

FASTING LEAVEN- The focus of the fast is for Christ to cleanse us of offense. How? We willingly deny our flesh and cry out for more of Him to be made manifest in us. He sees what is done in secret and rewards us.

① *START OUT 2017, forgetting what is behind... Philippians 3:13-14: Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

2 Corinthians 3:11-18- Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into His image with intensifying glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Fasting is one way to transformation, more freedom, and greater life in the Spirit. Jesus gives instruction in Matthew 6:16-18 regarding fasting, starting out with “When you fast...” It is personal choice, one He says is to be done in secret and seen only by the Father. The giving, fasting and praying you do in secret, He will reward (Matthew 6:4, 6, 18).

There are many ways to fast; but this fast is focusing on removing leaven from our diets for a time. In the Bible, leaven is symbolic of flesh based sin. Here are a couple of examples:

- 1 Corinthians 5: 6-8 Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
 - Sin referenced above- forms of boasting, approving of sin (context of 1 Cor 5), malice, wickedness
- Matthew 16: ¹¹How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ¹²Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Also see Matthew 15:1-20 as another rebuke of the Pharisees)
 - Sin referenced above- religious legalism, hypocrisy, unbelief, offense at Jesus’ words and actions

There is a sweeping generalization that Christ made about wicked words and actions, stating that their origin is from corrupt hearts.

Matthew 15: ¹⁶“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. ¹⁷“Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? ¹⁸But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

② **Some interesting truth about leaven/yeast:** Leaven/yeast is a fungus. In a moist environment, it ferments. In dough, it feeds on it causing it to rise. As the parallel meaning scripture intends, think of sin feeding on your flesh desires, causing you to rise in rebellion, responding by flesh instead of spirit.

Consuming too much yeast can wreak havoc in our bodies. It causes fungal infection in any part of the body such as the underarms, nails, mouth, genitals, and toes. The infection is symptomatic of overgrowth, i.e. too much yeast attacking our bodies.



Leaven is an ingredient that produces fermentation or a chemical process to make dough rise. Leavening includes yeast and chemical leavening agents, such as baking powder, baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) and potassium bicarbonate. Leavening can be found in such things as bread, cookies, cake, crackers, cereals and pies. Yeast is also used in fermented drinks such as beer.

The tongue is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell (James 3:6).

Eating bread without leaven/yeast, parallels part of the desert experience found in the Old Testament. God created a festival of unleavened bread to be observed at Passover, Exodus 12. He also fed His people with unleavened bread from Heaven after he delivered them from bondage, i.e. fed them with manna.

According to the Hebrew lexicon, the term "unleavened bread" is derived from the word matzoh, which means "bread or cake without leaven." The lexicon also states that matzoh is in turn derived from a word which means "to drain out or suck." In referring to this second Hebrew word, the lexicon states, "In the sense of greedily devouring for sweetness."

Indeed the manna God fed his people with was sweet to the taste and is meant to be greedily devoured. Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And regarding the bread from heaven being sweet, Exodus 16:31 describes manna being white like coriander seed and tasting like wafers made with honey.

Just because it is interesting, note the reference to coriander seed as part of manna's description. I'm sure it is no coincidence that coriander is naturally effective in curing various skin diseases like eczema, itchy skin, rashes, and inflammation. It also helps cure mouth ulcers and sores. It's used to combat bad breath also. Notice how this is opposite the effects of leaven!

Jesus said in John 6:51 "I am the living bread who came down from Heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

God intends we would have a sense of greedily devouring Jesus as living bread. We are to taste and see that the Lord is good, Psalm 34:8. We are to put His word in our mouth and live.

③ Choose your time of fasting from leaven. 3 days? 7 days? 14 days? 21 days? In Christ you are free from the law so simply pray about it and pick your own length of time. If you are new to fasting, my suggestion is to not put too long of a time frame on it. During this time avoid all foods containing leaven as a symbolic denial of sin controlling your flesh. Note your physical reactions and expect some tiredness, irritation, possible headaches. Your body will crave what it is being deprived of. Consult your physician prior to fasting if you have any personal health inquiries regarding fasting. This will bring to light a real battle between flesh and spirit, Galatians 5:16-26. Call on God in your moments of weakness!

Find one time in the day and "EAT" God's Word. Tell God what is hard about the fast, notice what longings rise up and lay that at Christ's feet. **As you fast, ask him to fill you up with more of His Spirit!**

Luke 11:9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"