

INCLUDES ORIGINAL RECIPES FROM EXECUTIVE CHEF JOHN P. PERKINS

ELMER L. TOWNS

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *FASTING FOR SPIRITUAL BREAKTHROUGH*



The DANIEL FAST for Spiritual Breakthrough

P R A I S E F O R

❁ The Daniel Fast ❁

for Spiritual Breakthrough

Elmer Towns has taught all the students at Liberty University and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary to fast the way the Bible teaches. I fully recommend *The Daniel Fast for Spiritual Breakthrough* when you need God to answer a specific prayer.

Dr. Ergun Caner

President, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and Graduate School
Lynchburg, Virginia

When we were building our new facility in 2007, our staff committed to a 21-day Daniel Fast. We had a target date of March 2008 to be in our building. We knew that was a stretch, but we believed God for that date. During our fast, we discovered that the building crews were well ahead of schedule and we would actually celebrate Christmas 2007 in our new facility. God showed up in a big way, and 1,000 people were added to our services when we moved in. We believe it was a direct result of our focused prayer and fasting that God was able to do what even the construction crews could not explain. We have since made it a practice to do an annual fast, and we encourage our congregation to join with us.

Matt Fry

Lead Pastor of C3 Church, Clayton, North Carolina

This book is meant for this moment! The Holy Spirit is calling each believer to lay hold of the *power of fasting with prayer*! Daniel's prayer and fasting literally affected a shaping of history at a desperate time in the ancient world. Today, we are at a profound, prophetic intersection in time—one calling us to lay hold of the practical guidelines unfolded in this book. *The Daniel Fast for Spiritual Breakthrough* shows how God's people can see the same results in our generation but on Jesus' terms: "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting" (Mark 9:29).

Dr. Jack W. Hayford

Chancellor, The King's College and Seminary
Founding Pastor, The Church On The Way

When our church was having difficulty getting a building permit for its present worship sanctuary, Dr. Towns came and taught a seminar on fasting. Then we as a congregation fasted to intervene in what seemed like an “immovable mountain.” God turned around an impossible situation, and we now are using that building to reach our community with the love and message of Jesus Christ. *The Daniel Fast for Spiritual Breakthrough* is a great spiritual tool for the work of the Kingdom.

Tom Mullins

Senior Pastor, Christ Fellowship, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

Elmer Towns has been a friend of mine since the early 1970s and has made a contribution to my church both in Sunday school growth and the enrichment of prayer ministry. I’ve had him preach at pastoral conferences at my church on fasting and, in my opinion, he is a modern-day expert on fasting. The stories he tells in this book about how I led my church in a Daniel Fast indicate our commitment to fasting and prayer. Fasting remains a regular discipline among many of our people . . . and is part of my life.

Ron Phillips

Senior Pastor, Abba’s House, Chattanooga, Tennessee

About two years after entering full-time ministry, I heard Dr. Towns speak on the power of fasting. Sadly, fasting was not part of my “Christian discipleship” process until that point. Since then, I have sought to incorporate fasting in my regular disciplines and into my church leadership, and I have experienced the spiritual power of fasting each time. This book is perfect for a personal or church-wide fast, and the daily readings will be an ever-present encouragement to you as you experience God’s blessings through a planned season of fasting.

Nelson Searcy

Lead Pastor, The Journey Church (New York City)
Founder, ChurchLeaderInsights.com

Elmer Towns is a man who breathes with God! His insights come as if from heaven itself. Every ounce of this book is as powerful as a pound of dynamite! Elmer previously wrote a bestselling book on fasting, and now he has added even more to our spiritual arsenal. This book taught me something I did not know: targeted fasting, and how to aim for and hit a bull’s eye in the spirit. Ready! Aim! Fast!

Tommy Tenney

Founder and CEO of GodChasers.network
Pineville, Louisiana

The
DANIEL
FAST
for Spiritual Breakthrough

ELMER L. TOWNS



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Note: The fasts suggested in this book are not for everyone. Consult your physician before beginning. Expectant mothers, diabetics, and others with a history of medical problems can enter the spirit of fasting while remaining on essential diets. While fasting is healthful to many, the nature of God would not command a physical exercise that would harm people physically or emotionally.

