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Introduction

What—me, fast? Forget it!

Most of us, if we think about fasting at all, think of it as something we would never voluntarily do. Oh, we might do it once in a blue moon—on doctor's orders or if we're seeking God for an especially important decision. But it's certainly not something we would ever consider making part of our lifestyle. Life is uncertain enough as it is without *intentionally* skipping meals!

And yet you have picked up this book. Something in you is drawn to the idea of fasting. Maybe you have heard what a great method it is to detoxify your body. Or maybe you are wanting to step up your walk with Christ and make fasting a spiritual discipline you can embrace. Maybe a little of both.

Either way, *Fasting Made Easy* is for you.

Fasting is good for you on so many levels. There are few things you can do for your body that have the power to so radically improve your physical health that fasting has. We live in a toxic environment, and fasting is a mighty cleanser. On the spiritual side, fasting begins to break the stranglehold your hunger may have over your behavior. The Bible talks about this as the flesh warring against the spirit. Fasting is part of

crucifying the flesh, which leads to greater self-control and harmony with God's Spirit.

There are a number of different kinds of fasts. Some are more radical than others. Some restrict food and drink exclusively, while others ask you to abstain from something else—like watching television, perhaps. The kind of fasting I recommend in this book, juice fasting, is extremely helpful to clean out the toxins in your body and may help jump-start you into a healthy lifestyle that includes periodic fasting. I hope it will bring you closer to God as well.

So don't be alarmed. Fasting doesn't have to be scary. It will improve your health physically and spiritually. And I will be with you every step of the way.

Chapter 1

WHY SHOULD I FAST?

If you have watched a news telecast in the last year, you have listened to reports of the perils of the polluted environment in which we live. Environmentalists continually plead for help to save our world from air pollution and water pollution as well as from other “causes” that involve preserving and restoring our good green earth.

Unfortunately, in spite of their pleas, the world you live in is increasingly more dangerous to your health with every passing day. The air you breathe is filled with industrial air pollution, along with carbon monoxide and other elements that threaten your health. In addition, the unrestrained use of chemicals in many businesses is contaminating your environment and damaging your health. Common household cleaners and other personal products contaminate your home environment as well.

Threat of a Toxic Environment

You can live without food for several weeks and without water for several days, but you can only live for minutes without air. However, breathing polluted air

can be detrimental to your health. When the air you breathe is polluted, dangerous contaminants pour into your lungs and through your bloodstream, and they are eventually pumped by your heart to every cell in your body. Even air-conditioned buildings, where many people spend the majority of their time, are not free from harmful toxins, chemicals, and bacteria that get trapped in the building and are recirculated through heating and air-conditioning systems.

Sick building syndrome

Out-gassing is a term used to describe the air contamination of new buildings, where building materials emit harmful gasses—such as formaldehyde from carpets, solvents from paints, and other chemicals from fabrics, couches, curtains, glues, and more—into the air. Older buildings may emit airborne mold, dust mites, or dangerous bacteria, which are pumped into the air through air-conditioning units. Volatile organic compounds are also emitted from copying machines, laser printers, computers, and other office equipment.

How does the pollution of “inside” air affect your body? Referred to as “sick building syndrome,” many ailments can be directly related to these unhealthy breathing conditions. If the building where you work does not have clean air, you may experience headaches;

itchy, red, and watery eyes; sore throat; dizziness; nausea—as well as problems concentrating. Other symptoms of sick building syndrome include fatigue, shortness of breath, and problems with memory.

This information regarding environmental hazards is not meant to make you feel helpless but to help answer the question, “Why should I fast?” Considering the impact of a toxic environment on your body, you will be relieved to know that fasting can cleanse your body and help you overcome the health threats of a toxic environment.

Symptoms from pesticide pollution

Outside air is hardly exempt from pollutants. Pesticides are not only used in fields of crops and on trees and flowers, but they can also be found in air fresheners, mattresses, disposable diapers, carpets, and many other products. Your skin readily absorbs pesticides, which are also breathed into your lungs and can be ingested by your mouth. Your body is designed to eliminate these dangerous poisons, but the sheer quantity to which you are exposed daily can overwhelm your body's defense systems.

When pesticides build up to a dangerous level in your body, you may actually begin to experience memory loss, depression, anxiety, psychosis, or other forms of mental illness. Parkinson's disease and possibly even

hormone-sensitive cancers, such as breast and prostate cancer, can be related to this toxic buildup. Many people who suffer with neurological diseases sometimes have higher levels of pesticides stored in their brains.

Pesticides in the body are stored in fatty tissues. You need to consider those “love handles” a hiding place for stored toxins and poisons. Your brain, which is composed of about 60 percent lipids (fat-like substances), will also readily store these poisons. Other fatty tissues that store toxins include the breasts and prostate gland.

