

A signpost with five arrows pointing in different directions against a cloudy sky background. The arrows are light blue and the signpost is silver. The text is centered over the signpost.

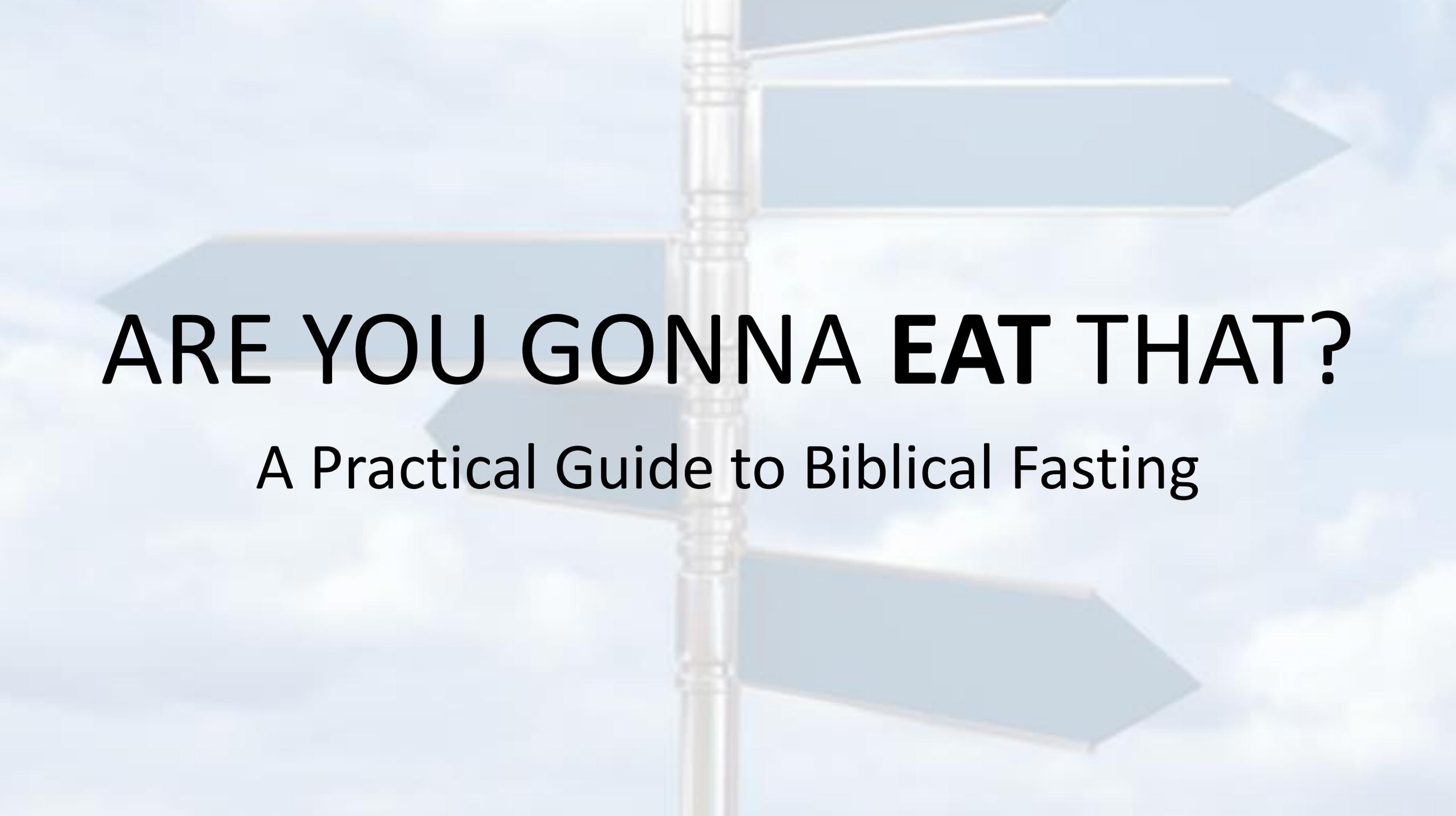
LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Fasting for a Follower of Jesus

A signpost with five arrows pointing in different directions against a cloudy sky background. The arrows are light blue and the signpost is silver. The text is centered over the signpost.

A FAST FROM THE PAST

A Biblical View of Fasting

A signpost with four arrows pointing in different directions (up, right, left, down) against a background of a blue sky with white clouds. The signpost is a silver-colored metal pole with a textured surface.

