

The Benefits of Fasting

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale

The Gathering

Ray of Hope Christian Church

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Matthew 6:16-18

When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.




Fasting is one of the “pillars”
of the Christian faith.



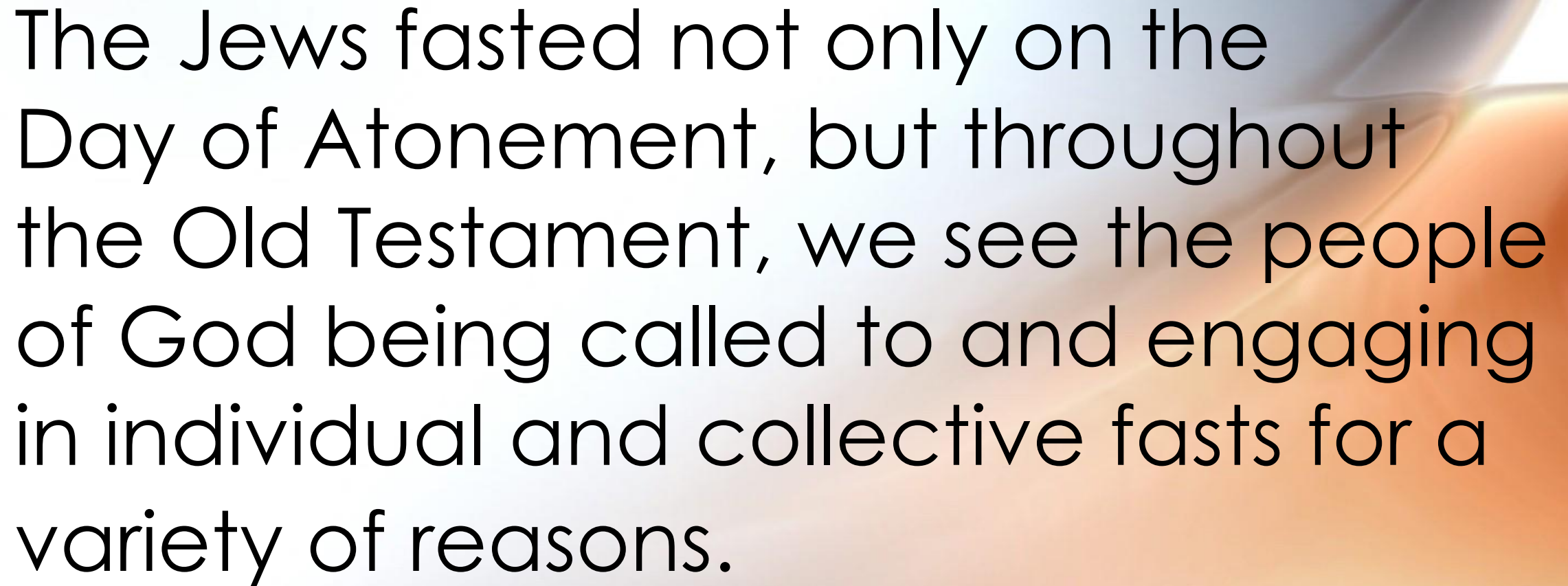
Moses, David, Nehemiah,
Jeremiah, Daniel, Anna, Paul,
Peter and even Jesus fasted.



When you fast...not if you fast.




Jews were commanded by God to fast on the Day of Atonement.



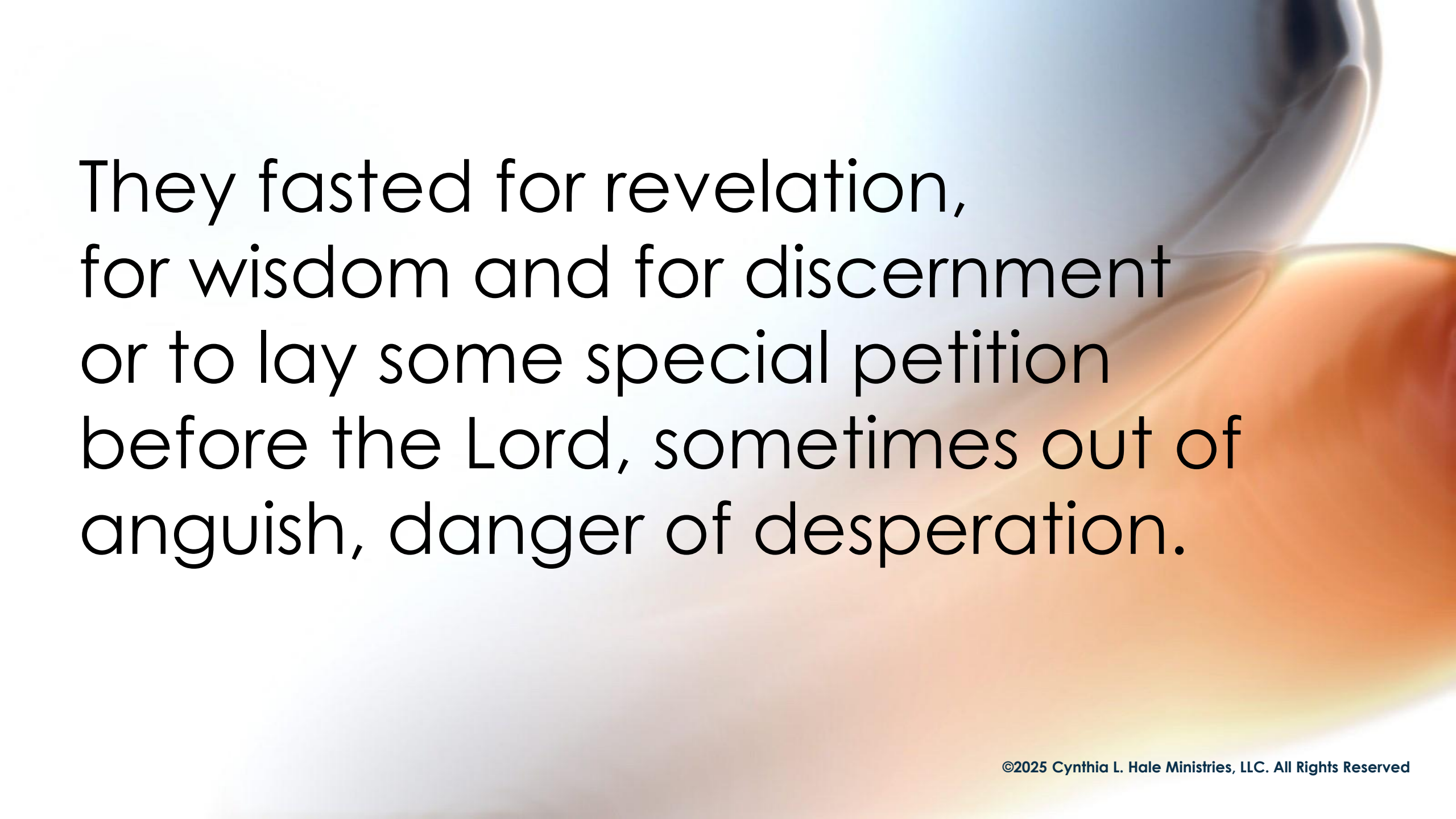
The Jews fasted not only on the Day of Atonement, but throughout the Old Testament, we see the people of God being called to and engaging in individual and collective fasts for a variety of reasons.



