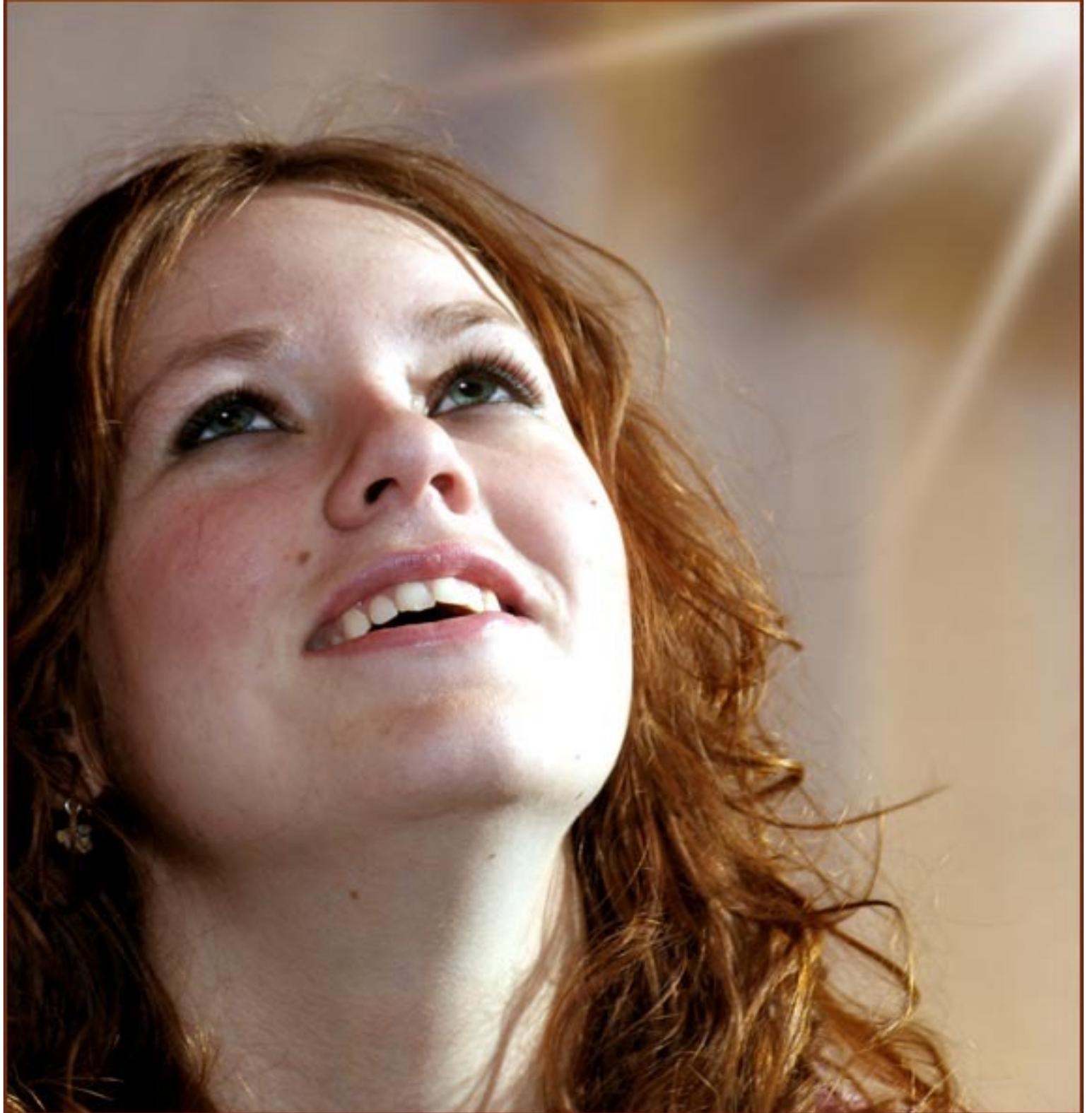


# **FASTING**

## **The Forgotten Discipline?**



# FASTING

## The Forgotten Discipline?

### Nehemiah 1:4

*“As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.”*

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#### REASONS WHY FASTING IS FADING...

1. Weird Middle Ages stories.
  2. Many Americans live to eat.
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#### DEFINITION:

*“A voluntary decision to go without food, or something else you enjoy, in order to magnify Jesus Christ and minimize self.”*

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#### SOME EXAMPLES OF SCRIPTURAL FASTING:

1. Seeking direction from God – Nehemiah 1:4
2. Confession and grieving over sin – Nehemiah 9:1-3
3. At the beginning of a ministry project.
  - Moses before the 10 commandments are written on tablets – Exodus 34:28
  - Jesus before choosing the apostles and beginning public ministry – Matthew 4:2
  - The church before sending Barnabas and Saul to evangelize the Gentiles (missions) – Acts 13:2-3
  - Before choosing elders in churches – Acts 14:23
4. Expression of pain, sorrow, loss, or tragedy – Judges 20:26
5. As a partner with prayer – Joel 1:14
- 6.

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## **WRONG REASONS TO FAST:**

1. For outward show – Matthew 6:16
2. Misguided reasons – Acts 23:12-21

### **Examples:**

- To earn “brownie points”
- Dieting
- Hunger strikes
- To get something from God

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## **ARE WE COMMANDED TO FAST?**

*“But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.”* Matthew 6:17–18

Jesus’ statement, “when you fast” indicates that fasting is normal and acceptable in the Christian life. He assumes His followers will fast on certain occasions, but He does not give a command or specify a particular time, place, or method. Because the validity of the Day of Atonement ceased when Jesus made the once-for-all sacrifice on the cross (Heb. 10:10), the single prescribed occasion for fasting has ceased to exist.

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## **TYPES OF FASTS:**

- 1) Partial – Fast from certain types of foods (meats, sugar, etc.) for a designated period of time – one meal, two meals, etc.
- 2) Normal – Fast from food from daylight until dark, drink water
- 3) Absolute – No food or water for a designated period of time
- 4) Non-food – Fast from any activity that tends to dominate your time and/or loyalty – media, social media, recreation, etc.

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## **THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF FASTING: To nurture a singular focus on Jesus!**

*“First, let it (fasting) be done unto the Lord with our eye singly fixed on Him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven.”*  
-John Wesley