ARE YOU GONNA EAT THAT?

A Practical Guide to Biblical Fasting

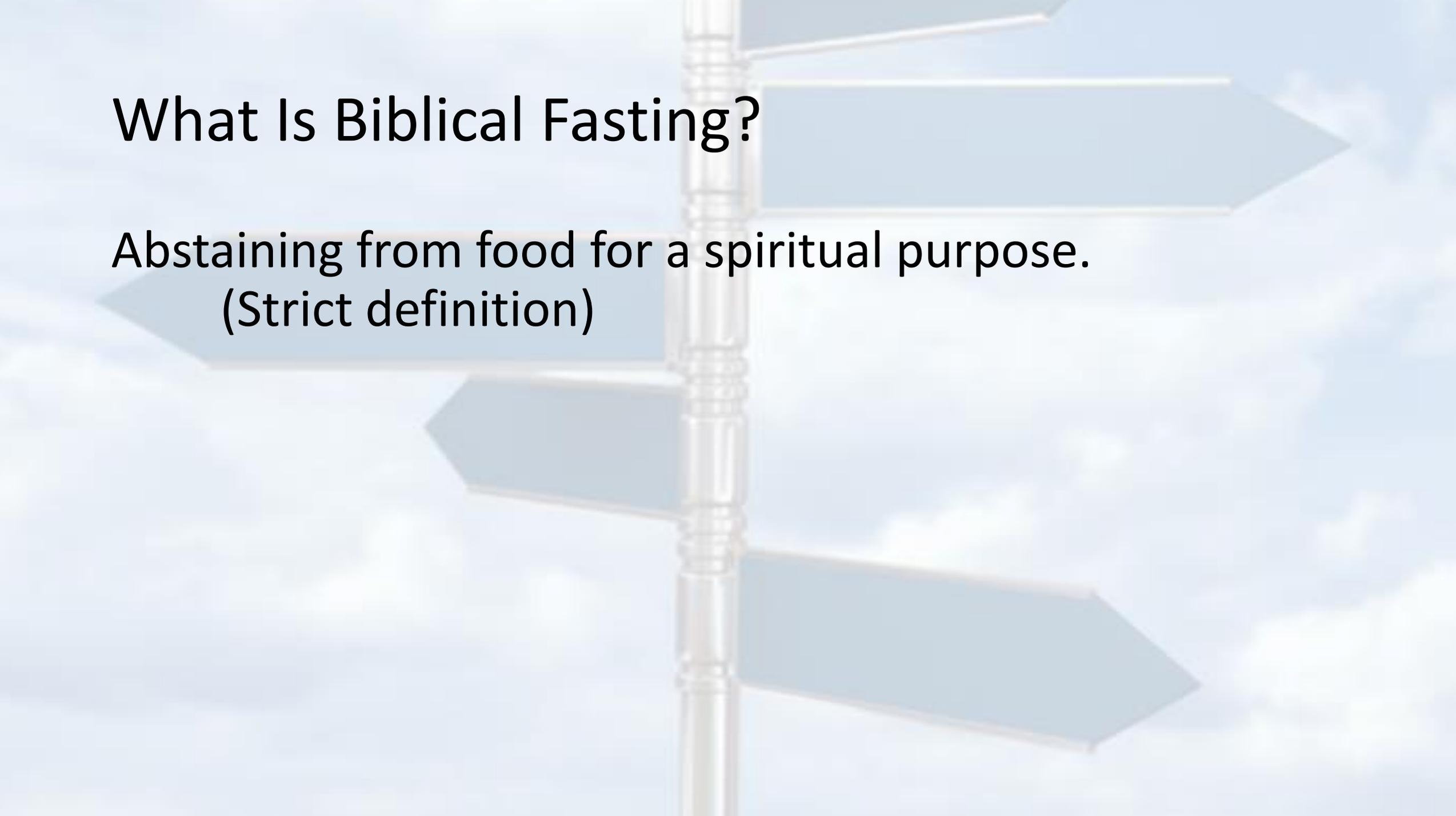


Direction

Fasting

What Is Biblical Fasting?



A signpost with multiple arrows pointing in different directions against a cloudy sky background. The signpost is a vertical metal pole with several light blue arrows attached to it, pointing in various directions. The background is a bright blue sky with soft, white clouds.

