

**Priorities Under Fire: An Emergency Plan
For Coping With Crisis**
Selected Scriptures

Series: Biblical Priorities - Part 7

Introduction

The Problem -

The Need -

The Teaching -

16 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:15-18 (NIV)

I. Historical Overview

II. A Biblical Overview

- A. Definition
- B. Type of Fasts
- C. Old Testament – “to afflict one’s soul”
 - 1. Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29)
 - 2. Times of Distress
 - 3. Times of Revelation
 - 4. Development of Regular Fasts (Zechariah 8:19)
 - 5. Abuses in Fasting (Isaiah 58)
 - 6. Summary of O.T. Teaching on Fasting
- D. New Testament – “Never for Sin or Sorrow”
 - 1. John the Baptist – Mark 2:18
 - 2. Christ – Luke 4:2, Luke 5:33, Matt. 17:21
 - 3. Paul – Personally – Acts 9:9
 - 4. Call to Missions – Acts 13:2

5. Church at Antioch – Acts 14:23

III. The Purpose of Fasting

IV. Five Critical Times to Fast – When To Call “Time Out”

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- 5.

- A. How to Fast?

1. Physical Considerations
2. Spiritual Considerations

CONCLUSION: The greater the **external pressure** (time/people demands) you are under, the greater the need for the **internal renewal** fasting provides.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What first comes to your mind when you hear the word “fasting?”
2. Have you had any personal experience with fasting? Share your experience (positive or negative).
3. What is God’s intent with regard to fast? **When** and **how** should we use it as a spiritual resource?
4. Is there any **crisis** in your life that fasting and prayer might be God’s clear direction for you at this time?
5. How could the regular practice of fasting help provide a “spiritual pitstop” to protect you from “crisis mode” living?