

## 21 Day Daniel Fast Instructions

As we planned this fast I noticed many Churches will begin the year with a “Daniel Fast”, but only after fully celebrating the New Year with all of the Festivities, Delicacies, Parades, Bowl games are finished. The Average start date is around the 10th of January. This was great motivation as we always strive to bring biblical concepts and practices in harmony with the Word of God. Therefore during these 21 Days we will rediscover what the biblical purpose and meaning of fasting is. What we discovered radically changed our goals and approach for this fast.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose for this fast is twofold; Die to our flesh so we can clearly hear God’s direction, and pursue a more intimate relationship with Him. This is a Daniel Fast and so all restrictions will be based on biblical text.

***Daniel 1:3-5 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king’s descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king’s delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.***

Daniel’s fasted to remain true to serving God alone and staying true His Word. Daniel wanted to preserve the relationship He already had and remain true as The King (of the known world at time) wanted to get the best and brightest in Israel to conform. Note Daniel and the Hebrew Boys were not given an option they were given a directive and this was their response.

***Daniel 1:8 But, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.***

**Guidelines:**

Based on Daniel's response all participants in this fast must first purpose in their hearts not to defile themselves either. Now we say this fully understanding the biblical record has removed all eating restrictions from believers (Acts 10:9-16). The defilement in our days comes from our reliance and indulgence on all things except God. So for 21 days we will abstain from all things not needed and indulge in God. We have broken the guidelines down to 5 segments; Foods Allowed, Foods to Avoid, Activities Allowed, Activities to Avoid, Conscience Issues.

### **Foods Allowed:**

All fruits: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are not limited to apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon

All vegetables: These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are not limited to artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

All whole grains: including but not limited to whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

All nuts and seeds: including but not limited to sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

All legumes: These can be canned or dried. Legumes include but are not limited to dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

All quality oils: including but not limited to olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

Beverages: Juice (no sugar added) spring water, distilled water or other pure waters.

Other: tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs and spices.

**Foods to Avoid:**

All meat and animal products including but not limited to beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and fish.

All dairy products including but not limited to milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

All sweeteners including but not limited to sugar, syrups, molasses, and cane juice.

All leavened bread including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

All refined and processed food products including but not limited to artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

All deep fried foods including but not limited to potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

All solid fats including shortening, margarine, lard and foods high in fat. Beverages including but not limited to coffee, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

Remember, READ THE LABELS!

**Activities Allowed:**

During the fast all activities that promote life and godliness are ok. There are two rules of thumb to use as guidelines. One the medium is not important, the motive is. If you get on the internet and go to the dust discipleship center page; for example, to post a testimony, praise, or seek encouragement that's good. However, if you just on Facebook just to see what is going on that would not be acceptable.

### **Activities to Avoid:**

During the fast we need to abstain whenever possible from all things not needed for life and Godliness. This means all things secular that can be avoided must be avoided. This includes but is not limited to; Television, Movies, Sports, Video Games, Internet Browsing, Games, basically all things recreational that can be avoided.

### **Conscience Issues:**

#### **Food:**

Grapes, Raisins, or Grape juice some people interpret “wine” in the Bible as fresh grape juice. But I have a hard time believing Noah got naked on fresh grape juice; I am pretty sure it was fermented. Natural Sweeteners Honey and unprocessed, unbleached sugar cane Honey is made by bees out of flower nectar. It is not really considered vegan, because it is a product of a living being. The decision to allow honey on your Daniel fast is between you and God. Raw cane sugar Sugar cane is grown from a seed. However, it goes through a considerable amount of processing. Refined white sugar is definitely not Daniel Fast friendly. True raw sugar is better than white, refined sugar. If you choose to allow it on your fast, use it sparingly. Judge for Yourself Two questions you can use as a general rule of thumb: Did it grow from a seed? Has man polluted it? Has it been fermented If you can answer these questions with any degree of certainty then you can be reasonably assured that your food choices are in line with The Daniel Fast.