What Is Biblical Fasting?

Abstaining from food for a spiritual purpose.
(Strict definition)

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Abstaining from anything that is a normal part of your life, to intensify your focus on a spiritual purpose.
(Practical definition)

3 Types of Biblical Fasts



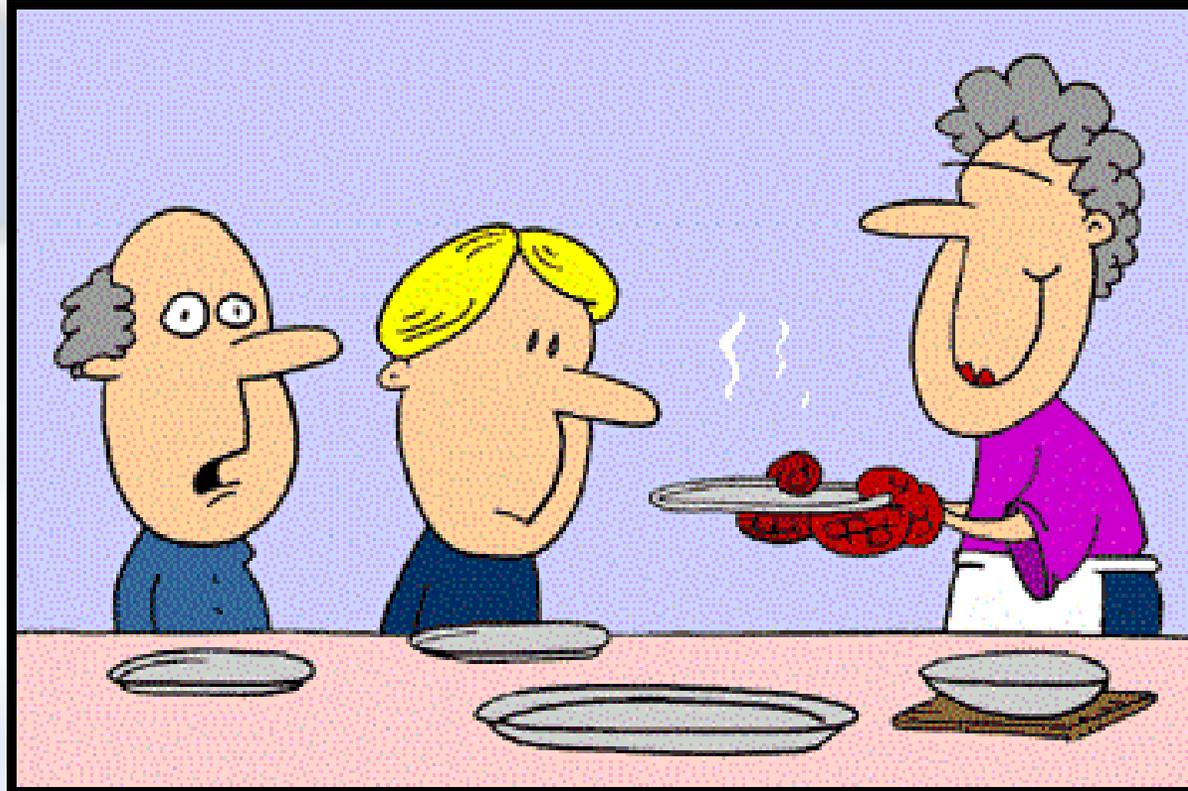
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- Daniel 10:3; 1:8-17; Matthew 3:4

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THAT'S RIGHT, WE'RE FASTING THIS WEEK
AREN'T WE?