A danger of very-low-calorie diets is that they allow these toxins from stored fat to be released so quickly that you may feel foggy-minded and fatigued. Your liver, which is one of the main cleansing organs of your body, can become overwhelmed and unable to break down and eliminate the quantity of toxins released by your body during dieting. When that happens, even more toxins may become stored in the brain and other fatty tissues.

In contrast, fasting, when done correctly, can help to rid the body of this toxic overload and restore health and vitality to your body, mind, and spirit.

Problems from other contaminants

While we cannot discuss at length all the potential contaminants that overload your body with toxins, I

want to mention a few of the most common and most hazardous to your health. Cigarette smoke, which contains cadmium, cyanide, lead, arsenic, tars, radioactive material, and other deadly poisons, overloads your body with these toxins. And the negative effects of inhaling “secondhand smoke” are well documented. That is why I do not recommend “smoking sections” in restaurants. It makes about as much sense as having a “peeing section” in a swimming pool.

It is important to mention the toxins in your water, many of which come from chemicals emitted into our air and washed down into our water supplies by rain. For example, the Kellogg Report showed that the growth of industry in this country has introduced complex and sometimes lethal pollutants into our nation’s water systems.¹ Chlorine, which is added to the water to kill microorganisms, can combine with organic materials to form trihalomethanes, which are cancer-promoting substances. Although chlorine kills most bacteria, it does not kill viruses and parasites, such as *Giardia*, one of the major causes of diarrhea in day-care centers.

Another major problem is solvents, such as those used in cleaning products, which dissolve other materials that otherwise would not be soluble in water. These can be very damaging to your kidneys and

liver. Like pesticides, they are likely to be stored in your fatty tissues, including the breasts, prostate, and brain. There are more than 60,000 chemicals already in our environment, with about 2,000 more being added each year.²

Even your food may be filled with a long list of chemical substances added for flavor, color, or longer shelf life. Chemical food additives are usually made from petroleum or coal tar products. They may include preservatives, bleaching agents, emulsifiers, texturizers, and ripening agents (such as ethylene gas) sprayed on bananas and other fruits. In short, much of the food we consume adds to the toxicity of the body, as we will discuss.

A TESTIMONY

(Adapted from Jeff Louderback, "Delivered From Pain," *Charisma and Christian Life*, November 2003, 46.)

When he awakens in the morning, Russ Stewart celebrates the simple acts of taking a shower, dressing himself, and taking a walk before beginning the day. To him, there is no reason to dread Mondays—or any day. The thirty-eight-year-old pastor is now free from debilitating medical conditions that had plagued him with anguishing pain from the time he was a child in Oklahoma until he was introduced to Don Colbert's body-detoxification program last April.

A doctor had diagnosed the eleven-year-old Stewart with juvenile arthritis, which caused swollen joints and impaired his mobility. Stewart was unable to participate in physical activities—no baseball at the neighborhood park or basketball on the playground. And it was only the beginning of the “sometimes tortuous” pain that gradually worsened as he grew from a boy into a man.

In his early twenties, doctors discovered that Stewart had psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. As the years passed, his fingers and toes became crooked. His knees and hips chronically ached. He was prescribed so many medications—everything from anti-inflammatories to methotrexate, a drug that was originally used to treat cancer—that a briefcase was needed to carry them all.

The heavy doses of medicine left his immune system weak, and he was prone to viruses such as colds and the flu. Typically, he took as many as eight 600-milligram ibuprofen tablets to make it through the day. “I was constantly worried about losing my job,” says Stewart, who was an administrator at an assisted-living facility before becoming senior adult ministries director at Elsinore First Assembly in Lake Elsinore, California. By then, Stewart was also suffering from fibromyalgia and migraine headaches that caused him to miss work due to their severity. “I was so disabled with the arthritis that my wife had to put my shoes and socks on because I couldn’t bend down,” says Stewart. “At church, I wanted to lift my hands in worship, but I couldn’t.”

Stewart became so discouraged from the constant pain that he felt he couldn't go on. He believes that God intervened for him, hearing his desperate prayers and sparking his dramatic recovery. While surfing the TV channels during the early hours of the morning one sleepless night, he found the Richard Roberts' Christian talk show on which Dr. Don Colbert was a guest. He was talking about his book *Toxic Relief*.

Stewart ordered the book, read it, and followed Dr. Colbert's comprehensive dietary guidelines. After finishing a three-week, three-day detoxification program, Stewart began to notice dramatic improvements in his health. Within five weeks of beginning the program, Stewart's skin was smooth and clear, his migraine headaches never returned, and his joints were free of pain. He could walk without discomfort, and he began to play golf for the first time. "I had been so sick for so long, it was like waking up from a coma," Stewart explained.

