



BLESSINGS OF FASTING

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You're probably well aware of what the law of the fast means—once a month on fast Sunday, you go without food and drink for two meals, pray, and contribute a fast offering to help the poor (and, of course, you can fast and pray at other times of need, within reasonable, healthy limits). But are you aware of all the blessings that come with keeping this commandment? Here are several to consider. What others can you find in the scriptures, teachings of living prophets, and personal experience?

Power to Overcome Temptations

“Fasting will strengthen your self-discipline [and] fortify you against temptations” (*For the Strength of Youth*

[2011], 39). So how does fasting do this? Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained that as you fast, “through your spirit, you develop personal power over your body’s drives of hunger and thirst. Fasting gives you confidence to know that your spirit can master appetite. . . . Fasting fortifies discipline over appetite and helps to protect against later uncontrolled cravings and gnawing habits” (“Self-Mastery,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 30–31).

Healing and Miracles

In the New Testament, the disciples of Jesus Christ unsuccessfully tried to cast a devil out of a boy. After the Savior was able to do so, the disciples asked why it hadn’t worked for them like it had for the Savior. Jesus told

them that “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (see Matthew 17:14–21). *True to the Faith* explains: “This account teaches that prayer and fasting can give added strength to those giving and receiving priesthood blessings. The account can also be applied to your personal efforts to live the gospel. If you have a weakness or sin that you have struggled to overcome, you may need to fast and pray in order to receive the help or forgiveness you desire” ([2004], 67).

Love for God’s Children

Contributing a generous fast offering after skipping two meals on fast Sunday helps us understand and love Heavenly Father’s children who don’t have as many blessings as we do. Elder L. Tom Perry of the



Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that living the law of the fast “raises our appreciation for those who are without and provides a means to satisfy their daily requirements” (“Building a Community of Saints,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 36).

Remission of Sins

Helping out the poor as part of our fast also brings the additional blessing of helping us retain a remission of our sins. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) explained: “When we give to the bishop an offering to relieve the suffering of others, we not only do something sublime for others, but we do something wonderful for ourselves as well. King Benjamin taught that as we give of our substance to the poor, we retain ‘a remission of [our] sins from day to day’ (Mosiah 4:26)” (“The Law of the Fast,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 74).

Personal Revelation

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah talked about the law of the fast. He promised that if you fast and pray, “the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry,

and he shall say, Here I am” (Isaiah 58:9). He also taught that if you help those in need, “the Lord shall guide thee continually” (Isaiah 58:11). From the Book of Mormon we learn that the

sons of Mosiah “had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation” (Alma 17:3). We also learn that Alma the Younger “fasted and prayed many days” so that he could gain a testimony (Alma 5:46). Like these men, you can also be led by the Lord and receive revelation if you obey the law of the fast.

OTHER BLESSINGS

In addition to the blessings mentioned, ancient and modern prophets have also taught about these blessings of observing the law of the fast:

- Loose the bands of wickedness.
- Free the oppressed.
- Break every yoke.
- Increase our physical health.
- Increase prosperity.
- Energize us spiritually.
- Strengthen our self-discipline.
- Fill our homes with peace.
- Lighten our hearts with joy.
- Prepare us for times of adversity.
- Open the windows of heaven.
- Help us teach with power.
- Increase humility and spirituality.

From Isaiah 58:6, 8; Marion G. Romney, “The Blessings of the Fast,” *Ensign*, July 1982, 4; Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Law of the Fast,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 75; Alma 17:3; and L. Tom Perry, “The Law of the Fast,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 31.

Stronger Relationship with God

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “By not eating these two meals, we draw close to the Lord in humility and prayer” (“Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 9). President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) explained that this happens because fasting will “promote communion with the Holy Ghost, and insure a spiritual strength and power. . . . As fasting should always be accompanied by prayer, this law would bring the people nearer to God” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 198). **NE**