

The Freedom Found in Fasting

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“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything (1 Corinthians 6:12, ESV).

Are you enslaved to anything?

“Of course not!” most of us would indignantly answer. “A slave? Me? How insulting.”

Yet if we pause to reframe the question, we might answer differently. Is there anything you have to have? Any substance, legal or illegal, that feels essential or central to your day?

Do you crave your coffee in the morning?

Do you have to have your sugar after dinner?

Do you count on that drink to get you through the day?

Might that be a sneaky form of slavery? Paul gave us some insight: **“All things are lawful for me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be dominated by anything.”** Consider Paul’s “all things” grid. Even if something is lawful—is it helpful? Even if something is lawful—is it dominating you? Anything you must have is a form of enslavement for you.

Paul wasn’t finished. He continued, **“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food’—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body”** (1 Corinthians 6:13). While some people are in bondage to food, others

are enslaved by their sexual appetites. These natural, human desires can either be under the control of the Spirit, or they can control us.

The Apostle Peter also warned of being enslaved to our appetites. He wrote, “**Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul**” (1 Peter 2:11). Our appetites in and of themselves may not be wrong, but left unchecked, they “**wage war against**” our souls. The remedy for this soul battle? *Fasting*. Peter urged us “**to abstain from the passions of the flesh.**” We don’t need to abstain forever, or even continually, but for a time. This is a significant principle. Anything that could overpower or enslave you can be set aside for a time to break its control on you.

Any one of our hungers has the potential to enslave us, but fasting breaks our enslavement to food and appetites of many kinds. When we fast, we set something aside in order to clarify its importance. Fasting reveals what controls and dominates us.

When we fast, we get a major dose of perspective. We’re able to see more clearly. Fasting humbles us and shows us our true selves. It’s a big-time reality check.

When we fast, we are freed to focus our hunger upon what really matters.

When we fast, we find freedom.

Journal

- Are you enslaved to any physical appetites?
- Is there anything you should set aside for a time to break its control on you?

Pray

Father God, would You open my mind and heart to consider fasting in a new

light? It's not confining, Lord; it's freeing. You gave us this spiritual discipline for our good, to help us keep our appetites in check so we aren't ruled by them. Lord, I don't want to be a slave to my physical desires. I want to live for You. **"For freedom Christ has set [me] free"** (Galatians 5:1). Help me to stand firm and not let myself be enslaved again. In Jesus' powerful name I pray, amen.