They fasted as a way of confessing sin
- Nehemiah 9:1-2.



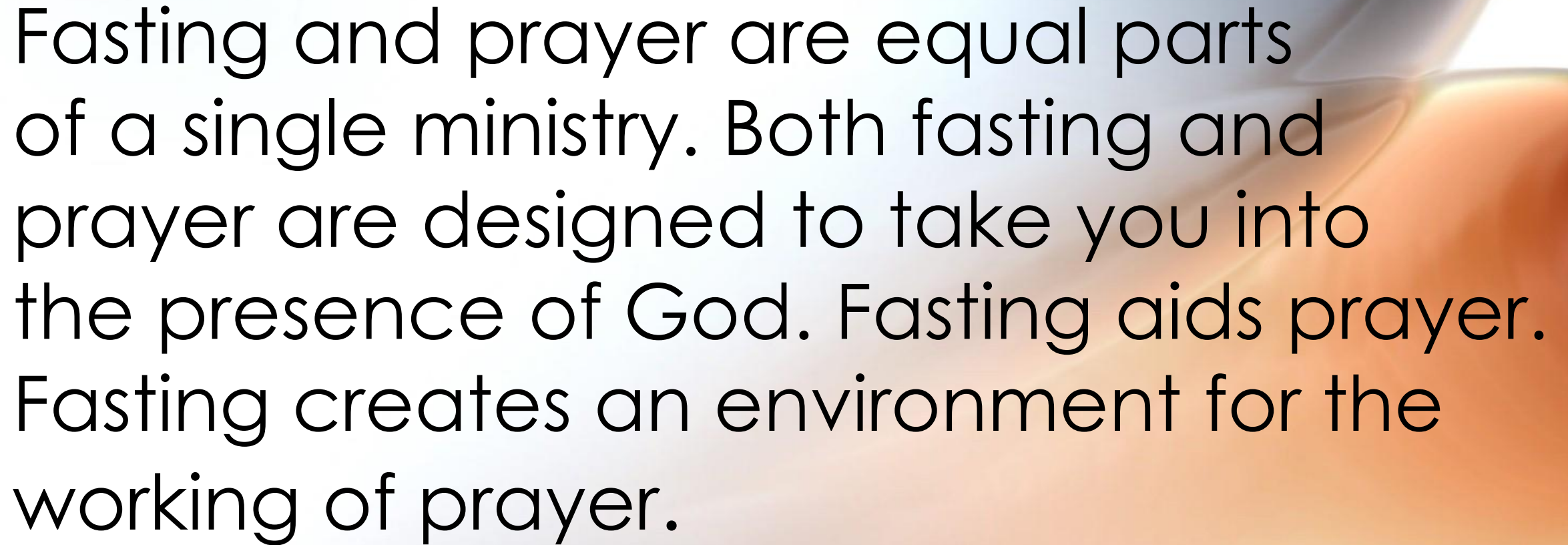
The people fasted when they were in crisis, when they needed a breakthrough in their lives.



They fasted for revelation,
for wisdom and for discernment
or to lay some special petition
before the Lord, sometimes out of
anguish, danger of desperation.

