

Fasting Does a Body Good!

Last week, Christians around the world began the Lenten fast, a 47 day period of sacrificing a “fleshly” desire in hopes of earning a reward of a stronger spiritual relationship with God. Would my sacrifice this year be chocolate, popcorn, potatoes, or fried foods? The more I thought about it, the more I realized that fasting for me had become something I did because I knew I was supposed to...but the “joy” of fasting had long gone.

In fact, I’d noticed over the last few years, fasting had become something that I did out of habit but I didn’t really feel like I was getting anything out of it. I think if we are honest, at one point or another in our spiritual lives, we get to a “brick wall” where it seems like you do spiritual things (prayer, fasting, church attendance) out of tradition more than anything else.

I made the effort to pray more during my fasts, listen to spiritual music, and worked hard to put myself in a position where I could hear God better. I’d even talked to a friend who found herself dealing with the same issue and we encouraged each other as we struggled to fast. But we both wondered why it was so hard to fast when fasting was normally an easy thing to do.

This year in preparation for Lent my church began a bible study series on fasting. For the first time in years, I was excited to hear about fasting....and I soon realized why it had been so hard to fast.

He introduced the idea from Elmer Towns' book, "Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough" of the nine fast patterns:

- The Disciple's Fast: Fasting for freedom from addiction
- The Ezra Fast: Fasting to solve problems
- The Samuel Fast: Fasting to win people to Christ
- The Elijah Fast: Fasting to break crippling fears
- The Widow's Fast: Fasting to provide for the needy
- The Saint Paul Fast: Fasting for insight and decision making
- The Daniel Fast: Fasting for health and physical healing
- The John the Baptist Fast: Fasting for an influential testimony
- The Esther Fast: Fasting for protection from the evil one.

I'd made the mistake of doing to same fast for over 15 years. The teachings of my pastor helped me realize that as our spiritual situation changed, so should our fasts.

Isaiah 58:6 says, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the

chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" Maybe part of the reason I wasn't getting the results I wanted was because I was using the wrong strategy. It wasn't about the food I would change eating, it was about the change that God would make in my life.

Shewanda Riley is a Dallas-based author who can be reached at

lovehangover@juno.com or you can join her on Facebook. For more information, visit www.shewandariley.com or www.anointedauthorsontour.com.