"When my mother saw me for the first time after I was well, she cried. She had not seen me well since I was a little boy." Stewart's mother also followed Dr. Colbert's detoxification program and is now pain-free and off all medications for osteoarthritis from which she suffered.

Give Your Body a Boost

I don't mean for the discussion regarding our polluted environment to make you feel like a victim or to cause

you to give in to hopelessness. On the contrary; as I have mentioned, I only want to highlight the problem of our toxic environment in answer to the question, “*Why should I fast?*” As we discuss the effectiveness of fasting to cleanse the body of tremendous amounts of toxins, it will become clearer to you why you need to include fasting as part of your lifestyle for health.

Of course, there are other ways, along with fasting, to help you in your fight against this inevitable toxic overload. The following section will be helpful in your quest to give your body a boost by learning to avoid major sources of pollutants.

How to Avoid Major Sources of Pollutants

- Avoid heavy smog and gasoline fumes. Wait inside at an airport away from exhaust and fumes from buses and taxis; never jog alongside a busy highway.
- Choose less toxic carpets, paints, and drapes; never use furniture made of pressed wood or particleboard.
- Minimize your exposure to mold spores and dust mites by keeping the air-conditioning and heating ducts in your home clean, changing the filters regularly. Lowering the relative humidity in your home to less than 45 percent will discourage the growth of mold and dust mites.

- Use an air purifier such as a hepa filter or ionizer air filter in your home to remove chemicals and toxins in the air. Get fresh air from the outdoors into your home during the day.
- Reduce your exposure to pesticides by not having your home sprayed. Try natural methods of bug control, such as sprinkling closets with boric acid.
- Avoid use of air fresheners or air deodorizers.
- Removing shoes before coming inside from outdoors will eliminate a major source of pesticides.
- Don't allow smoking in your home, and avoid areas where secondhand smoke is present.
- Use a water filter for drinking water and a shower filter, such as a Wellness Filter, charcoal, or KDF shower filter, to effectively remove chlorine.³ (See Appendix D.)

While these are helpful ways to avoid some of the mentioned contaminants, it is impossible to keep the body from being exposed to toxins. Fasting is an effective means of cleansing the body of these undesirable toxins, which, if left unchecked, can cause your health to deteriorate in a number of ways.

The Threat From Internal Toxins

Before discussing how effective fasting can be for restoring and maintaining health, let me address briefly another reason to include periodic fasting as

a part of your healthy lifestyle—*internal toxins*. I like to compare the wonderful complexities of your body to a fine engine of an expensive automobile. Just like that engine, which creates exhaust as it burns fuel to run, your body creates many different toxins as it burns the “fuel” you feed it. Your body is equipped to eliminate these toxins through special functions of the liver, the GI tract, and other body systems to keep you feeling energetic and healthy. The problem arises when these built-in elimination systems are bombarded both from without and within with more toxins than they were designed to handle.

The downside of antibiotics

You may be aware that your intestines should contain adequate amounts of good bacteria, such as *lactobacillus acidophilus* and *bifidus*, which are designed to prevent the growth of bad bacteria and yeast. In the event that you develop sinusitis, bronchitis, tonsillitis, or other common “reasons” for taking antibiotics, the attempt of the antibiotics to kill the bad bacteria results in their eliminating many of the good bacteria as well. When excessive amounts of beneficial bacteria are killed, pathogenic bacteria may flourish. The bad bacteria may actually produce *endotoxins* internally, which may be as toxic as almost any chemical, pesticide, or solvent that enters your body from outside sources. Though

antibiotics are important in treating life-threatening infections, the negative effects on health from *overuse* of antibiotics are beginning to be evaluated seriously by the medical community.

The effect of antibiotics upsetting the body's delicate balance of good bacteria can result in yeast overgrowth, called *candidiasis*, with an array of unpleasant symptoms, including bloating, gas, and irritable bowel syndrome. Candidiasis is caused by overgrowth of yeast in the intestines and may release over eighty different toxins into the body, including acetaldehyde and ethanol, which is alcohol. Acetaldehyde is related to formaldehyde, which is found in carpets and pressed wood. Acetaldehyde is extremely toxic to the brain, causing memory loss, depression, severe fatigue, and difficulty with concentration.

The problem of free radicals

The body also suffers from the internal production of *free radicals*, a result of the oxidation process of foods. For example, when you cut an apple in half and leave it in the air, it turns brown—that is oxidation. In the process of converting foods to energy (ATP), some free radicals are always produced. However, certain foods such as fried foods and polyunsaturated fats, including most salad dressings, cause production of excessive amounts of dangerous free

radicals. Though your body's trillions of cells have a protective wrapping around them made of lipids or "fatty" cell membranes, excessive amounts of free radicals released into your tissues can work like wrecking balls, ricocheting off the protective cell membranes and damaging them in the process.