II Chronicles 20:3-4

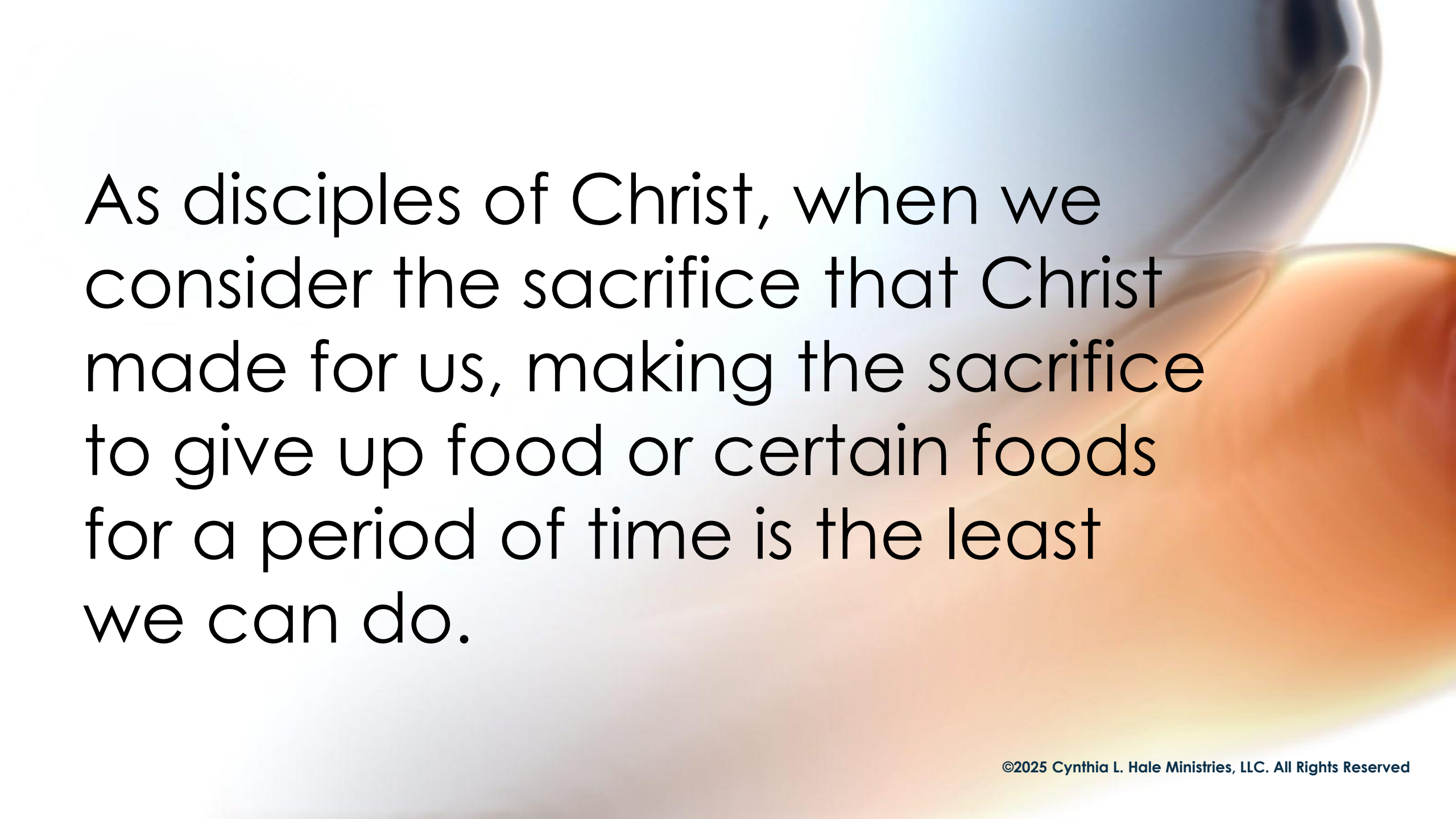
Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek Him.



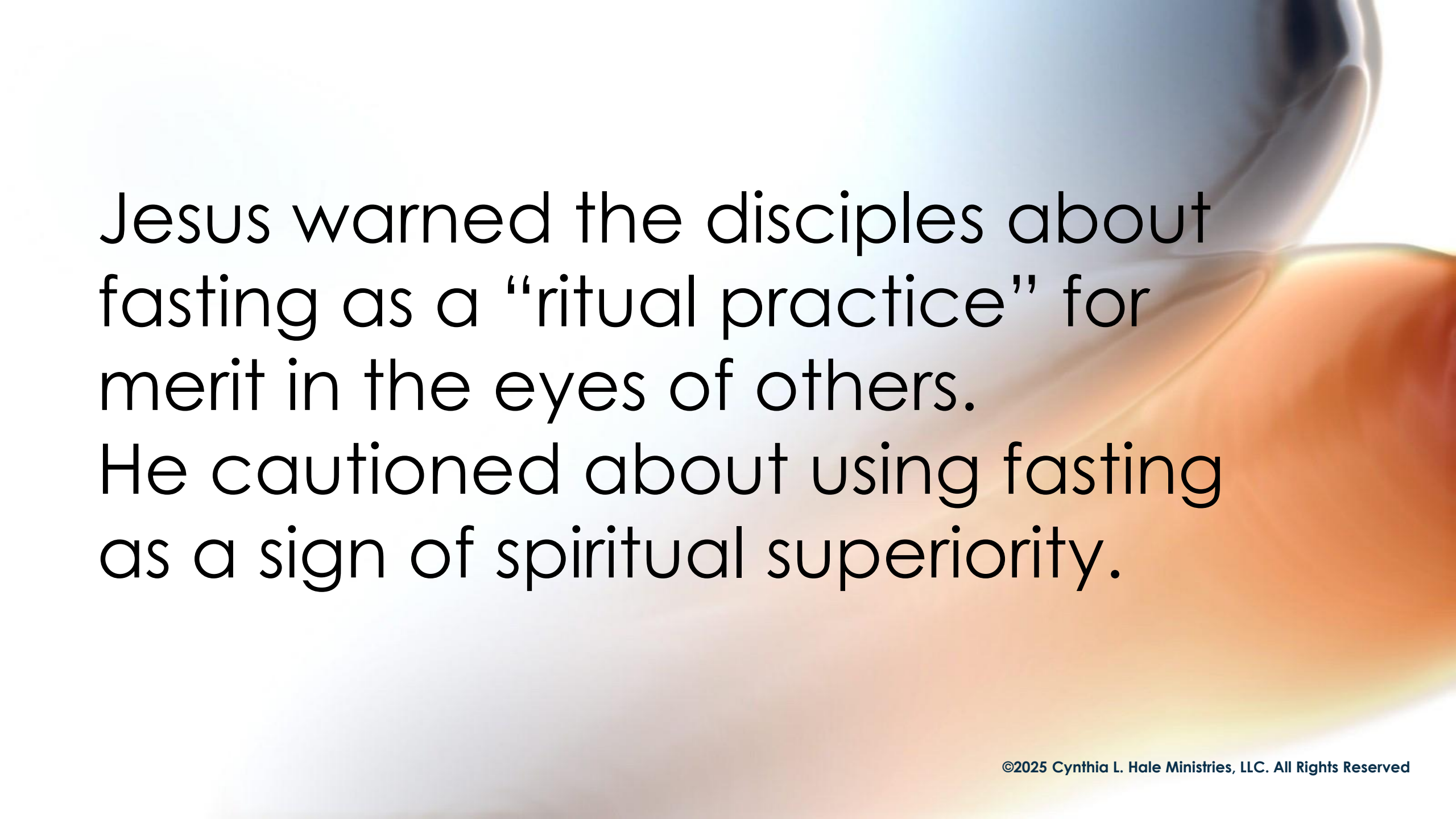
Fasting and prayer are equal parts of a single ministry. Both fasting and prayer are designed to take you into the presence of God. Fasting aids prayer. Fasting creates an environment for the working of prayer.