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*Dedicated to the memory of Jerry Falwell, my pastor,
who challenged me to my first day of fasting; and to Bill Bright,
who motivated me to my first 40-day fast. Also dedicated to
David Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world's largest church,
who challenged me to teach the ministerial students at Liberty
University to fast before seeking their first pastorate.*



❁ Contents ❁

Foreword <i>by Larry Stockstill</i>	9
Invitation.....	11

SECTION 1

ABOUT THE DANIEL FAST

1. What Is Fasting?.....	15
2. What Is a Daniel Fast?	18
3. Why Choose to Fast?.....	21
4. Why Vow?.....	23
5. What Can I Withhold?	27
6. What Is the Primary Focus of the Daniel Fast?	33
7. How Can I Prepare for My Fast?	35

SECTION 2

DAILY READINGS

Week One: Day 1 to Day 7 Overview	43
Day 1: Your Private Prayer in a Daniel Fast	44
Day 2: Joining Others in a Daniel Fast	48
Day 3: Daily Commitment During Your Fast.....	54
Day 4: Praying and Fasting for a Project	59
Day 5: The Benefits of a Lengthy Fast	66
Day 6: Saying No in Prayer	72
Day 7: The Persistence of a Daniel Fast	76
 Week Two: Day 8 to Day 14 Overview	 81
Day 8: Intimacy with God.....	82

Day 9: Giving Thanks in Prayer.....	89
Day 10: Fasting to Hunger After God.....	94
Day 11: Prayer Is Asking.....	100
Day 12: Fasting to Worship God	109
Day 13: Fasting to Locate Sin	114
Day 14: Don't Violate Your Fast.....	120
 Week Three: Day 15 to Day 21 Overview	 125
Day 15: The Prayer of Crucifixion	126
Day 16: Weeping While Praying	135
Day 17: Introspective Prayer	140
Day 18: Resting in Prayer	147
Day 19: Urgent Prayer.....	153
Day 20: Spiritual Warfare Prayer.....	159
Day 21: Stay in the Moment	165

SECTION 3

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Nine Kinds of Fasts Found in Scripture	173
Appendix B: Six Ways to Fast.....	178
Appendix C: Recipes to Use During a Daniel Fast	180

*Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break
every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you
bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked,
that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?
Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall
spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you;
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.*

ISAIAH 58:6-8

❁ FOREWORD ❁

The Impact of a Daniel Fast

In January 1998, our church entered into our Daniel Fast in the first three weeks of January. We had begun this practice several years before and had begun a cycle of harvest and multiplication in small groups.

It was on the fifteenth day of this fast that my wife and I were leaving Baton Rouge on the way to San Antonio to minister. As we drove around the curve where the governor's mansion is visible, in my spirit I saw a wind blow the door open (a brief mental image of this flashed across my mind as I looked over at the mansion). I told Melanie, my wife, "I believe God is about to open a door to the governor's mansion for a Bible study."

We ended the twenty-first day of the fast in San Antonio and returned to Baton Rouge. There, on my desk, was a note that the governor's secretary had called. When we returned her call, she told us that the governor had been exercising on his treadmill one week before when a daily 90-second program I have done for years came on the local affiliate. A voice inside of the governor said to him, "Call and ask this man to come teach you the entire Bible in four lessons."

This invitation was especially amazing because I had never met the governor before. On the appointed day, he was gathered with 15 of his top staff for the occasion. I taught them four Bible lessons: "creation," "chosen people," "Christ" and "the Church." At the end of the month, the governor asked that I continue. The Bible study continued through the remainder of his term and four additional years after his re-election! Many times I was able to pray with this

group for miracles that stopped hurricanes, broke drought over the state, and brought great favor to this governor. He became the most popular governor our state has had in recent times before his retirement in 2004.

I am persuaded that this mighty open door came through the power of prayer and fasting. Even as Daniel himself prayed and fasted, God opened the doors to the highest levels of government and authority. After Paul's fast in Antioch (see Acts 13), God opened the door to the highest official in Cyprus, Sergius Paulus. Only the power of the Daniel Fast can bring a breakthrough in the United States and state governments, and my experience with the Governor of Louisiana is living proof of that reality.

Larry Stockstill
Senior Pastor, Bethany World Prayer Center
Baker, Louisiana

❁ INVITATION ❁

Welcome to *The Daniel Fast for Spiritual Breakthrough*. This book was written as a guide for your fast. You'll read an explanation of how the Daniel Fast was named, why it's either 10 or 21 days, what you should eat and how you should discipline yourself in a fast.

