

## A Courageous Fast

Esther 4

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Esther+4&version=NIV>

***“Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” (vs. 16)***

Esther is a woman of Godly courage. For the sake of God’s people, she lays out a plan which includes her risking her life to go before the king on behalf of the Jews. It was against the law for her to enter the King’s court without being asked by the king. Furthermore, the king did not know that Esther was a Jew. Yet with boldness, she proclaims a fast and promises that following a time of fasting she will go before the King and try to save her people, God’s people.

Fasting is an unfamiliar practice to us, though it is a spiritually rewarding practice and one of the Lenten disciplines (spiritual discipline we practice during the 40 days leading up to Easter). Jesus and the disciples fasted. John Wesley required that his preachers fast Wednesdays and Fridays. The point of fasting is to give up something (traditionally food) in order to spend more time in the presence of God through prayer and scripture reading and holy listening. Additionally, in fasting we experience a small amount of physical suffering or discomfort. We deny the flesh in order to more fully provide for our spirits. Esther’s fast was an intentional seeking of the Lord in preparation of going before the King. In Lent we fast intentionally to walk closer to the cross and empty tomb.

As Ash Wednesday (the start of Lent) approaches, consider a courageous fast this Lenten season. Fast where it will hurt a little-social media, a favorite tv show, a favorite food consumed regularly. Don’t replace the item with another. For example, I am giving up my beloved coffee this Lent, but I won’t be consuming hot tea instead. Rather each time I would normally reach for that coffee, each time I’m tempted, I will instead pray/read scripture/worship/listen for God. May God bless you in your courageous fast!