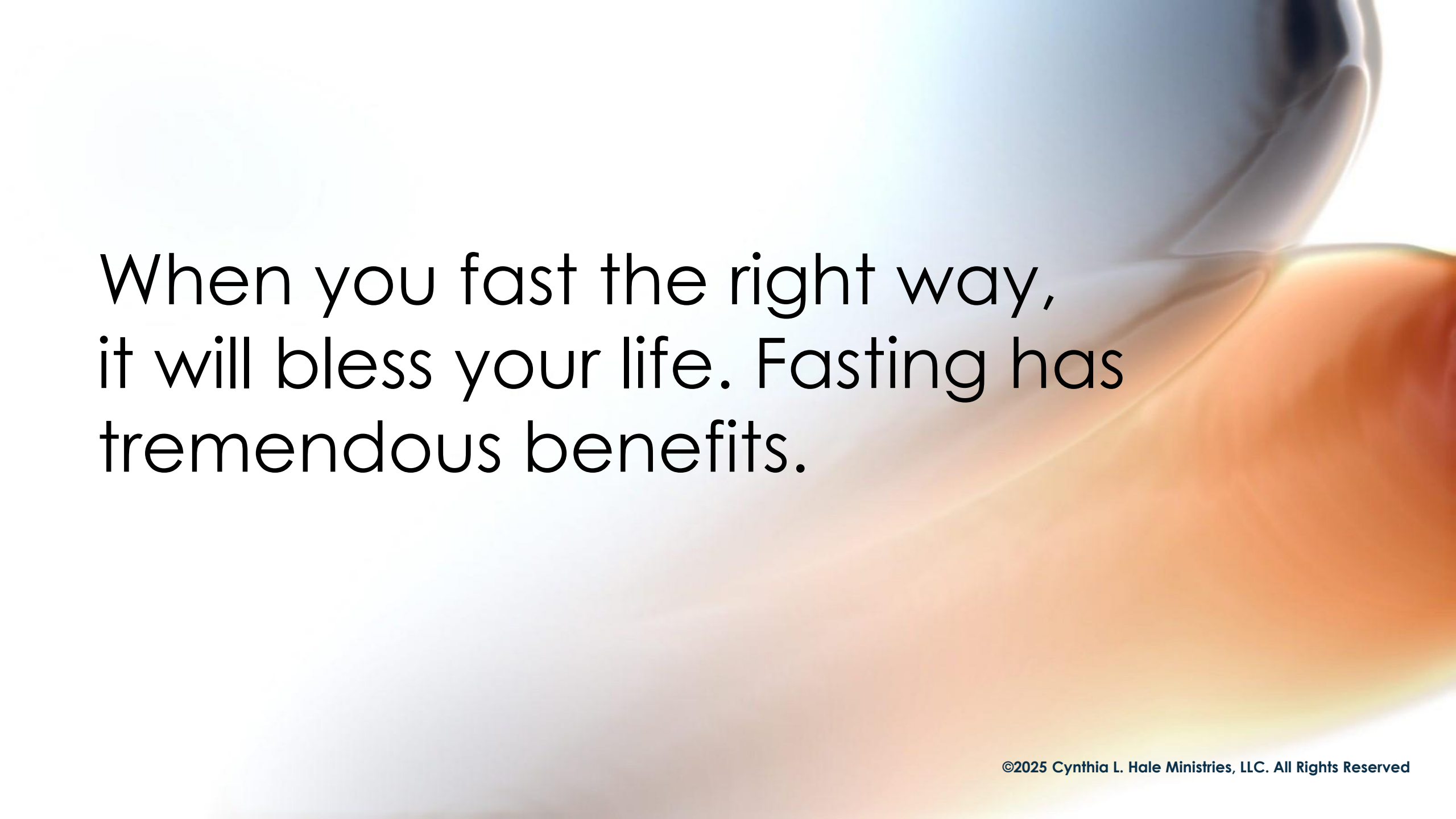
Fasting is an act of faith and obedience; it is an act of our will. Actually, it is an achievement over our desires and our flesh.



