

**Title:** Fast & Furious

**Text:** Luke 2:36-38

**Target:** A new year resolution is not always about starting something new, it is just as much about stopping something old.

- I. **The Desire in Fasting:** *Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” (Matthew 9:14)*
- A. **Recognizing His Absence:** *Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? (Matthew 9:15a)*
  - B. **Longing for His Presence:** *The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. (Matthew 9:15b)*

**Question #1:** When you feel distant from God, how does that affect your spiritual hunger or desire to fast?

Think about times when you’ve sensed God’s absence. How did you respond, and did that longing for His presence lead you to fast or sacrifice something in your life?

**Question #2:** What does longing for God look like in your life?

Fasting isn’t just about giving up food—it’s about desiring more of God. How do you actively express that longing, whether through fasting, prayer, or other disciplines?

II. **The Direction in Fasting: Not commanded, but compelled!**

- A. **The Mindset in Fasting:** *And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so that their fasting may be seen by others... (Matthew 6:16-18)*
- B. **The Metaphysical in Fasting:** *I will not be dominated by anything. (1 Cor. 6:12)*
- C. **The Mental Clarity of Fasting:** *O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. (Psalm 63:1)*
  - **Time with God:** Mark 1:35
  - **Seek God:** Matthew 4:4
  - **Hear from God:** 1 Samuel 3:10

**Question #3:** What does it mean to be “compelled” to fast instead of just following a command?

Think about moments when you felt an internal urge to fast—not because you had to, but because your heart was drawn to it. How did that differ from times when you fasted out of routine or obligation?

**Question #4:** How does fasting challenge your relationship with control and comfort?

Fasting is a way of stepping away from things that often dominate our lives. What areas in your life do you find difficult to release or give up? How does fasting help you gain freedom from those things?

**Question #5:** Psalm 63:1 talks about a soul thirsting for God like someone in a dry, weary land. What would you say is the “dryness” in your life right now?

Reflect on your current spiritual state. What areas feel dry or lacking, and how could fasting help bring you closer to God in those areas?

**Question #6: How does fasting help you hear from God more clearly?**

When you set aside time to fast, what does it do to your mind and heart? How does it help you tune out distractions and focus more on God?

**III. The Different types of Fasting:** *As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you! My soul thirsts for God, for the living God (Psalm 42:1-2)*

- A. Complete Fast:** Drink only liquids, abstain from all food. (Ex. Jesus, Moses...)
- B. Selective Fast:** Removing certain elements from your diet. (Ex. Daniel fast)
- C. Partial Fast:** Abstaining from eat during a certain time such as sunup to sundown.
- D. Soul Fast:** Removing distractions such as TV, social media, streaming, etc.

**Question #6: Which type of fast (Complete, Selective, Partial, or Soul Fast) do you feel most drawn to this year, and why?**

Think about the kind of fast that would be most meaningful for you right now. Do you feel called to give up food, certain comforts, or even digital distractions?

**Question #7: What would a “Soul Fast” look like for you?**

A “Soul Fast” involves removing distractions like TV, social media, or other things that pull us away from God. What are some distractions you could fast from to make space for God in your life?

**IV. The Deliverance because of Fasting:** *Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? (Isaiah 58:6)*

- A. Believing for Victory:** (2 Chronicles 20:3)
- B. Believing for Breakthrough:** (Mark 9:29)
- C. Believing for Revival:** (Nehemiah 1:4)
- D. Believing for a Miracle:** (2 Samuel 12:16)
- E. Believing for Wisdom:** (Daniel 9:3)
- F. Believing for Success:** (Esther 4:16)

**Question #8: Fasting isn’t just about starting something new—it’s also about stopping something old. What old habits, distractions, or attitudes might you need to let go of this year?**

As you look to the new year, think about things that have held you back spiritually. What do you need to stop in order to make room for God to move in your life?

**Question #9: How can fasting help you reset your life and move forward in a way that honors God?**

The new year is often a time for new beginnings. How can fasting be a way for you to spiritually reset and refocus on God’s priorities for you this year?

**Takeaway:** Your circumstances may or may not change, but you will never be the same.

**Question #10: How can fasting strengthen your connection with others in your community group?** Fasting is often a deeply personal practice, but it can also be a shared experience. How might fasting together with others deepen your relationships and help your community grow spiritually?