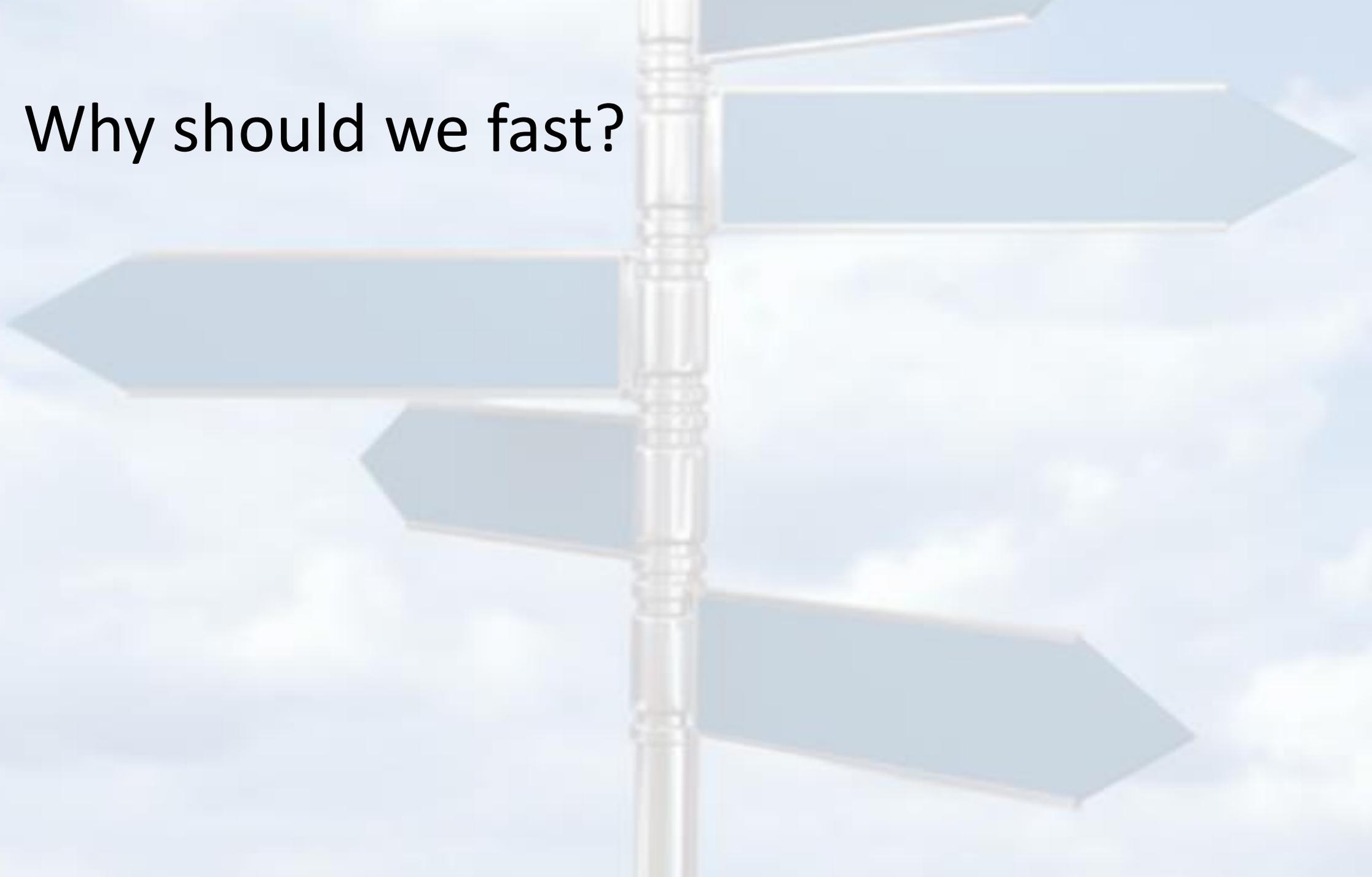
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- Matthew 4 & Luke 4
2. Partial Fast – Restricted Diet (e.g. juice only, vegetables & water, locusts & honey, etc.)
- Daniel 10:3; 1:8-17; Matthew 3:4
3. Absolute Fast – No food or water
- Esther 4; Ezra 10:1-6; Acts 9:9
- Extreme cases – Exodus 34:28; Deut. 9:9; 1 Kings 19:8

How Long is a Fast?

