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ONE OF THE LOST
KEYS OF INTIMACY
WITH GOD
THROUGH FASTING.

D'Jamildo Graham

Xulon Press

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One of the lost keys of intimacy with God through fasting.

by D'Jamildo Graham

Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 9781545602942

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Introduction



When God laid this book on my heart he was teaching me how to have intimacy with Him. My journey of intimacy has been over a period of 17 years. My introduction to fasting began when I was 7 months pregnant. As I am now writing this book, my oldest son is 18 years old, which gives you some idea of how long God through his Holy Spirit has been working this word out in me.

This book is dedicated to my husband Antonio Graham, who has sacrificed so much for me to be able to fast and be alone with God. To my children for understanding that time away from them when I am with God makes me a better mother when I am with them.

As you take this journey with me, I would advise you to gather these resources to better help you with your study. So, grab your Bible, Bible Commentary, and journal (from any dollar store), and let's go to work!

CHAPTER 1

The Building Blocks Of Fasting



The young queen slowly made her way down the long hallway. Clothed in royal garments, her quiet footfalls seemed to thud against the stone floors and bounce off the outer walls of the great palace. She glanced through the giant archway and out over the garden courtyard. White cotton curtains fluttered amongst the marble pillars, while gold and silver couches beckoned her to sit for a while to rest her weary body. Weak from three days without food and water, Esther shook off the temptation. She was needed elsewhere.

Just days earlier, her cousin Mordecai appeared at the palace gates dressed in sackcloth and ashes, the Jewish sign of mourning. Haman, the king's most trusted adviser and second in command in the Persian Empire, had crafted a devious plot that meant sure annihilation for the Jewish nation. As her cousin's messenger relayed the news, Esther's hands shook. Even now, his words reverberated to her very core.

"If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14, NLT).

Esther called on her people, the Jews throughout Susa, to gather to fast and pray- focusing on their petition before God. Despite the dangers of going without water in the hot and arid climate of Persia, it had been done. For three days, she had leaned on the history of her people, following the lead of the patriarchs- Moses, Abraham and King David, as she fasted, prayed and called on the only One who could deliver them.

They needed deliverance, and she needed courage from Jehovah Himself for what must come next. She was about to do something that could mean certain death, but her mind was made up. If she must die, she must die. The calling was too strong to ignore.

Esther took a deep breath and stepped onto the inner court of the palace, just in front of the enormous archway leading to the throne hall. She saw her husband's confusion as he caught a glimpse of her from his throne. The look quickly turned into a smile as he extended his scepter to her, motioning for her to enter. With the confidence born through her fasting and communion with Jehovah Maginnenu, her defender, she walked through the archway and straight into the arms of history.

In Biblical times, fasting was an integral part of worshiping God. Jews like Queen Esther saw it as a sign of their weakness and complete dependence on God, but the practice didn't end in the Old Testament. It was also key to the success of the early church. After his Damascus road experience, Paul fasted for three days to set his heart right with God. The Antioch church elders refrained from food and spent time in prayer before sending Paul and Barnabas out on the first missionary journey. Even Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights before starting His earthly ministry.

Today fasting is something we relegate to the pages of history. Pastors rarely touch on the topic and when they do it is most often with fear. Perhaps they reason it is an archaic tradition whose time has passed, or maybe the Biblical command to do it in secret keeps them quiet (Matthew 6:16, NLT). But the truth is, fasting is a powerful form of worship that, if practiced with the right heart, brings Christians even closer to their heavenly Father.

WHAT IS FASTING?

In Greek, fasting was known as "néstieia" and in Hebrew as "tsom" (Strong). Most simply, fasting is giving up something for a period to draw closer to God. It can be food, entertainment, comforts, just about anything that stands between you and your heavenly Father. It is not a diet or a resolution and it certainly is not a way to convince the Creator to see things your way. Instead, it is about moving away from the things of this world, changing your heart and making you more effective in His service.

While we aren't commanded to fast, the Bible does tell us to be separate from the world. In the second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul encouraged the young church to remove itself from the sin around them. *"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17, NKJV).*

When Paul urged the Corinthians to separate themselves, he wanted them to pull away from the culture. Too often our focus on a fast seems to be the idea of giving up food. Instead it should be about detaching ourselves – not only from sin, but from the things of this world and moving closer to God. It is the same kind of discipline that Paul talked about in another letter to the Corinthians.

"Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, NLT).

A runner doesn't just get up one morning ready to run a marathon. They spend hours training, watching what they eat, getting plenty of rest, and then training some more, year-round. They don't take many breaks. They can't. While their friends are going to movies and eating takeout, the athlete keeps sacrificing because studies show in the first week after they stop their regimen, they can lose as much as ten percent of their cardiovascular fitness. Who wants to go through all of that work just to lose it?

Besides the physical training there are the mental workouts. Athletes must know the sport inside and out- the rules, the techniques, and the strategies that will enable them to play at the highest levels. The same can be said of fasting. Depriving our bodies of food won't do any good if our hearts aren't involved. Only through devoting our time to God and worshiping Him during the fast, will we find a full blessing.

After all that training the athlete goes through, the reward is still only temporary. The ribbons and medals they win will eventually fade and corrode with time. The rewards of fasting are eternal. It disciplines you to win a spiritual race that gives you the ultimate prize, a closer relationship with the Father.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

God wants that relationship with us even more than we do. That is why He created us in His very image, so we can relate to Him and understand who He is. If you think about it, we are the only part of His creation that can carry on that kind of relationship. He doesn't want to express that love to trees and rocks. He wants us to know him more. He wants an intimate relationship with us and He is jealous to have it. He said so Himself when He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses.