

## King of the Hill "Dethroning King Stomach"

Have you ever heard of easy street? I know many people that are trying to get there. But what does the Bible have to say about easy street?

"But easy street is a dead end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods: belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetite." Philippians 3:19 Message

When I was a boy we used to play a game called "King of the Hill!" Did anyone else play that? It was a primitive game that we played as boys with one simple rule: Whoever stays on top of the hill the longest, wins, and whoever stays on top is always considered the strongest! Naturally, I aspired to be the strongest sometimes I was, sometimes I wasn't. There was someone stronger than me. I know, you are shocked! It was a rough game, but it taught me something that applies to us all today. Whatever you feed the most gets bigger, stronger, more dominant.

So you might be asking...How does this apply to us today? Well, as you know, we are triune beings. We have a spirit, mind and a body that comprises our soul. These parts of our triune being are at war with one another (Romans 7:14-22). They are constantly trying to be king of our will. I chose the word "will" instead of "hill" on purpose because, our will sits on top of our emotions, desires, thoughts, and attitudes.

The will also sits on top of our actions, behaviors and appetites. The will is a muscle that must be nourished, exercised, corrected and sanctified by our spirit in order to follow God. Whoever is "King of the Will" is the king and this affects our life in God.

Whichever of these three competitors (mind, body, and spirit) is strongest is the one who stays on top! In other words, if your spirit is strongest, it will remain king of the hill in your life. However, if your spirit is undernourished and neglected, your mind and your body will battle it out for top dog and for control of your will and as a result, control of your life (in part or in total).

Today, many make their stomach "King of the Hill" and rarely, if ever, allow the spirit of God to master the appetites of the flesh (body). I believe this area is rarely, if ever challenged in the "Christian Experience."

It's the strongest boy in the neighborhood, in my opinion. As a result, we choose the course of least resistance and when praying and fasting, pick categories that are fairly easy to overcome or beat for a short time period.

But, when it comes to "King Stomach," we know that area is too strong so we don't even try to dethrone the appetites and addictions of our body. Why am I bringing this up? Because I think we are missing out on some of the most significant breakthroughs in our walk with God.

**Remember this:** your spirit, which is perfect, holy, and righteous, is often trapped and imprisoned by the other parts of you that are fed more and are therefore stronger. A time of fasting and prayer emphasizes the nourishment of our spirit, giving it opportunity to regain influence, control and leadership of our lives while we intentionally under nourish or in some cases completely stop feeding our bodies and minds altogether.

Christ did this as well. He was led by the spirit in all things. He was not ruled by His appetites. Jesus said to Satan after being tempted to eat while on a forty day fast: "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Luke 4:4)."

His strength during this time of fasting shifted to the bread of life from the bread of man. He sustained a supernatural fast of 40 days as a human being! After this time of fasting, God used Him mightily: "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the spirit and news about him spread through the whole country-side (Luke 4:14)."

Jesus, our elder brother, dethroned "King Stomach" so we can too! He will never ask you to do something that you can't do or He didn't do. You can do this! Bottom line is, when you have fasted food (fast foods, sweets, caffeine, all processed foods, meats, sugars of all types) and have over nourished on God's word, you will feel strong in the Lord filled with the power of His might!

I believe that as we embrace this New Year, there are things in which we need Breakthrough! Am I right? I believe we all need God's active intervention in our lives. This requires effort in the natural so as to later see God do His part in the supernatural. Just think of the heavenly activity that would happen if a body of believers (corporately) determined to set aside time, entertainment, food intake, even finances to make God "King of the Hill" by a 21 day fast to start out the New Year. 21 days could make the difference for your entire year. To make Him "King of the Hill," you must exercise your will and do something. Will you? What will you do?

**Challenge:** I want to challenge you to commit to this time of fasting. I have learned if you don't ask for a commitment, you won't get one! So I am asking for commitment from all of you, that call Cross Community you church. We will be fasting for 21 days. I am asking that you would earnestly pray and decide what your commitment to this fast will be. Talk about it with your family, yes even children can fast too. Be wise and properly instruct or it might be taken as a form of punishment. Remember fasting is a privilege.

