226.2}

59 Fasts That Ignore False Ideas and Selfish Practices

60 “As a church let every instrumentality be sanctified, working decidedly
61 as God has spoken to them in Isaiah, fifty-eighth chapter. There is some-
62 thing to do in setting things in order, something to do beside fasting and
63 praying. Were Christ Jesus in person to address us, He would prescribe
64 just such a work to be done as is found in this chapter as described by
65 Isaiah. The health of our institutions demand a revolution in principles
66 which are now buried up under the rubbish of false ideas and selfish
67 principles that have no connection with God.” {Lt 52, 1891, par. 35}

68 Fasts Without a Purpose

69 “Fastings and vigils, without a special object in view, are time run to
70 waste. They are made to minister to a sort of self-gratification, instead of
71 being turned to account for the good of others.”—David Livingstone

72 Imposed Fasts

73 “It is true there are persons with ill-balanced minds who imagine them-
74 selves to be very religious and who impose upon themselves fasting and
75 prayer to the injury of their health. These souls [are] deceived. God has
76 not required this of them. They have a pharisaical righteousness, which
77 springs, not from Christ, but from themselves.” {3T 172.2}

78 Imbalanced Food Fasts (In this case Joseph Bates)

79 “I have been informed that you have taken but one meal a day for a peri-
80 od of time; but I know it to be wrong in your case, for I have been
81 shown that you needed a nutritious diet, and that you were in danger of
82 being too abstemious. Your strength would not admit of your severe dis-
83 cipline. {Lt 2, 1872, par. 1} God loves you. But you will with your ad-
84 vanced age, and your strong peculiarities certainly mar the work of God
85 more than you can help it. {Lt2-1872.} ... I think that you have erred in
86 fasting two days. God did not require it of you. I beg of you to be cau-
87 tious and eat freely [of] good wholesome food twice a day. You will
88 surely decrease in strength and your mind become unbalanced unless
89 you change your course of abstemious diet.” {Lt2-1872.}

90 A Self-Imposed 40 Day Fast

91 “All the fasting in the world will not take the place of simple trust in the
92 Word of God. “Ask,” He says, “and ye shall receive.” [John 16:24.]
93 {Lt206-1908.7} ... You are not called upon to fast forty days. The Lord
94 bore that fast for you in the wilderness of temptation. There would be no
95 virtue in such a fast; but there is virtue in the blood of Christ. Will you
96 not believe that there is power in His sacrifice to purify and refine you,
97 power in His grace to make you a laborer together with God?”
98 {Lt206-1908.13} [Charles Hirschmiller of South Lancaster, MA]

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Fasting Resources		Righteousness by Faith Ques- tions Answered	
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100 *The Study Guide was created for the 2022 GYC Conference in Phoenix,*
101 *AZ, by Dan Augsburger of Path2Prayer Ministries. All quotations come*
102 *from the writings of Ellen White. Find more resources at disciple-*
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