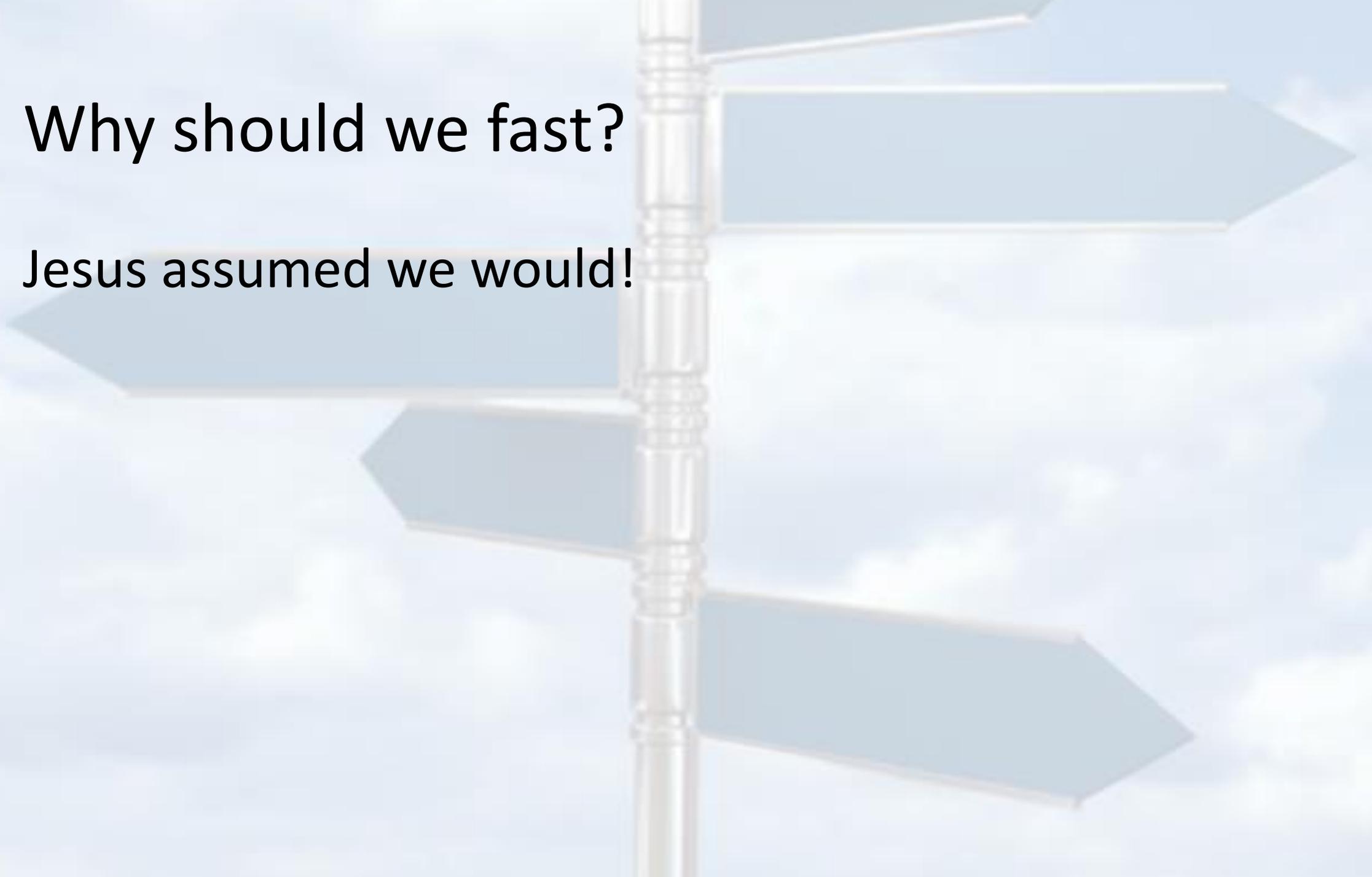
1. One day (Leviticus 23; 1 Samuel 7:6; Nehemiah 9.1; Jeremiah 36:6)
2. Part of a day (Judges 20:26; 2 Samuel 1:12; 3:35)
3. One night (Daniel 6:18-24)
4. Three days (Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9)
5. Seven days (1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 12:16-23)
6. Ten days (Daniel 1:8-17)
7. Fourteen days (Acts 27:33-34)
8. Twenty-one days (Daniel 10:3-13)
9. Forty days (Deuteronomy 9:9; 1 Kings 19:8; Matthew 4:2)
10. Fasts of unspecified lengths (Matthew 9:14; Luke 2:37; Acts 13:2, 14:2-3)

Why should we fast?



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Jesus assumed we would!



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“Whenever you fast, don’t be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they make their faces unattractive so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting isn’t obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” – Matthew 6:16-18

10 Other Reasons to Fast

1.) To express love and worship to God

“There was also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and was a widow for eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers.” – Luke 2:36-37

“As they were worshiping the Lord and fasting...”
– Acts 13:2

10 Other Reasons to Fast

2.) To express grief and take it to God

“Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and all the men with him did the same. They mourned, wept, and fasted until the evening for those who died by the sword — for Saul, his son Jonathan, the Lord’s people, and the house of Israel.”

