Dear Friend,

I am excited to know that you are interested in learning more about prayer and fasting. The spiritual discipline of fasting was a common practice of the early church. "So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed." In fact, Jesus gave instructions for "when you fast" not "if you fast" (cf. Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14-15), implying that all believers should fast.

If you have medical concerns, please consult your physician before beginning your fast. It is important to be physically prepared.

If you physically cannot participate in a traditional fast, you may want to consider "fasting" from technology or some other personal luxury. For example, your family may choose to eliminate television for 40 days. Teenagers may choose to eliminate video games for 40 days. The idea is not simply to make a "personal sacrifice" and eliminate something. The idea is to replace those activities with time in God's word and prayer. We hope to experience a hunger for prayer and a genuine hunger for time with God.

I hope your spiritual walk will be strengthened as you apply these steps toward developing the spiritual discipline of fasting and prayer.

Praying for your spiritual health!

Pastor Chris

Introduction (Bill Bright)

I believe the power of fasting as it relates to prayer is the spiritual atomic bomb that our Lord has given us to destroy the strongholds of evil and usher in a great revival and spiritual harvest around the world.

Increasingly I have been gripped with a growing sense of urgency to call upon God to send revival to our beloved country. In the spring and summer of 1994, I had a growing conviction that God wanted me to fast and pray for forty days for revival in America and for the fulfillment of the Great Commission in obedience to our Lord's command.

At first I questioned, "Is this truly God's call for me?" Forty days was a long time to go without solid food. But with each passing day, His call grew stronger and more clear. Finally, I was convinced. God was calling me to fast, and He would not make such a call without a specific reason or purpose. With this conviction, I entered my fast with excitement and expectancy mounting in my heart, praying, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

I believe such a long fast was a sovereign call of God because of the magnitude of the sins of America and of the Church. The Lord impressed that upon my heart, as well as the urgent need to help accelerate the fulfillment of the Great Commission in this generation.

As I began my fast, I was not sure I could continue for forty days. But my confidence was in the Lord to help me. Each day His presence encouraged me to continue. The longer I fasted, the more I sensed the presence of the Lord. The Holy Spirit refreshed my soul and spirit, and I experienced the joy of the Lord as seldom before. Biblical truths leaped at me from the pages of God's Word. My faith soared as I humbled myself and cried out to God and rejoiced in His presence.

This proved to be the most important forty days of my life. As I waited upon the Lord, the Holy Spirit gave me the assurance that America and much of the world will, before the end of the year 2000, experience a great spiritual awakening. This divine visit from heaven will kindle the greatest spiritual harvest in the history of the

Church. But before God comes in revival power, the Holy Spirit will call millions of God's people to repent, fast, and pray in the spirit of 2 Chronicles 7:14:

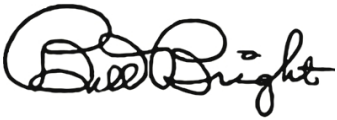
If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

The scope of this revival depends on how believers in America and the rest of the world respond to this call. I have spent fifty years studying God's Word and listening to His voice, and His message could not have been more clear.

This handy reference guide, *Seven Basic Steps to Successful Fasting and Prayer*, will help make your time with the Lord more spiritually rewarding. I encourage you to keep it with you during your fast and refer to it often because it gives easy-to-follow suggestions on how to begin your fast, what to do while you fast, and how to end your fast properly.

During my forty-day fast, God impressed me to pray that two million Christians in North America will fast for forty days by the end of the year 2000, and pray for national and worldwide revival and for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. I urge you to prayerfully consider this challenge.

Before you fast, I encourage you to read my book, *The Coming Revival: America's Call to Fast, Pray, and "Seek God's Face."* It will help equip you for the coming spiritual awakening.



Step 1: Set Your Objective

If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
-2 Chronicles 7:14

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these seven basic steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

Through fasting and prayer we humble ourselves before God so the Holy Spirit will stir our souls, awaken our churches, and heal our land according to 2 Chronicles 7:14. Make this a priority in your fasting.

Step 2: Make Your Commitment

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. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
-Matthew 6:16-18

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (cf. Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14-15). For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long will you fast – one meal, one day, once each week, a week, several weeks, forty days? (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake. Such as: water only or water and juices; what kinds of juices you will drink and how often.
- What physical or social activities you will restrict.
- How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God's Word.

