

# GOD'S HEALING WAY

Part 3

Chapter 18

# God's Healing Way

- ⌘ Demonstrates His Power
- ⌘ Develops Character
- ⌘ Uses Natural Remedies
- ⌘ Requires Prayer
- ⌘ **Utilizes Fasting**
- ⌘ Exposes Satan's Deceptive Healing
- ⌘ Amplifies End-Time Truth

# Chapter 18: GOD'S HEALING WAY UTILIZES FASTING

## FASTING AND PRAYER

Fasting and prayer are spiritual disciplines that go hand in hand. Great physical, mental, and spiritual benefits are received from their combined use. Biblical accounts in the **Old Testament** of those who fasted and communed with God include: Moses (Exodus 34:28), Elijah (1Kings 19:8), Ezra (Ezra 8:21, 23), Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:4), Esther (Esther 4:16), and Daniel (Daniel 9:3). The **New Testament** accounts include: Jesus (Matthew 4:1, 2), the early Christians (Acts 13:2, 3), and Paul (2 Corinthians 11:27).

# The Unacceptable Fast

Isaiah describes God's people complaining that He does not take notice of their fasting. **"Wherefore have we fasted say they, and Thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takes no knowledge?"** (Isaiah 58:3).

While here on earth, Christ described a fast that God condemns. **"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance (expression): for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward"** (Matthew 6:16). "Fasting or prayer that is actuated by a self-justifying spirit is an abomination in the sight of God." E.G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 280.

# THE FAST THAT FAILS

Fasting and prayer will accomplish nothing while the heart is estranged from God by a wrong course of action.

E.G. White, Testimonies, Volume 2, page 146

These Biblical principles are applicable today. "It is true that there are persons with ill-balanced minds who imagine themselves to be very religious and who impose upon themselves fasting and prayer to the injury of their health. **These souls suffer themselves to be deceived. God has not required this of them ....** They trust to their own works for salvation and are seeking to buy heaven by meritorious works of their own instead of relying, as every sinner should, alone upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour." E.G. White, Testimonies, Volume 3, pages 172, 173.

# The Acceptable Fast

The Lord has specified His chosen fast, which bears fruit to His glory in repentance, in devotion, and in true piety. **"Is not this the *fast* that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"** (Isaiah 58:6, 7).

# **THE FAST THAT GOD FAVORS**

**The spirit of true fasting and prayer is the spirit which yields mind, heart, and will to God.**

*E.G. White, Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 189*

Both physical and spiritual benefits accompany the true fast. **"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward (protection)" (Isaiah 58:8).**

**"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am" (Isaiah 58:9).** "The outward signs of fasting and prayer, without a broken and contrite spirit, are of no value in God's sight. The inward work of grace is needed. Humiliation of soul is essential... .He (God) will graciously receive those who will humble their hearts before Him. He will hear their petitions and heal their backslidings." E.G. White, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, Volume 3, page 1132.

# PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF FASTING

## Defining the Fast

The **total fast** is abstinence from all food. Drink generous amounts of water. A simple herb tea may be included in the total fast. The **partial fast** includes fresh fruit or a vegetable broth and small amounts of plain, whole grain bread to be taken at the regular mealtime. **Ending a fast** is just as important as the fast itself. Break a fast with simply prepared fruit, vegetable, and whole grain (cereal) foods. Eat no more than two or three varieties of foods at a meal. Do not overeat! Use the simple diet for the same number of days that were spent fasting.

Fasting for one or two meals per week (or two to three days per month) can be safely recommended. Exceptions to prolonged fasting include pregnant and breast feeding mothers as well as those who are seriously ill or undernourished.

# Health Benefits of Fasting

"Intemperate eating is often the cause of sickness, and what nature most needs is to be relieved of the undue burden that has been placed upon her. In many cases of sickness, the very best remedy is for the patient to fast for a meal or two, that the overworked organs of digestion may have an opportunity to rest." E. G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 189.

- ⌘ Fasting promotes clear thinking and a sense of well-being.
- ⌘ Fasting cleanses the body.
- ⌘ The body eliminates waste products through the lungs, bowels, kidneys, and skin. The energy normally used in digesting food is spent in cleansing the bloodstream and body tissues.

- ⌘ Fasting aids in re-educating the taste buds. It decreases cravings for unhealthful food and increases the appetite for simple, unrefined food.
- ⌘ Fasting helps in maintaining an ideal weight. Fasting along with physical exercise and a healthful diet are keys to weight control.
- ⌘ Fasting helps combat ailments such as the common cold, sinus and allergy symptoms, digestive disorders, and arthritis.
- ⌘ Fasting improves mental health. It lifts depression, reduces anxiety, and lessens tension or stress.

"There are some who would be benefited more by abstinence from food for a day or two every week than by any amount of treatment or medical advice. To fast one day a week would be of incalculable benefit to them."  
E.G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 189.