#### **Activities:**

The main thing I want to cover here is sex. This is a difficult subject on a fast especially a 21 Day fast. Biblically we cannot fast from sex without permission from our spouses; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Therefore I would like to offer a few guidelines to help everyone make a decision that won't grieve their conscience:

☒ If your spouse will not consent to abstain continue on the fast and just let them be the initiator

☒ If you and your spouse are intimate due to increased connection with God or one another and not by lust.

☒ If you struggle in the area of Lust and this is part of your motivation for fasting

☒ If you just feel it does not bother your conscience and do not want to abstain from intimacy with your spouse.

It is far better to join the fast and pray for God's deliverance and strength than to not fast at all. Who knows God is able and He may just shock you and work things out for you!

## **Children**

The extent of your children's involvement in the Daniel Fast will depend upon their ages and spiritual maturity. Ask the Lord to show you what will work best for your family dynamic, and trust Him to give you wisdom. Following is a list of ideas that will help you move through each stage of your fast:

### **Before the Fast**

- Sit down with your children and discuss the definition of a fast. Look at examples from Scripture, such as when Esther called a 3-day fast (Esther 4:16) or when the Israelites prayed before their 900-mile trek to Jerusalem through difficult and dangerous territory (Ezra 8:21-23). Talk about what God how God answered their prayers.

- Read the story of Daniel's 10-day test in Daniel 1 to give your children an idea of Daniel's character and how he refused to violate his convictions. Take a look at the account of Daniel's 21-day fast in Daniel 10. Explain how the modern-day Daniel Fast is following the prophet's example of devotion to prayer.

- Talk about which foods you are going to give up during your fast. Emphasize that such foods are not bad or wrong, but that you are abstaining from them temporarily as a way to honor the Lord.

- Make a list of people for whom you want to pray.

- Go grocery shopping together. Even though it may mean more time at the supermarket (and more patience on your part!), make it a family event. Have older children select produce for you. Let a younger child hold the shopping list. You'll make your kids feel special, and they'll be more likely to be excited about the fast.



## **During the Fast**

- Pray together each evening. This commitment will be a challenge, especially with school and church activities during the week. However, do your best to make this family time a priority. Keep it simple and brief. Otherwise, your children will lose interest. One activity to try with your children is The Prayer Game (see sidebar). Get creative with your ideas, and your children will look forward to bringing their needs before the Lord.
- Invite your kids into the kitchen to assist with meal preparation. Even though it will mean more work for you, it will be worth it. Assign older children the job of rinsing and chopping vegetables. Allow younger ones to set the table and fill glasses with water. Ask your husband (or wife) to wash the dishes. Get the whole family involved!

## **The Pain of Fasting**

Fasting is not easy. There are degrees of fasting, of course. The pain of fasting is twofold. The physical pain is due to the detoxification of our bodies. All the accumulate poison and garbage starts to come into our blood and we feel dreadful. This can be alleviated by fasting on juice. With juice fasting you have some control on the speed of your body's detoxification.

The soulish pain is due to the conflict in the spiritual realm between your flesh and the Spirit of God. This goes behind the natural desire to eat.

There is soulish pain because:

1. Most times our bodies are demanding food 3 times a day and complain that food is needed when they are denied. A little training in fasting soon clears up this misconception.
2. You cannot use food as an emotional crutch to give pleasure, drowsiness, satisfaction and escape. Instead you must depend on God for comfort.
3. You are brought face to face with other painful issues in your life. God reveals the need for you to forgive others, to repent of your wicked ways, to stop running from Him and start trusting Him. There is thus also a spiritual and soulish detoxification which happens when we fast.
4. You will be attacked by demonic forces seeking to induce you to give up the fast. Jesus experienced this in the wilderness with Satan (Matthew 4:1-10). Great spiritual victories are won or lost on our willingness to endure spiritual hardship and temptation out of love and faithfulness to the Lord.

5. You will experience weakness at times, and we like to feel strong and in control. Fasting teaches us dependence upon God.