



# UPGRADE

## “Upgrade My Prayer Life”

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” **Luke 11:1 NLT**

**Without air, we die physically, without prayer, we die spiritually.**

### FASTING AND PRAYER

**Fasting** is voluntarily depriving yourself of food or drink (or some other good thing) in order to focus on God. You can fast alone, in a group, in crisis, or in preparation for something important.

### FASTING IS A FAITH-BUILDING EXERCISE.

- Train yourself in the spiritual discipline of fasting.
- It's relinquishing the natural for **the supernatural**.
- It's about **releasing control to God**, not obligating him to give us breakthrough on our terms.

*“More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.”*

**Richard Foster**

<sup>17</sup> One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, “Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won't let him talk. <sup>18</sup> And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn't do it.” <sup>19</sup> Jesus said to them, “You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” <sup>20</sup> So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup> “How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy's father. He replied, “Since he was a little boy. <sup>22</sup> The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.” <sup>23</sup> “What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.” <sup>24</sup> The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!” **Mark 9:17-24 NLT**

<sup>28</sup> Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, “Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.” **Mark 9:28-29 NLT**

- Fasting can **unlock breakthroughs** in the spiritual realm that will never happen in any other way.
- When you fast, you **reaffirm your dependence on God's power**, not your own.
- Ask God to show you when you should fast and for how long.

### FASTING AS A GROUP DURING CRISIS

<sup>1</sup> After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat. <sup>2</sup> Messengers came and told Jehoshaphat, “A vast army from Edom is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea. They are already at Hazazon-tamar.” (This was another name for En-gedi.) <sup>3</sup> Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the Lord for guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. **2 Chronicles 20:1-3 NLT**

### JESUS PERSONALLY FASTED

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. <sup>2</sup> For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. **Matthew 4:1-2 NLT**

### PAUL AND BARNABAS FASTED IN PREPARTION

Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. **Acts 14:23 NLT**

### FASTING IS DONE WITH A SENSE OF HUMILITY

<sup>16</sup> “And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. <sup>18</sup> Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.” **Matthew 6:16-18 NLT**

- Everyone can temporarily give up something in order to draw closer to God.
- Fasting is not intended to punish the flesh, but to redirect attention to God.
- Fasting does not change God; God changes us through our fast.
- Where do you need a new breakthrough in your life?

### Next Steps for me today...

- To put my faith in Jesus right now.
- To take a big step toward a needed breakthrough.

- **To begin a fast this week of something in order to draw closer to God.**