# SPIRITUAL BENEFITS OF FASTING

## Opens the Mind to God's Wisdom

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). "It is in the order of God that those who bear responsibilities should often meet together to counsel with one another and to pray earnestly for that wisdom which He alone can impart.... Talk less; much precious time is lost in talk that brings no light. Let brethren unite in fasting and prayer for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally." E. G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 188.

# Revives Languishing Spirituality

"There is need of fasting, humiliation, and prayer over our decaying zeal and languishing spirituality." E.G. White, Testimonies, Volume 4, pages 535, 536.

When God's law was to be proclaimed at Mount Sinai, His people were given two days to prepare for the event. "Their person and their clothing must be freed from impurity. **And as Moses should point out their sins, they were to devote themselves to humiliation, fasting, and prayer, that their hearts might be cleansed from iniquity.**" E.G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 304.

On the Day of Atonement the Israelites were to afflict their souls and do no work (Leviticus 23:27-32). This was the most sacred day of the yearly sanctuary service. **"The whole ceremony was designed to impress the Israelites with the holiness of God and His abhorrence of sin....** Every man was required to afflict his soul while this work of atonement was going forward. All business was to be laid aside, and **the whole congregation of Israel were to spend the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart."** E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 419, 420.

# Helps Overcome Temptation

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered" (Matthew 4:1, 2).

"With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation .... As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome .... From the time of Adam to that of Christ, self-indulgence had increased the power of the appetites and passions, until they had almost unlimited control. Thus men had become debased and diseased, and of themselves it was impossible for them to overcome. In man's behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test." E.G. White, *Desire of Ages*, page 117.

# Anyone Can Overcome

That long fast in the wilderness was to be a lesson to fallen man for all time. Christ was not overcome by the strong temptations of the enemy, and this is encouragement for every soul who is struggling against temptation. Christ has made it possible for every member of the human family to resist temptation.

E.G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 186

# Empowers People for God's Service

"When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. **By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He was to travel...** .During His long fast, the whole plan of His work as man's deliverer was laid out before Him." E.G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book 1, page 227.

In one instance, the disciples were unable to cast a demon out of a possessed child. When they were alone with Jesus, they asked Him the reason for their failure. Jesus replied, **"Because of your unbelief. ..Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting"** (Matthew 17:20, 21). "In order to succeed in such a conflict they (the disciples) must come to the work in a different spirit. **Their faith must be strengthened by fervent prayer and fasting, and humiliation of heart.** They must be emptied of self, and be filled with the Spirit and power of God." E.G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 431.

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers ... As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:1-3). "Before being sent forth as missionaries to the heathen world, these apostles were solemnly dedicated to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands." E.G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 161.

# Unlocks God's Treasury of Truth

"There are in the Scriptures some things which are hard to be understood and which, according to the language of Peter, the unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction. We may not ... be able to explain the meaning of every passage of Scripture; but there are *no* vital points of practical truth that will be clouded in mystery. . .

# Unlocks God's Treasury of Truth

When the time shall come ... for the world to be tested upon the truth for that time, minds will be exercised by His Spirit to search the Scriptures, even with fasting and with prayer, until link after link is searched out and united in a perfect chain. Every fact which immediately concerns the salvation of souls will be made so clear that none need err or walk in darkness." E.G. White, *Testimonies*, Volume 2, page 692.

# KEYS THAT OPEN END-TIME PROPHECY

Those who make light of the third angel's message do so because they know little of Daniel or the Revelation. They have not read these prophecies with a determination to find out the meaning by *prayer*, by *study*, and by *fasting*. E.G. White, Advent Review and Sabbath Herald June 8, 1897

# Imparts Courage to Meet Tribulation

"Through Esther the queen the Lord accomplished a mighty deliverance for His people. At a time when it seemed that no power could save them, Esther and the women associated with her, by fasting and prayer and prompt action, met the issue, and brought salvation to their people." E.G. White, *Conflict and Courage*, page 245.

"The death of James caused great grief and consternation among the believers. When Peter also was imprisoned, the entire church engaged in fasting and prayer." E.G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 144. While Peter's execution was delayed until after the Passover, the church prayed without ceasing for Peter (Acts 12:5). Peter's miraculous deliverance was God's answer to their prayers.

# Prepares God's People for the End-Time

"We are living in the most solemn period of this world's history. The destiny of earth's teeming multitudes is about to be decided. ...We need to be guided by the Spirit of truth .... **We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, with fasting and prayer, and to meditate much upon His word, especially upon the scenes of the judgment. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God.**" E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 601.

"Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader (Jesus Christ). They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food." E.G. White, *Last Day Events*, page 82.

# The Fast for Everyone

The true fasting which should be recommended to all, is abstinence from every stimulating kind of food, and the proper use of wholesome, simple food, which God has provided in abundance. Men need to think less about what they shall eat and drink of temporal food, and much more in regard to the food from heaven, that will give tone and vitality to the whole religious experience.

E.G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 188

# God's Healing Way: Part 3

Continued in Chapter 19