Imagine what would happen to the city of New York if a large crane were driven through its streets with a giant, uncontrolled wrecking ball swinging from side to side. Even if it did not actually bring down the skyscrapers, it could inflict severe damage to them. Similarly, free radicals released into your tissues can wreak havoc on your internal organs as well.

Victims of the "American" Diet

In addition to the threat of internal toxins, the standard American diet (SAD) presents another challenge to your health. We have become a nation of sugar addicts. "Added sugars, found largely in junk foods such as soft drinks, cakes, and cookies, squeeze healthier foods out of the diet. Sugar now accounts for 16 percent of the calories consumed by the average American and 20 percent of teenagers' calories."⁴ A USDA survey shows that the average American is consuming about 20 teaspoons of sugar per day.⁵ That results in over 150 pounds of sugar consumed a year per person,

largely through sodas, which contain 9 teaspoons per 12-ounce can.⁶

Sugar woes

People continue to believe that a little sugar will not hurt them. However, continuing to eat this “dead food” on a scale that the average American consumes it can cause serious health problems. Everyone knows that sugar is linked to diabetes; it is also associated with hypoglycemia—low blood sugar. That is because if excessive amounts of sugar are eaten, the body produces excessive amounts of insulin to handle the sugar overload, which may drive the blood sugar too low, resulting in hypoglycemia.

Sugar is also a major cause of obesity, a weakened immune system, behavioral disorders, osteoporosis, yeast overgrowth (candidiasis), accelerated aging, and sugar addictions. These cravings for more, caused by consumption of sugar, may lead to binge eating. You plan to eat only one cookie, but one leads to another, and you continue eating until the entire box of cookies has been devoured. And, of course, these episodes of binge eating can lead to more serious eating disorders.

Worthless white flour

Another dead food that is a “staple” of the average American diet is white flour. White flour is created by removing the outer fibrous portion from the whole

grain. That shell contains healthy fiber and B vitamins. Then, the germ of the wheat is also extracted, which contains the majority of the nutrients—vitamin E, the B vitamins, and minerals. After extracting these “live” parts of the grain, the starch, or *endosperm*, remains, which is then ground into white flour with practically zero nutritional value. Consider this: the live parts of the grain are then marketed to health food stores as wheat germ and fiber—go figure.

Meat worries

One of the reasons Americans rank high in heart disease and cancer is that we also score high in our consumption of red meat. People who choose to live on hamburgers, steaks, pork chops, and ham sandwiches are going to suffer the consequences in poor health. Consuming excess meat and protein (including milk products, cheeses, and eggs) congests the organs and cells. It lowers the pH of the tissues, making the cells constipated from protein overload. When that happens, the cells become acidic and may not be able to adequately release their waste products. The benefit of fasting simply cannot be overestimated to help the body rid itself of these accumulated toxins.

Salt wiles

The typical American consumes excessive amounts of salt. Most of our food is processed,

which usually means it is full of salt, because salt is a preservative that prolongs the shelf life of food products. The wiles of salt working inside our bodies may lead to high blood pressure along with other health problems. I see patients every day with blood pressure problems. For some, medication is needed at least temporarily to correct this dangerous condition. Others, simply by making a few healthy lifestyle choices, including limiting salt intake and practicing periodic fasting, can greatly improve their blood pressure.

These and many other unnecessary health conditions can be improved and eliminated by choosing to give your toxic body welcome relief through periodic fasting.

Enhancing the Design

Let me rush to the good news at this point: your body is designed with an incredible system of defense, which can be enhanced and, in some cases, restored, through proper fasting. Even though your body is bombarded by external and internal toxins, you can choose to step in and even the score.

The burden of toxins your body is fighting has been accumulating over time. You may have become accustomed to the general feeling of fatigue and general lack of vitality that toxicity causes. You may even

be suffering from symptoms of a degenerative disease. If so, you will be amazed at how much better you will feel after choosing to cleanse your body through fasting.

In my experience as a physician, I have seen heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, chronic fatigue, and many other serious diseases reversed as my patients cleanse their bodies from toxins through fasting. In addition, detoxifying your body through fasting can also help to rid you of excess weight, if you are overweight or even obese. Not only will you feel better and live longer as you remove toxins from your body, but you will look better as well. Eyes become brighter and skin glows as you enjoy the vitality of higher energy levels.

I trust I have been able to answer the question, “*Why should I fast?*” As you continue to read, you will discover other benefits as well for choosing to work with your body’s designed ability to cleanse and heal itself. Though fasting may seem like a “sacrifice” at first, I want you to understand the wonderful potential it has for enhancing your health and helping you to maintain a healthy lifestyle.