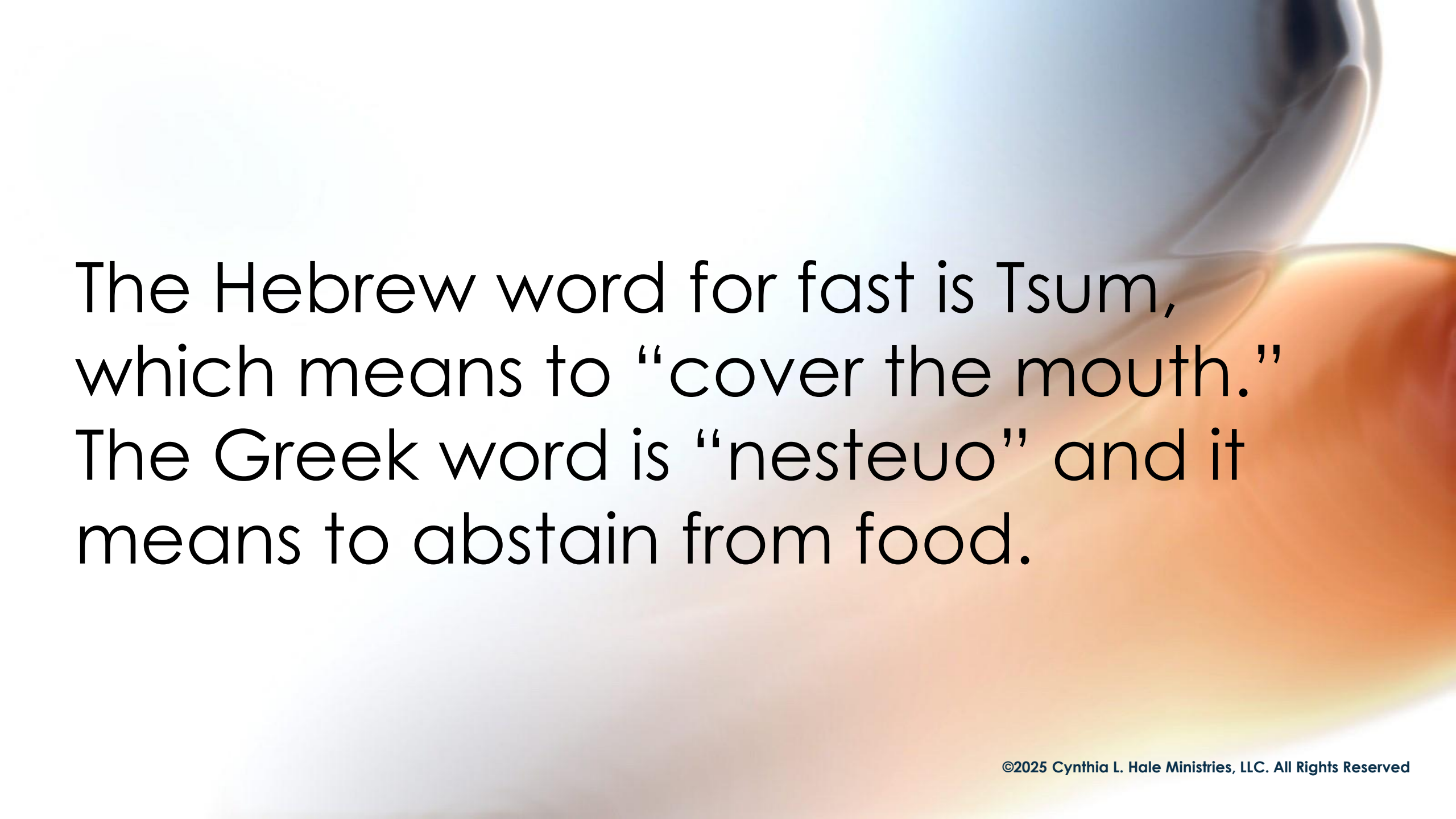
As disciples of Christ, when we consider the sacrifice that Christ made for us, making the sacrifice to give up food or certain foods for a period of time is the least we can do.



Jesus warned the disciples about fasting as a “ritual practice” for merit in the eyes of others. He cautioned about using fasting as a sign of spiritual superiority.



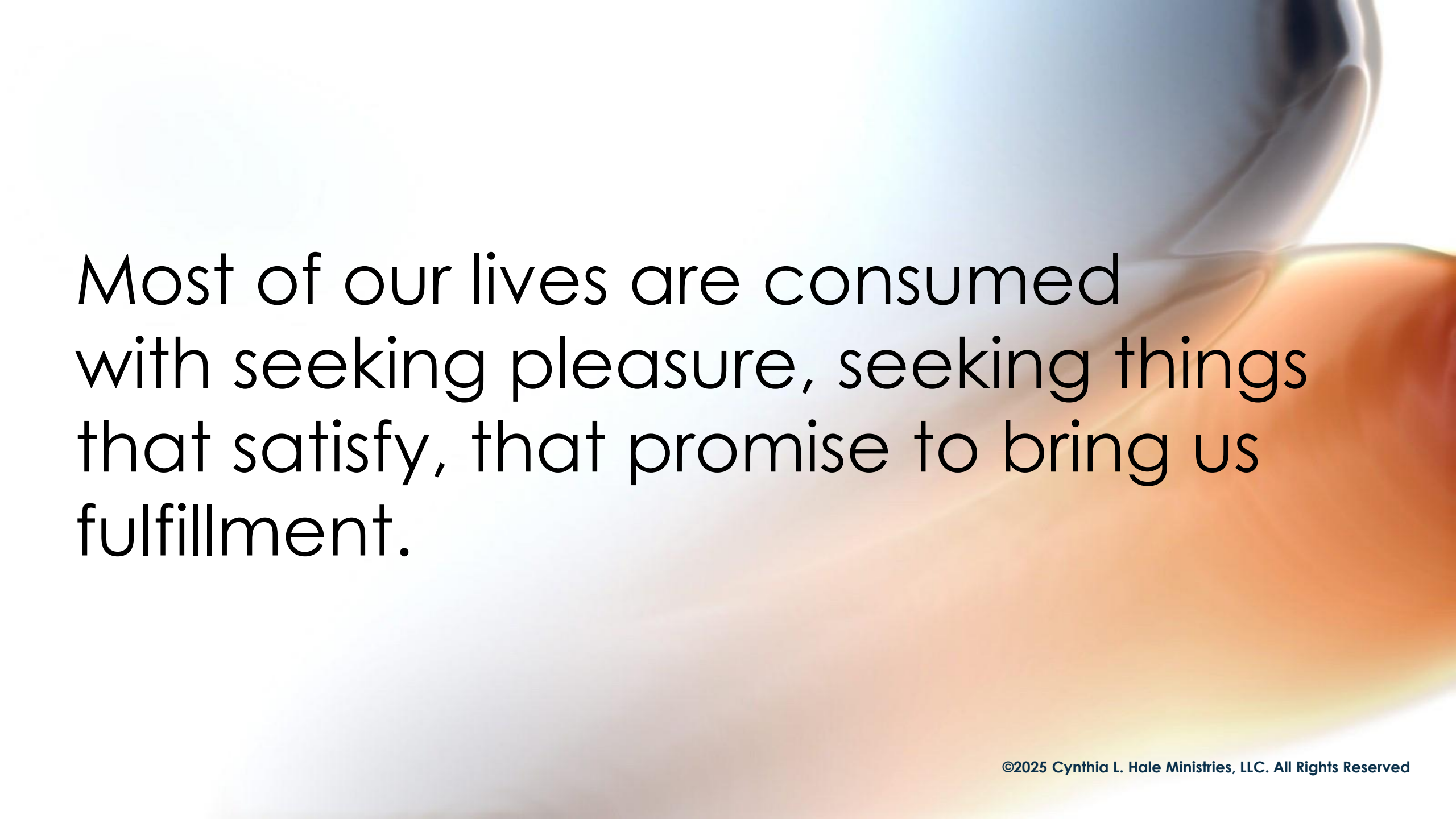
When you fast the right way,
it will bless your life. Fasting has
tremendous benefits.