– 2 Samuel 1:11-12

Also, 1 Samuel 31

10 Other Reasons to Fast

3.) To express repentance and a return to God

“Even now — this is the Lord’s declaration — turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Tear your hearts, not just your clothes, and return to the Lord your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and He relents from sending disaster.” – Joel 2:12

Also, 1 Samuel 7:6 and Jonah 3:5-10

10 Other Reasons to Fast

4.) To seek deliverance or protection

“I proclaimed a fast by the Ahava River, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask Him for a safe journey for us, our dependents, and all our possessions. I did this because I was ashamed to ask the king for infantry and cavalry to protect us from enemies during the journey, since we had told him, “The hand of our God is gracious to all who seek Him, but His fierce anger is against all who abandon Him.” So we fasted and pleaded with our God about this, and He was receptive to our prayer.”
– Ezra 8:21-23

Also, 2 Chronicles 20:1-4 and Esther 4:13-16

10 Other Reasons to Fast

5.) To overcome temptation and dedicate yourself to God

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was hungry.” – Matthew 4:1-2

Also, Luke 4:1-2

10 Other Reasons to Fast

6.) To express concern for God's work

“Hanani, one of my brothers, arrived with men from Judah, and I questioned them about Jerusalem and the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile. They said to me, “The remnant in the province, who survived the exile, are in great trouble and disgrace. Jerusalem's wall has been broken down, and its gates have been burned.” When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of the heavens.”

– Nehemiah 1:2-4

10 Other Reasons to Fast

7.) To minister to the needs of others

“Isn’t this the fast I choose: To break the chains of wickedness, to untie the ropes of the yoke, to set the oppressed free, and to tear off every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your house, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to ignore your own flesh and blood? Then your light will appear like the dawn, and your recovery will come quickly. Your righteousness will go before you, and the Lord’s glory will be your rear guard.” – Isaiah 58:6-8

10 Other Reasons to Fast

7.) To minister to the needs of others

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you took care of Me; I was in prison and you visited Me.’ – Matthew 25:34-40

10 Other Reasons to Fast

7.) To minister to the needs of others

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or without clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and visit You?’ “And the King will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.’”–

Matthew 25:34-40

10 Other Reasons to Fast

8.) To humble yourself before God

“He humbled you by letting you go hungry; then He gave you manna to eat, which you and your fathers had not known, so that you might learn that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” – Deuteronomy 8:3

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“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 I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” – 2 Chronicles 7:14

10 Other Reasons to Fast

9.) To strengthen prayer

“So we fasted and pleaded with our God about this, and He was receptive to our prayer.” – Ezra 8:23

