

# Social Media Fast

While some people may do a social media fast to reduce anxiety and depression that can result from social media, the biblical purpose of fasting in the Bible is to seek God.

You will get the most out of your social media fast when you replace the time you normally spend on social media with time with God.

## Before Starting a Social Media Fast

- Pray and ask God if and for how long you should do a social media fast
- Have an accountability partner to follow up and help you stay on track
- Recognize your triggers for when you engage on social media. Do you find yourself mindlessly scrolling in certain situations? Do you turn to social media as a distraction from school or work? Do you check social media as soon as you wake up in the morning, or before you go to bed? Do you grab your phone any time you're bored?
- Once you recognize your triggers, you can take action to change those habits or fill your time in different ways. Find alternatives to spending time on social media, such as reading, taking a walk, working on a puzzle, or connecting with people in real life. Finding ways to fill your time before you disengage from social media will help make the transition easier.
- Delete the social media apps from your phone
- Have a plan on how you'll spend more time with God during the time that you normally spend on social media

## Benefits of a Social Media Fast

While fasting for spiritual reasons should be the main focus, you'll be able to reap several other benefits during a social media fast.

### 1. Better Mental Health

It can be overwhelming to be exposed to so much content all at once and try to process what you're seeing.

Social media exposes us to everything happening everywhere all the time — both the good and the incredibly bad. These feelings of overwhelm or fatigue can even be compared to PTSD.

Disengaging from comparison culture and constant bad news can help improve your mental health, reduce your anxiety, help you feel more at peace, and even improve your happiness

Once off social media, your likelihood of comparing yourself to others will decrease, as individuals who took a break from social media experience decreased FOMO, and an increase in mental well-being and social connection.

## **2. Prevent or break a social media addiction**

Social media triggers the production of dopamine, a feel-good chemical that's released whenever your brain makes a connection, learns something new, or when something grabs its attention.

Social media is designed to be addictive with elements like infinite scrolling, auto-play videos, notifications, sounds, bright colors, and other appealing features.

If you feel like you're becoming addicted to social media, or already think you have a social media addiction, fasting from social media is a must to break the addiction and detox.

## **3. More time with God**

Just like with any fast, the main purpose of a social media fast should be to spend more time with God. And without being on social media all the time, you don't have an excuse for not having time with God.

If you're not sure how to spend your time with God, consider starting a new Bible study as you do your fast.

When you spend time with God, you'll feel closer to Him and be able to hear His voice.

## **4. Challenge Our Comfort Zones**

Social media provides a means for "relationship" without risk or anxiety, and comfort is prioritized over growth with social media as our vehicle of avoidance and distraction.

Relationships and life require risk with comfort as the antithesis of growth. In order to grow, we must move beyond our comfort through discomfort into growth.

Fasting from social media would require you to face the discomfort and boredom you experience when riding in an elevator or waiting in line, pushing you outside the protective bubble of comfort to exhibit God's love in seeing and responding to another person as made in His image.

## **5. More time doing things you love**

After spending time with God, you should have more time to do other things that you love. What could you do with this extra time?

## **6. Increase in meaningful relationships**

Social media does not replace the interactions we have with people in real life. Fasting from social media will allow you to connect with others in real life.

And if you were using social media to replace other relationships in your life, that can only make you feel lonelier and prevent you from forming true, deep friendships.

During a social media fast, pray and consider which relationships you want to invest more time in.

Your relationship with God should be #1, but who else can you connect with during this time? Perhaps it's a friend you haven't seen in weeks, or someone at church that you've been wanting to connect with. Make plans to meet with them and notice how you feel after.

The social interactions you have in person are beyond compare to the likes or comments you get on social media. In-person connections are so much more powerful, and we all need to hang out with each other face-to-face.

## **7. Increase in self-control**

When you abstain from anything, your self-control or the strength to say no will get stronger. The Holy Spirit is the one that gives you strength and self-control when you need it.

But when you fast, you are actively participating in activating this self-control by saying no to the desires of your flesh.

During the fast, you'll recognize when you have the urge or desire to do something, and you'll be activating self-control not to act on it.

And when you start to say no to every desire or craving, you'll realize how often you said yes to things just because it was there.