This book will also examine some of your prayer experiences while fasting. Perhaps you've committed to pray throughout the 10 or 21 days of your fast and, at the same time, fast for a prayer goal. You'll learn many practical tips on prayer. You'll learn how to encounter God, worship God and pray specifically for answers. You'll look at the role of weeping, repenting and what it means to crucify yourself. Then you'll learn some principles of warfare prayer and what it means to pray desperately.

If this is your first time ever to fast, this book will relieve some of your fears and explain some of the things you are experiencing while fasting. So read to get confidence in prayer and overcome anxiety; but most of all, read to get answers to your prayers.

As I wrote this book, I fasted several times, in several different ways. I was fasting and praying that God would show me what to write and help me prepare this book so that you would touch God as you read and fast; but more importantly, that God would touch you.

Written from my home at the
foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains,
Elmer L. Towns, 2009

❁ SECTION 1 ❁

About the Daniel Fast

What Is Fasting?

I was told that no one had written a bestselling book on fasting in 100 years, so when I wrote *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough* in 1996, I wanted some feedback. I mailed a typed copy of the manuscript to Pastor Ron Phillips of Central Baptist Church in greater Chattanooga, Tennessee. A few days later, I received a strange phone call.

“You’re a dirty dog,” the voice on the line said.

“Who’s calling me a dirty dog?” I asked.

“This is Ron Phillips,” he said with a laugh. Ron was a friend of mine; I had been to his church two or three times to hold Sunday School growth campaigns. “I’m at the Southern Baptist Convention,” he went on, explaining his joking remark. “I should be attending meetings . . . and voting . . . and talking to my buddies down in the hallways, but I’m glued to this hotel room reading your book. This book is so good that it will change my life.”

Before the phone call was over, Ron convinced me to come to his church to teach a Saturday seminar on the principles of fasting. So we set a date, and Ron sent out the invitations. He expected that 800 people would attend, but only 157 showed up. The reason for the lower attendance was because Ron had asked them to come and *fast* that day. Many people were scared away because they didn’t know how to fast or didn’t understand what God could do for them if they fasted. That convinced me that more needed to be written on fasting—whether it was a bestseller or not.

So, what does it mean to “fast”?

Definition

Fast (fa:st, -æ-): To abstain from food, or to restrict oneself to a meager diet, either as a religious observance or as a ceremonial expression of grief; to go without food; also (contextually) to go without drink; to pass (time) fasting; to keep or observe (a day, etc.) as a time of abstinence.¹

God created the human body to require food to keep it operating. To make sure the body gets fuel, God created within us an appetite for food, called hunger. Eating satisfies our appetite and gives us the strength to do the activities we need to do throughout our day. So why would a person choose to fast—to go without food for a period of time?

From God’s perspective, the reason is simple. Fasting can be used to accomplish a spiritual purpose. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were commanded to fast once each year: “In the seventh month, on the tenth day, you shall go without eating” (Lev. 16:29, CEV). This fast took place on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). On this day, the high priest would conduct special sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people. During the service, the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies in the center of the Temple—the only time of the year that he was allowed inside. God wanted His people to fast on this day in order to remember the experience of their salvation. Everyone fasted in order to identify with the high priest, who sacrificed a lamb for the forgiveness of their sins.

Today, as Christians we live under grace, so we are no longer *required* to fast. However, Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 6:16 that we are *allowed* to fast for certain reasons: “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” Likewise, in Matthew 9:15, He states, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.” We also see the apostles in the Early Church fasting for a spiritual purpose: “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy

Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2-3).

Many people who have never fasted before get nervous about the prospects of abstaining from food. They wonder if they will get hungry and if the hunger pains will make it too difficult for them to continue. They anticipate that it will be an unpleasant experience—probably many of the same concerns that the members of Central Baptist Church felt when Ron Phillips asked them to fast. However, keep in mind that fasting will not hurt any more than dieting to get thinner. It will also not harm you; in fact, some studies show fasting is actually good for the body, as it eliminates toxins from the body.

The purpose of fasting is not to make an outward show of your religious dedication to God, but rather to make a personal commitment between you and God. It’s not always easy—like any spiritual discipline, you will undoubtedly encounter resistance and opposition. So embark on your Daniel Fast—or any fast you undertake—with the full understanding of what you are doing. Know also that although the path may be difficult, the rewards will be great.²

My Time to Pray

Lord, I pray that You will guide me as I begin this time of fasting.