The Hebrew word for fast is Tsum,
which means to “cover the mouth.”
The Greek word is “nesteuo” and it
means to abstain from food.



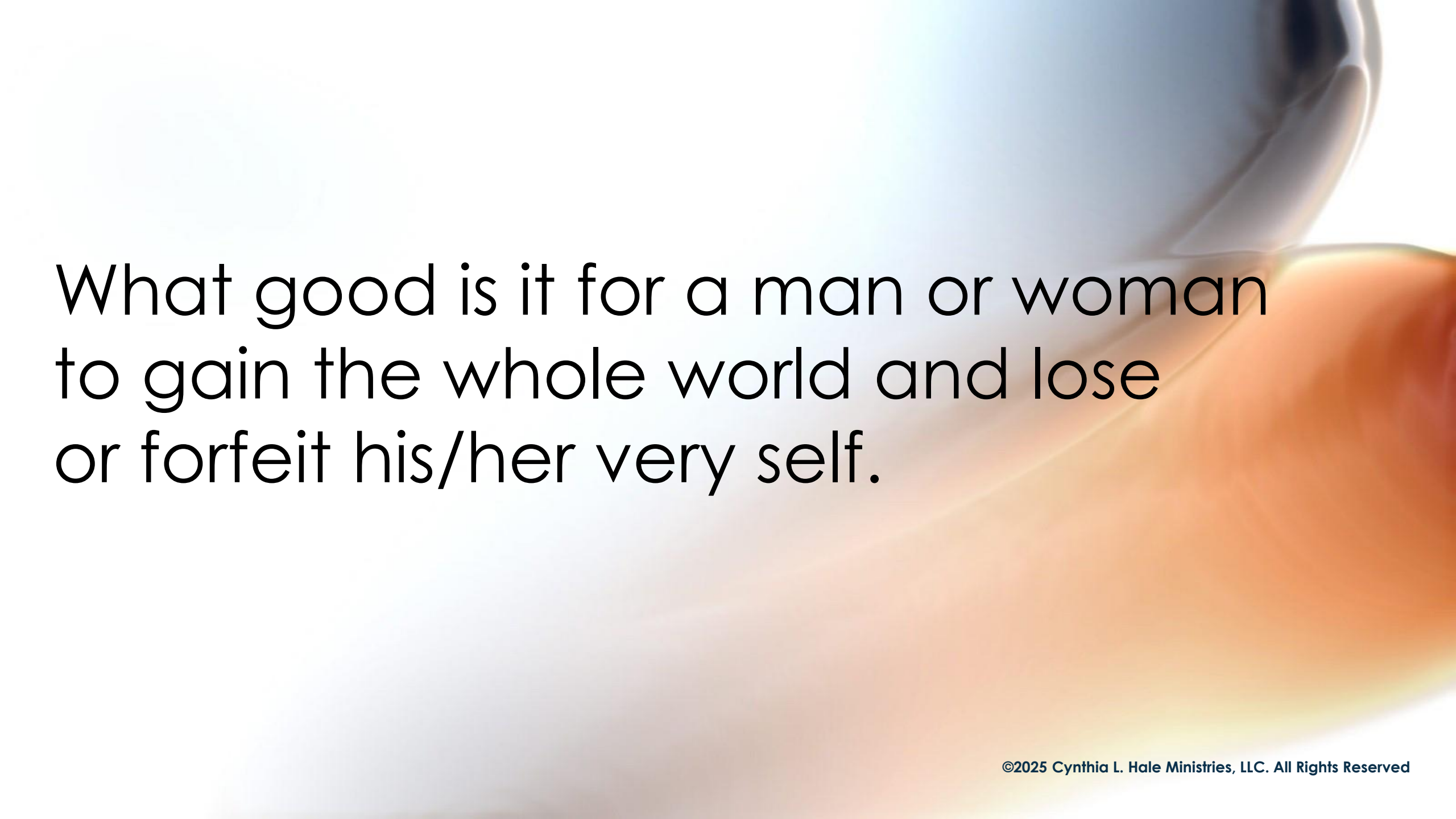
To fast is to seek the face of God.