The belly and all its appetites is a god that must be mastered (read: I Cor. 6:19b)! It can't be mastered if you won't decide to go without food for a period of time. We must under nourish our bodies in order to over nourish our spirit. This process purifies our bodies and allows us to hear the voice of God above the screaming appetites of our flesh. Additionally, don't just not eat but instead fill each normal eating occasion with intentional devotions (reading/journaling, prayer, worship, and quiet time). This becomes your food (the bread of life)!

### **What does fasting like that look like?**

Few Facts: In the first 22 hours (if water only) your body will be screaming for exactly what it wants to eat (mayo, salt, and Pizza in my case). This is not hunger, but rather habit telling you by way of the mind what you think you need, but in reality you just want it. After 22 hours, you go into detoxification. A lot of people never experience this because they do not give their body an opportunity to detoxify.

This experience gives the body an opportunity to change its concentration, from a focus on what it should receive to what it should get rid of. What a spiritual parallel. When you do this, it can be difficult at first but if you persevere, it can be very beneficial

Within 36-72 hours many experience euphoric feelings that are difficult to even describe. I think you just feel in tune with your surroundings, your relationships and your God. It's really awesome. In truth, you may have different body parts ache or you may even experience teenage acne again in some instances.

There are many different symptoms caused by fasting. But for most, it's just incredibly life giving and beneficial but you must endure some suffering to get to the benefits (read: I Peter 4:1-2). Anything really worth something has to cost something!

## Here are the types of fasts...(Basic descriptions)

\*\*\* Supernatural Fast—this is no food and no water and it is very intensive! This isn't something you would do unless God clearly spoke to you to do so. 3 days is the limit for this type of fast. Consult your doctor first.

\*\*\* Total fast—Remove all solid food and drink only water (preferably distilled). Medical benefits for this are enormous. For example, after just 22 hours you will change from digestion to detoxification/purification of the body. I believe spiritual detoxification happens even more rapidly. Addictive strongholds are broken when you fast.

\*\*\* Nothing Pleasant Fast or the Daniel Fast—here you decide to eat no pleasant food or drink. This fast was done by Daniel (Daniel 1) and he ate nothing pleasant and had no wine and instead ate fruits, vegetables and bitter herbs. This fast sustains physical needs while suspending poor/unhealthy appetites.

\*\*\* Non-Total fast—here you have no solids and replace them with juice, water or clear broth (no milk, no coffee, no soda etc...). The best option is fresh juices. This is the most common, with this kind of fast. It permits detoxification to continue while sustaining physical needs simultaneously.

\*\*\* The Partial Fast— This is a fast where you choose to eliminate maybe a meal a day or a certain food that is your favorite. It can also be observed as not eating anything from sun up to sun down and then eating a lite meal at the end of the day.

\*\*\* You can combo any of these types of fast as well. The important thing is that whatever type of fast you choose make sure to set aside that time to pray, and seek God's will, and direction for your for your life and fasting goals.

**Recommendations:** Consider these practical suggestions for effectively meeting with God during the fast.

\*\*\* Adjust schedules and commitments to allow time to fast and pray effectively. Include social engagements kids extra-curricular activities, travel plans etc. to reflect your priorities to slow down. Partner with a friend or spouse in the fasting process. You ensure success when there is accountability and encouragement. If you are a family, include kids where possible, at a level they can understand and experience.

\*\*\* Determine dietary considerations in advance. Meal planning and grocery shopping should be considered.

**Remove unnecessary temptations from the house.**

\*\*\* Unplug / Limit forms of media. Shut off the tv, computer, any technology that fosters distractions.

**Use your own discretion and wisdom. Supplement with high doses of worship music.**

\*\*\* Practice the principles of the Lord's Prayer daily. Find a special time and place.

\*\*\* Journal your encounters with God. This is very helpful and very rewarding to review on future fasts.

\*\*\* Include daily reading from God's word (Matthew 26:40, Luke 21:34-37, Luke 11:1-10, Matthew 6: 5-14, Luke 4: 1-19, Matthew 4:1-11 are some examples related to our challenge.)

In conclusion, this fast is for you, at the same time you are joining with others (it is privately practiced but publicly acknowledged). If practiced, this will change your walk with God and invigorate the most important relationship we say we have in this world as we begin this New Year. Let's make that a reality in 2011! Let's put God back on the throne of our lives. Let's make Him "King of our Will!"

I Love You Church! By "Church" I mean YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!

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