A M E N .

Notes

1. See http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50082578?query_type=word&queryword=fast&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&search_id=ydSC-7mmrRh-7573&result_place=1, s.v. “fast” (accessed July 1, 2009).
2. For a further explanation of the purpose of fasting, see *The Beginner’s Guide to Fasting* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2001), pp. 9-15.

What Is a Daniel Fast?

Jentezen Franklin, pastor of the Free Chapel in Gainesville, Georgia—a congregation with 10,000 in attendance—begins each year with a 21-day Daniel Fast. Everyone participates in some measure. Some people in the church fast for one day, others for three days, some for one week, and many for the full 21 days. Jentezen has said, “I’ve had people testify that only three days into a fast for a loved one suffering from cancer, the cancer was completely cured at this point. Another lady’s son was dying from 107-degree fever, associated with his leukemia. The very first day of the fast the boy’s fever broke and he didn’t suffer a trace of brain damage!”¹

Jentezen believes it is important in the spiritual growth of the congregation at Free Chapel to fast and sacrifice for God at the beginning of every new year. Some fast to break their addiction to junk food, some fast to break the power of an uncontrollable appetite, and some fast to break addiction to nicotine, alcohol or drugs, but most fast to know God intimately. Jentezen Franklin has said, “Each year I encourage all the members of Free Chapel to join us in our 21-day fast. If in 21 days you can be a new person, why go the rest of your life feeling sick, weak, overweight, and run down? Why not take a radical step of faith? We have only one life to give God—let’s get control of our bodies and go for God with the best we have!”²

So, how did Daniel get a fast named after him? In other words, why did Daniel fast? Daniel was 16 years old when the Babylonians took him captive. At that time, the king of Babylon was Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel had served in the king’s court in Jerusalem, so he

was being prepared for some type of government service in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar chose Daniel because he wanted “young men in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand” (Dan. 1:4, emphasis added).

Nebuchadnezzar wanted Daniel “to serve in the king’s palace” (v. 4) and help him administer his rule over the Jews, God’s people. But he wanted Daniel to be “Babylonian.” So, “the king appointed for them [Daniel and three of his friends] a daily provision of the king’s delicacies and of the wine which he drank” (v. 5).

To a teenager today, the word “delicacies” means foods like pizza or ice cream . . . and he or she might also include beer and alcohol—and even drugs—to the list. But Daniel didn’t choose luxuries; rather, “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine” (v. 8). Notice the word “purposed” in this passage. The secret to a Daniel Fast is to *purpose* in your heart; that is, to make a vow as you enter the fast that you will purpose to follow the Lord in what you eat and drink.

What did Daniel choose to eat? The *King James Version* of the Bible says that Daniel told his supervisor, “Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us *pulse* to eat, and water to drink” (v. 12, emphasis added). The newer translations use the word “vegetables” for “pulse,” which were probably leafy vegetables such as lettuce, turnip greens, cabbage, spinach and collard greens. So, Daniel ate a “salad” diet. What were the results? “At the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies” (v. 15).

The test that Daniel proposed to his supervisor appears to be a simple one, and as you enter the Daniel Fast, you may choose to eat only vegetables for 10 days. However, you may also choose to partake in a longer version of the Daniel Fast, as recorded in chapter 10: “I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth” (v. 3). Daniel continued with this fast for 21 days, “till three whole weeks were fulfilled” (v. 3).

The phrase “pleasant food” is interesting in this passage. “Pleasant food” means food that you would consider pleasant to your taste, such as steak, clam chowder, fried shrimp, escargot, veal cutlets with provolone, and so on. The *NIV* translates it “choice food,” the *CEV* calls it “fancy food,” the *CSB* and *TLB* translate it “rich food,” the *Complete Jewish Bible* translates the phrase “only food that satisfies me,” and *The Companion Bible* translates it “bread of desires.” All of these definitions point to the same issue: During a Daniel Fast, you give up the things you enjoy eating and eat only what is necessary. Therefore, the Daniel Fast is an expression of abstinence for purposes of self-discipline.

My Time to Pray

Lord, I purpose to follow You in what I eat and drink.

A M E N .

Notes

1. Jentezen Franklin, *Fasting: Opening the Door to a Deeper, More Intimate, More Powerful Relationship with God* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2008), p. 55.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 42.