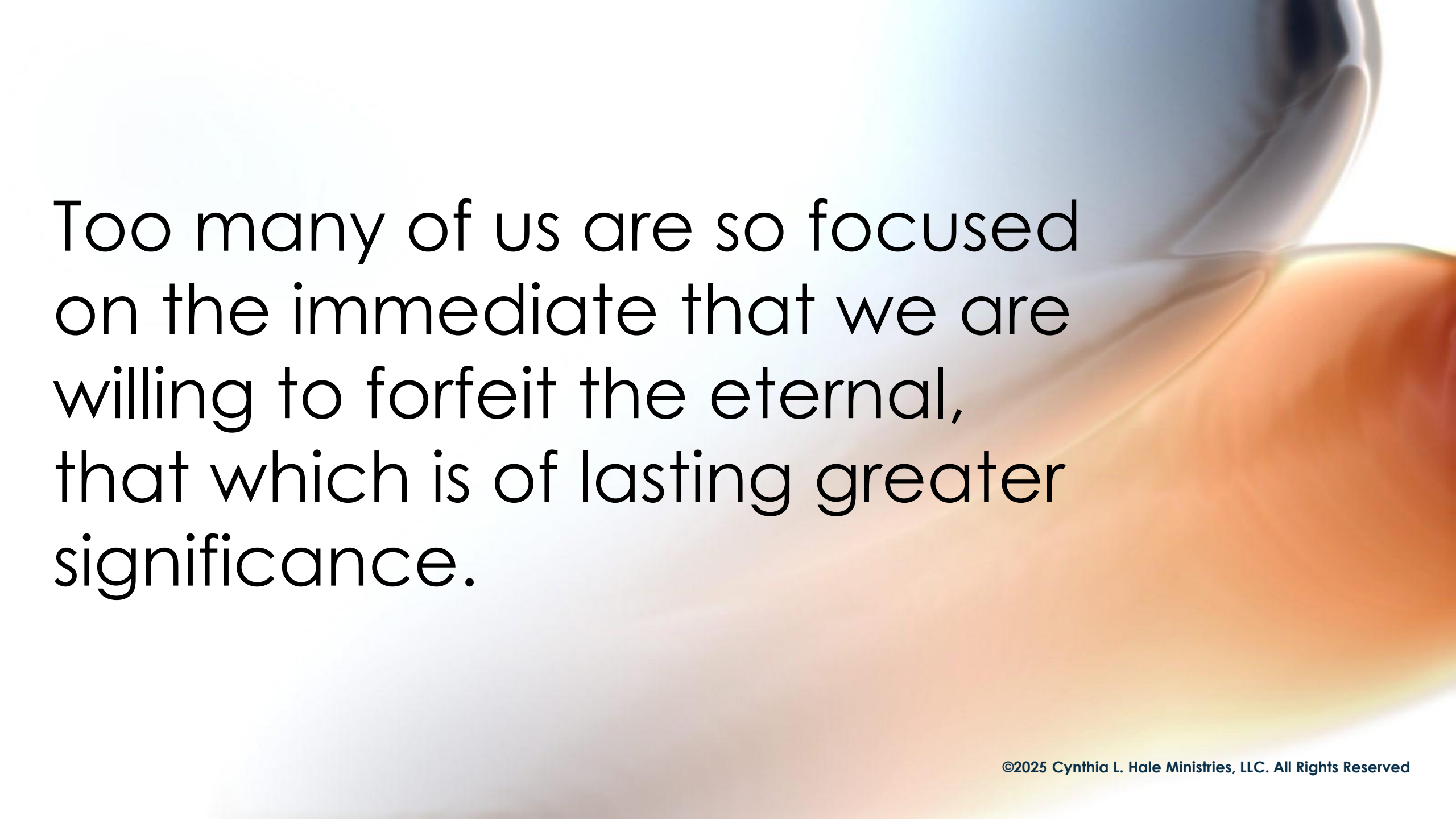
Most of our lives are consumed
with seeking pleasure, seeking things
that satisfy, that promise to bring us
fulfillment.



Fasting teaches us self-discipline,
which is the opposite of self-indulgence.



What good is it for a man or woman
to gain the whole world and lose
or forfeit his/her very self.



Too many of us are so focused on the immediate that we are willing to forfeit the eternal, that which is of lasting greater significance.

Discussion or Reflection:

What stronghold needs to be broken in your life through the discipline of fasting?



Fasting is good for our health.



Fasting keeps us from
becoming slaves of unhealthy
habits.



The fewer the things that we regard as essential for life and living; the freer we will be.

Jeremiah 29:13

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

A close-up, artistic photograph of a glass filled with a golden-brown liquid, possibly whiskey or brandy. The glass is partially visible on the right side of the frame, with a white object, possibly a napkin or a piece of paper, tucked into the top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of light blue and white, creating a serene and elegant atmosphere.

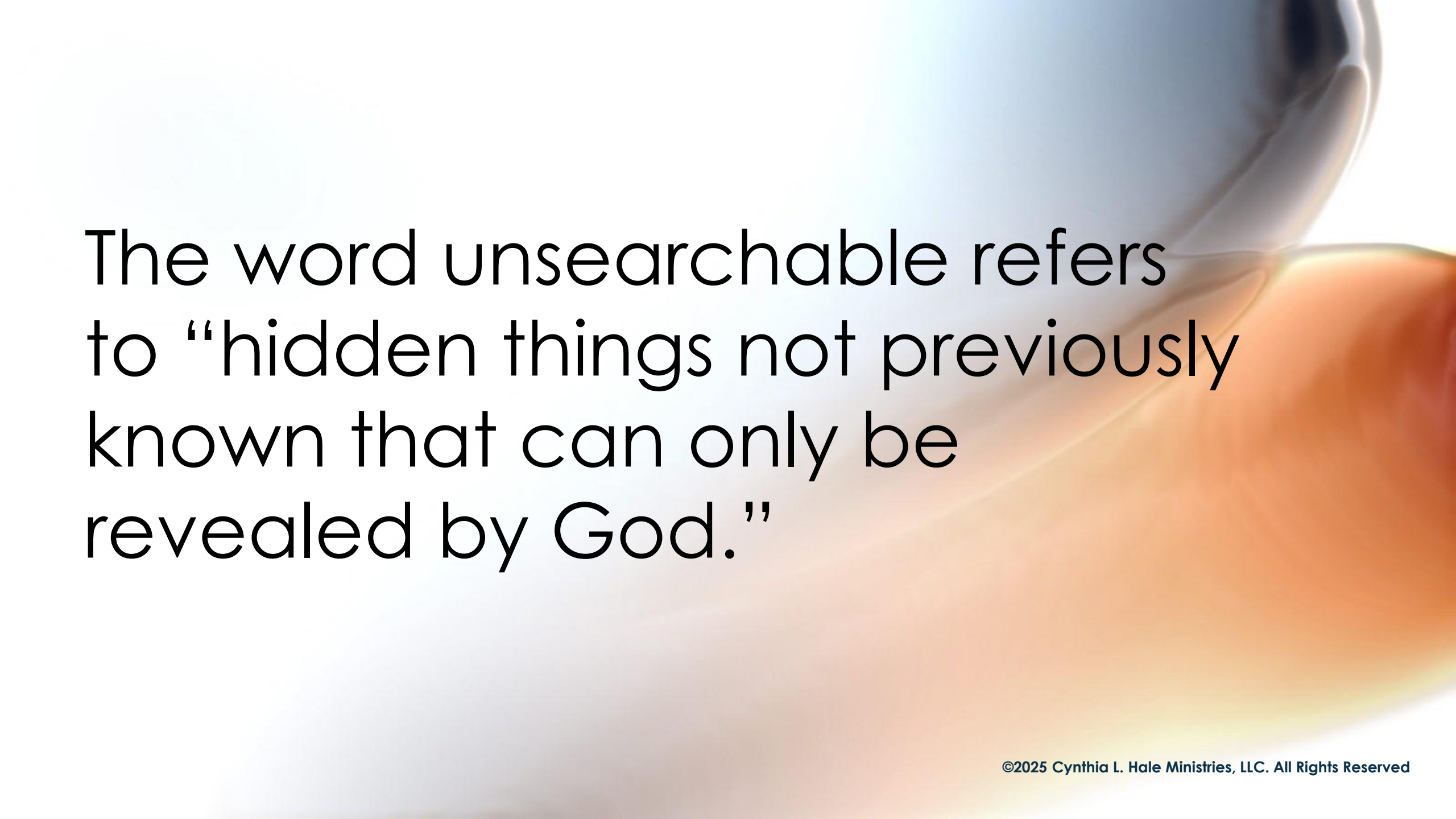
Isaiah 58:2-4



When one seeks God with
all one's heart through fasting
one is in preparation for spiritual
revelation.