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

Step 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

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If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
-1 John 1:9

- Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (cf. 1 John 1:9).
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (cf. Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4).
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14-15.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (cf. Romans 12:1-2).
- Meditate on the attributes of God: His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others (cf. Psalm 48:9-10; 103:1-8, 11-13).
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (cf. Hebrews 11:6).
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (cf. Galatians 5:16-17).

Step 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
-Romans 12:1-2

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

- Do not rush into your fast.
- Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
- Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting a fast.

While You Fast

Your time of fasting and prayer has come. You are abstaining from all solid foods and have begun to seek the Lord. Here are some helpful suggestions to consider:

- Avoid drugs, even natural herbal drugs and homeopathic remedies. Medication should be withdrawn only with your physician's supervision.
- Limit your activity.
- Exercise only moderately. Walk one to three miles each day if convenient and comfortable.
- Rest as much as your schedule will permit.
- Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness, and anxiety.
- Expect some physical discomforts, especially on the second day. You may have fleeting hunger pains, dizziness, or the "blahs." Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches. Physical annoyances may also include weakness, tiredness, or sleeplessness.

The first two or three days are usually the hardest. As you continue to fast, you will likely experience a sense of well-being both physically and spiritually. However, should you feel hunger pains, increase your liquid intake.

Step 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.
-Philippians 2:13

For a maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Morning

- Begin your day in praise and worship.
- Read and meditate on God's Word, preferably on your knees.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasure according to Philippians 2:13.
- Invite God to use you. Ask Him to show you how to influence your world, your family, your church, your community, your country, and beyond.
- Pray for His vision for your life and empowerment to do His will.

Noon

- Return to prayer and God's Word.
- Take a short prayer walk.
- Spend time in intercessory prayer for your community's and nation's leaders, for the world's unreached millions, for your family or special needs.

Evening

- Get alone for an unhurried time of "seeking His face."
- If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer.
- Avoid television or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus.

Step 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule (continued)

When possible, begin and end each day on your knees with your spouse for a brief time of prayer and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with our Lord in prayer and study of His Word are often better spent alone.

A dietary routine is vital as well. Dr. Julio C. Ruibal – a nutritionist, pastor, and specialist in fasting and prayer – suggests a daily schedule and list of juices you may find useful and satisfying. Modify this schedule and the drinks you take to suit your circumstances and tastes.

5 – 8am

- Fruit juices, preferably freshly squeezed or blended and diluted in 50 percent distilled water if the fruit is acid. Apple, pear, grapefruit, papaya, watermelon, or other fruit juices are generally preferred. If you cannot do your own juicing, buy juices without sugar or additives.

10:30 – noon

- Fresh vegetable juice made from lettuce, celery, and carrots in three equal parts.

2:30 – 4pm

- Herb tea with a drop of honey. Avoid black tea or any tea with caffeine.

6 – 8:30pm

- Broth made from boiling potatoes, celery, and carrots with no salt. After boiling about half an hour, pour the water into a container and drink it.

Tips on Juice Fasting

- Drinking fruit juice will decrease your hunger pains and give you some natural sugar energy. The taste and lift will motivate and strengthen you to continue.
- The best juices are made from fresh watermelon, lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. In cold weather, you may enjoy a warm vegetable broth.
- Mix acidic juices (orange and tomato) with water for your stomach's sake.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks. And avoid chewing gum or mints, even if your breath is bad. They stimulate digestive action in your stomach.

Step 6: End Your Fast Gradually

When your designated time for fasting is finished, you will begin to eat again. But how you break your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual wellbeing.

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

Here are some suggestions to help you end your fast properly:

- Break an extended water fast with fruit such as watermelon.
- While continuing to drink fruit or vegetable juices, add the following:
  - First day: Add a raw salad.
  - Second day: Add baked or boiled potato, no butter or seasoning.
  - Third day: Add a steamed vegetable.
  - Thereafter: Begin to reintroduce your normal diet.
- Gradually return to regular eating with several small snacks during the first few days. Start with a little soup and fresh fruit such as watermelon and cantaloupe. Advance to a few tablespoons of solid foods such as raw fruits and vegetables or a raw salad and bakes potato.

Step 7: Expect Results

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.
-John 14:21

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (cf. John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers.

A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding to many Christians.

It takes time to build your spiritual muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to strengthen your understanding and resolve. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honor your faithfulness.

I encourage you to join me in fasting and prayer again and again until we truly experience revival in our homes, our churches, our beloved nation, and throughout the world.