

“Moreover, when you fast,
do not be like the
hypocrites”

Matthew 6:16



How does fasting help us in our repentance?



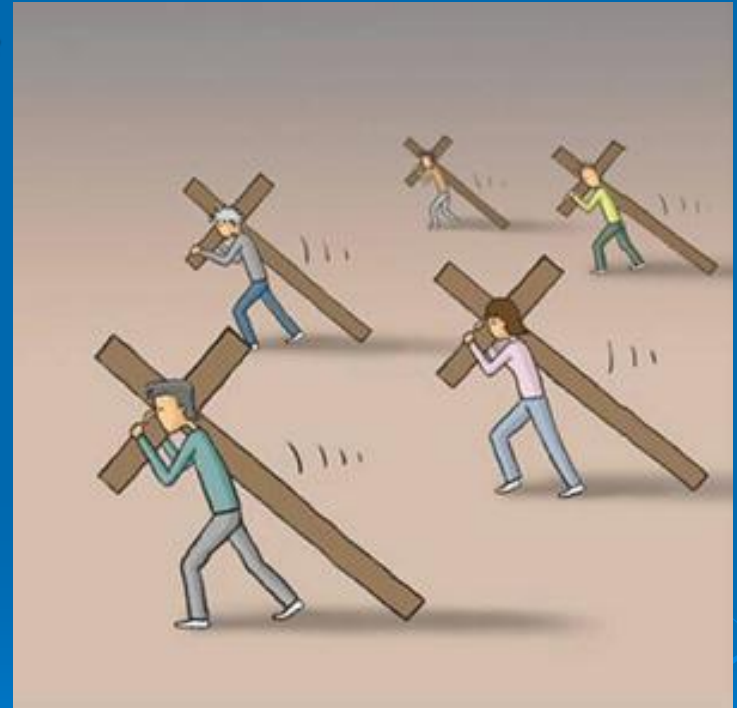
1. It cleanses the mind

- “Fasting is an exceptional virtue; it represses bodily impulses and gives strength to the soul to fight against the poisoning of the heart through the senses, and provides it with a remedy against any past poisoning. **Fasting causes the mind to be cleansed constantly.** It withers up every evil thought and brings healthy, godly thoughts -- - holy thoughts that enlighten the mind and kindle it with more zeal and spiritual fervor.” --*Elder Ephraim of Philotheou Mount Athos*



2. It is a cross that we bear willingly

- “A life of fasting, properly understood as general self-limitation and abstinence, to the annual practice of which the Church always calls us with the Great Lent, is really that bearing of the cross and self-crucifixion which is required of us by our calling as Christians. And anyone who stubbornly resists this, wanting to live a carefree, happy, and free life, is concerned for sensual pleasures and avoids sorrow and suffering; that person is not a Christian.” *--Archbishop Averky of Syracuse*



3. It is by fasting that we fight and can conquer our enemies

- "If a king wanted to take possession of his enemy's city, he would begin by cutting off the water and the food and so his enemies, dying of hunger, would submit to him. It is the same with the passions of the flesh; if a man goes about fasting and hungry, the enemies of his soul grow weak."

--Saint John the Dwarf



4. When we fast spiritually is when we refrain from evil

“Beware of limiting the good of fasting to mere abstinence from meats. Real fasting is alienation from evil. ‘Loose the bands of wickedness.’ Forgive your neighbor the mischief he has done you. Forgive him his trespasses against you. Do not ‘fast for strife and debate.’ You do not devour flesh, but you devour your brother. You abstain from wine, but you indulge in outrages. You wait for evening before you take food, but you spend the day in the law courts. Woe to those who are ‘drunken, but not with wine.’ Anger is the intoxication of the soul, and makes it out of its wits like wine.” --*St. Basil the Great*



5. By fasting we acquire purity

- “Bodily purity is primarily attained through fasting, and through bodily purity comes spiritual purity. Abstinence from food, according to the words of that son of grace, St. Ephraim the Syrian, means: ‘Not to desire or demand much food, either sweet or costly; to eat nothing outside the stated times; not to give oneself over to gratification of the appetite; not to stir up hunger in oneself by looking at good food; and not to desire one or another sort of food.’”

--St. Nikolai Velimirovich



6. Fasting is an act of obedience and temperance

- “Fasting is absolutely indispensable for man. From the external aspect, it is a struggle of filial obedience to God, who has given us the rules of fasting through His Holy Spirit. From the inner aspect, fasting is a struggle of restraint and self-limitation. In this lies the great value and sense of fasting, since a strict observance of fasts tempers one's will and perfects the character of one who is firm in his religious convictions and actions. Let us not forget that Christ Himself fasted, and foretold that His apostles would also fast.”

--Metropolitan Philaret



7. Fasting prepares us for spiritual worship

- “In the New Testament fasting is recommended as a means of preparing the mind and the heart for divine worship, for long prayer, for rising from the earthly, and for spiritualization.”

--Dr. Constantine Cavarnos



8. Fasting is the way to humility

- “Fasting is an outlet for compassion and a guard upon obedience; it destroys evil thoughts and roots out the insensibility of the heart. Fasting is a gate to paradise; **when the stomach is constricted, the heart is humbled.** He who fasts prays with a sober mind, but the mind of the intemperate person is filled with impure fancies and thoughts.” --*St. John Climacus*



9. Fasting is an expression of love towards God and His kingdom

- Here we find the reason that fasting is often used as a measuring-stick by the Holy Fathers; he who fasts much is he who loves much, and he who has loved much is forgiven much (Luke 7:47). He who fasts much also receives much.



10. Fasting helps us control our tongues

- “If you can begrudge the stomach, your mouth will stay closed, because the tongue flourishes where food is abundant.”

--St. John Climacus



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