Jeremiah 29:3

Call to me and I will answer you
and tell you great and unsearchable
things you do not know.



The word unsearchable refers to “hidden things not previously known that can only be revealed by God.”

A close-up, artistic photograph of a glass filled with a golden liquid, possibly honey or oil, with a white object partially visible at the top right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of light colors.

Exodus 24:18

Discussion or Reflection:

What revelation do you need from God? What wisdom, what questions do you need answered?



Fasting gives you
supernatural power.

Luke 4:14


Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.

Andy Murray

Prayer grasps the power of heaven
while fasting loosens the hold on
earthly pleasures.




Fasting gives us power in
interceding for others.

A close-up, artistic photograph of a glass being filled with a golden liquid, likely honey or oil, with a white substance being poured from above. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of light blue and white.

This kind does not come
out except by fasting
and praying.

Joel 2:15

Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly,
Gather the people, consecrate the assembly.

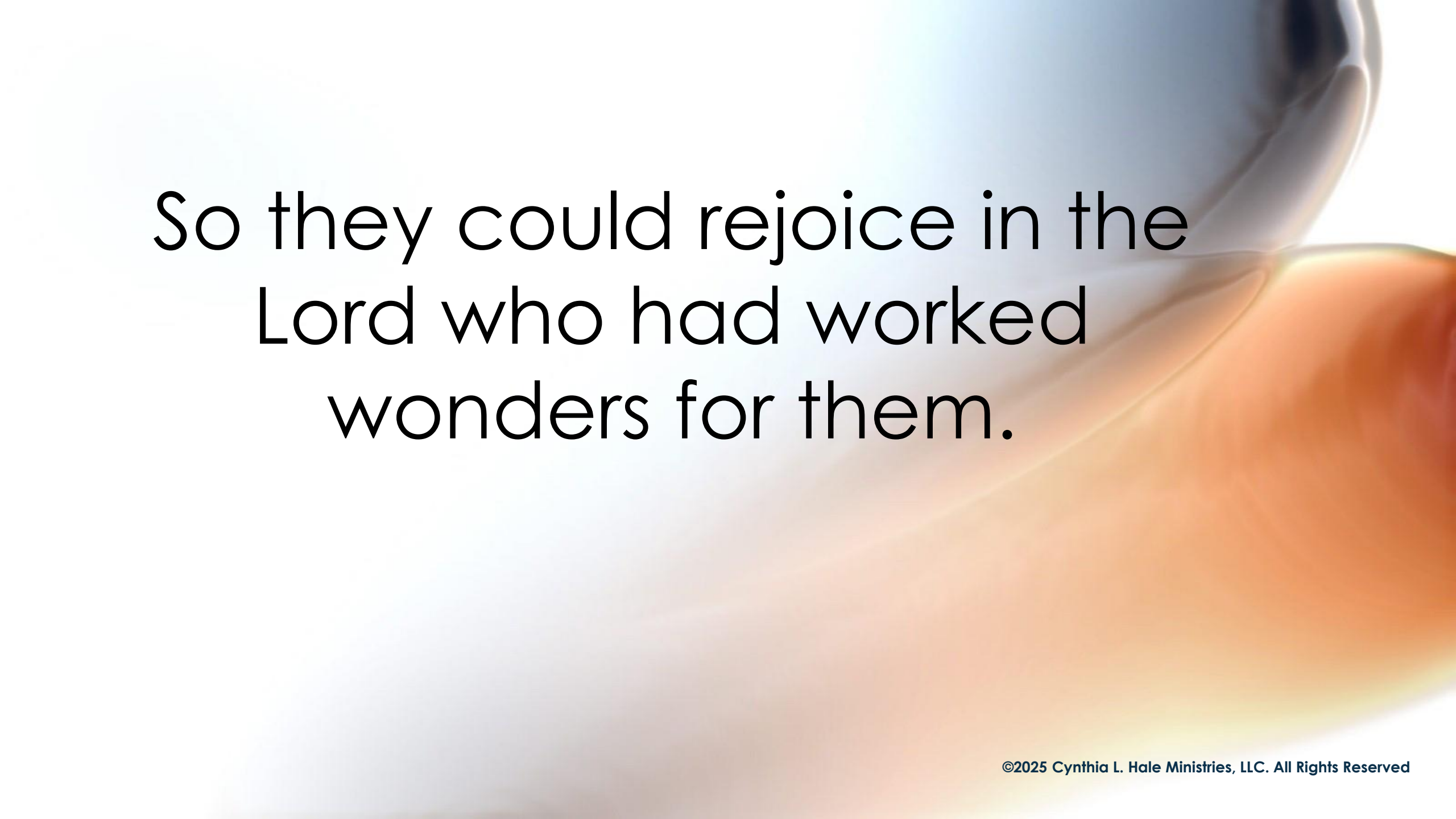


Joel 2:12-14



Joel 2:18-27, makes clear that God would:

- Restore their crops.
- Remove the threat of an invading army.
- Right the wrong in their lives.
- Regularly provide their needs.
- Refresh them with fresh rain.
- Repay them for the years that the locusts had eaten.



So they could rejoice in the
Lord who had worked
wonders for them.

Discussion or Reflection:

Are you fasting, why or why not?
What is your greatest hindrance to fasting? What is the greatest benefit that you have received in fasting?

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