10 Other Reasons to Fast

10.) To seek God's guidance

“As they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off.” – Acts 13:2-3

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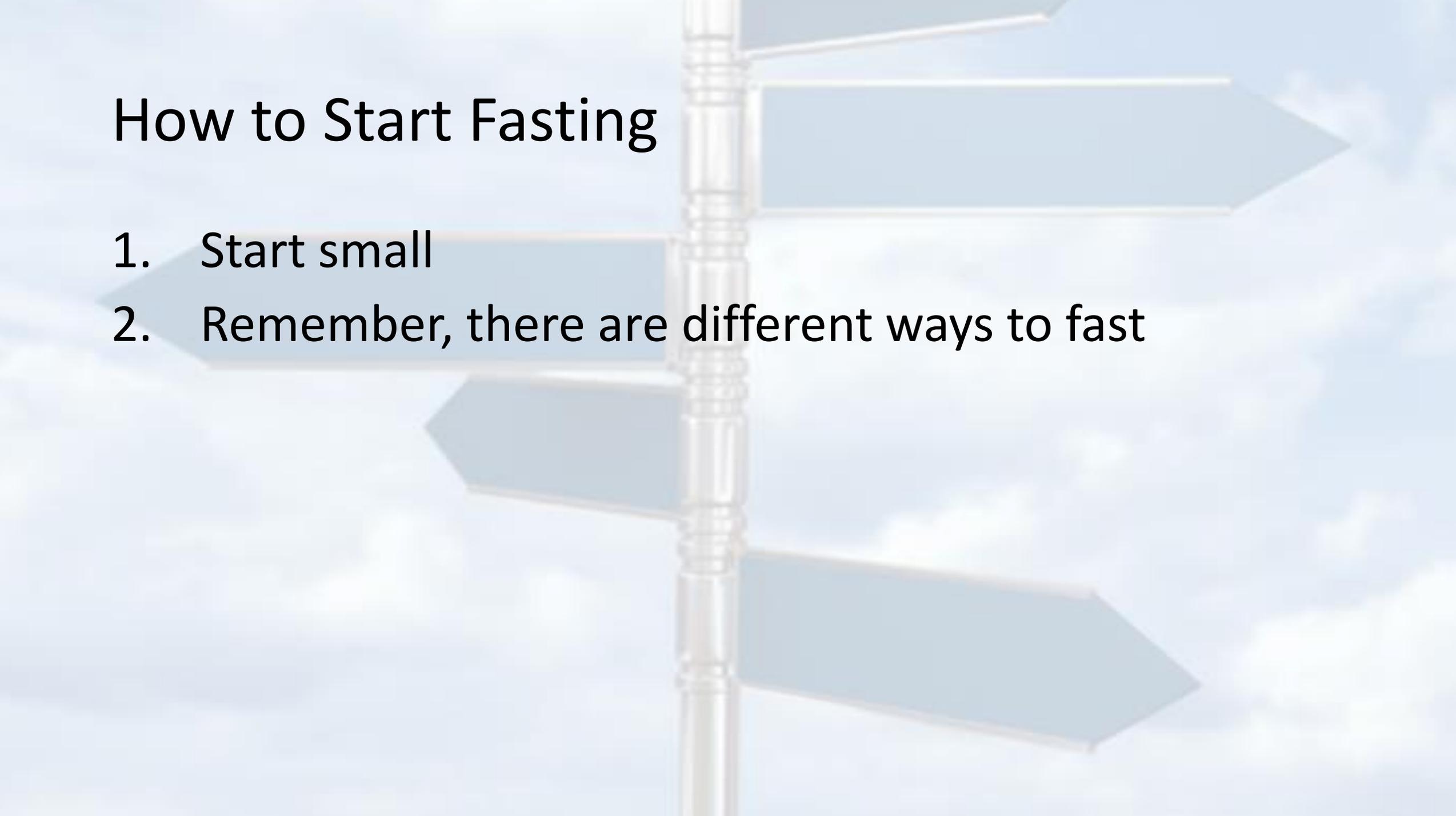
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“After they had preached the gospel in that town and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, “It is necessary to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.” When they had appointed elders for them in every church and prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” – Acts 14:21-23

How to Start Fasting

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3. Plan what you'll do instead of eating, etc.
4. Consider how it will affect others – show love
5. God is the focus

“Without a purpose and plan, it’s not Christian fasting;
it’s just going hungry.”

Who should NOT fast from food?

- Anyone with a medical condition such as diabetes or a heart condition.
- Anyone on medication which must be taken with food.
- Pregnant women and nursing mothers.
- Children.

Consider a non-food fast.

Practical Principles for Fasting

- Prayer without fasting is found in the Bible.
Fasting without prayer is not.

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- Fasting is not only abstaining;
it is feasting on prayer and study of the Word.

“He humbled you by letting you go hungry; ... so that you might learn that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” Dt. 8:3

Practical Principles for Fasting

- Fasting must be for the right motive.

“Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer, Regem-melech, and their men to plead for the Lord’s favor by asking the priests who were at the house of the Lord of Armies as well as the prophets, ‘Should we mourn and fast in the fifth month as we have done these many years?’ ...

– Zechariah 7:2-7

Practical Principles for Fasting

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“...Then the word of the Lord of Armies came to me: ‘Ask all the people of the land and the priests: When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and in the seventh months for these seventy years, did you really fast for Me? When you eat and drink, don’t you eat and drink simply for yourselves? Aren’t these the words that the Lord proclaimed through the earlier prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited and secure, along with its surrounding cities, and when the southern region and the Judean foothills were inhabited?’” – Zechariah 7:2-7

Practical Principles for Fasting

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“...did you really fast for me? When you eat and drink, don't you eat and drink simply for yourselves?” – Zechariah 7:2-7

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” – 1 Corinthians 10:31

Practical Principles for Fasting

- Fasting is not with an intent to get immediate results. It isn't a gumball machine.

“No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

– Hebrews 12:11

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- Fasting is not trying to get God to do something; it is realigning our hearts and minds with the heart and mind of Christ.