



**“If You are the  
Son of God,  
command that  
these stones  
become  
bread.”**

**Matthew 4:3**

**Why did the Lord start His  
ministry by fasting?**

**And why was the first  
temptation about food?**

# 1. Fasting is the beginning of the sincere struggle

- “Fasting was the commandment given to our nature in the beginning to protect it with respect to tasting of food, and in this point the progenitor of our substance fell. There, however, where the first defeat was suffered, the ascetic strugglers make their beginning in the fear of God as they start to keep His laws”

*--St. Isaac the Syrian*

## 2. Fasting is the foundation of every virtue

- “Fasting, vigil ... are God’s holy pathway and the foundation of every virtue”

*--St. Isaac the Syrian*

### **3. Fasting is a mighty weapon against vile desires**

- “What weapon is more powerful and gives more boldness to the heart in the time of battle against the spirits of wickedness, than hunger endured for Christ’s sake?...He who armed himself with the weapon of fasting is a fire with zeal at all times”

*--St. Isaac the Syrian*

## 4. Fasting offers freedom from bonds

- “Fasting appears gloomy until one steps into its arena. But begin and you will see what light it brings after darkness, what freedom from bonds, what release after a burdensome life”

*--Bishop Theophan the Recluse*

## 5. Fasting enlightens the mind

- “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*

## 6. Fasting and prayer are an acceptable sacrifice

- “We may liken fasting to a burning coal and prayer to frankincense. Neither has value without the other, but together, the sweet savor of their incense fills the air”

*--Fr. Matthew the Poor*

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