

Fasting

page 1

Fasting and Praying

Our motivation in prayer and fasting is to seek the kingdom of God. (Matthew 6:10, 33) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. (33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Prayer and fasting is not to put God in a place to do what we want. Instead, it is to put us in a place to hear the will of God in our life and to give us the spiritual power to accomplish His will. When we pray and fast we are tapping into the mind and power of God. During fasting, we spend time focusing on God, His Word, and His will in our life. We seek for a deeper and more powerful relationship with God. As we do this, we are blessed body, soul, and spirit. When we fast, this benefits our body because it purges it from toxins. When we spend time reading our Bible, this feeds our soul. And when we pray, this renews our spirit with the Holy Spirit. There are many other benefits that we will be studying.

The Fasting Chapter - Isaiah 58

Hypocritical fasts reprov'd, (Isaiah 58:1-5, GW) Cry aloud! Don't hold back! Raise your voice like a ram's horn. Tell my people about their rebellion and the descendants of Jacob about their sins. (2) They look for me every day and want to know my ways. They act as if they were a nation that has done what is right and as if they haven't disregarded God's judgment [on them]. They ask me for just decrees. They want God to be near them. (3) Why have we fasted if you are not aware of it? Why have we inflicted pain on ourselves if you don't pay attention? Don't you see that on the days you fast, you do what you want to do? You mistreat all your workers. (4) Don't you see that when you fast, you quarrel and fight and beat your workers? The way you fast today keeps you from being heard in heaven. (5) Is this the kind of fasting I have chosen? Should people humble themselves for [only] a day? Is fasting just bowing your head like a cattail and making your bed from sackcloth and ashes? Is this what you call fasting? Is this an acceptable day to the LORD?

The true fasting accepted, (Isaiah 58:6-7, GW) This is the kind of fasting I have chosen: Loosen the chains of wickedness, untie the straps of the yoke, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke. (7) Share your food with the hungry, take the poor and homeless into your house, and cover them with clothes when you see [them] naked. Don't refuse to help your relatives.

The righteous is kept and blessed through true fasting, (Isaiah 58:8-14, GW) Then your light will break through like the dawn, and you will heal quickly. Your righteousness will go ahead of you, and the glory of the LORD will guard you from behind. (9) Then you will call, and the LORD will answer. You will cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am!" Get rid of that yoke. Don't point your finger and say wicked things. (10) If you give some of your own food to [feed] those who are hungry and to satisfy [the needs of] those who are humble, then your light will rise in the dark, and your darkness will become as bright as the noonday sun. (11) The LORD will continually guide you and satisfy you even in sun-baked places. He will strengthen your bones. You will become like a watered garden and like a spring whose water does not stop flowing. (12) Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the foundations of past generations. You will be called the Rebuilder of Broken Walls and the Restorer of Streets Where People Live. (13) If you stop trampling on the day of worship and doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the day of worship a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, if you honor it by not going your own way, by not going out when you want, and by not talking idly, (14) then you will find joy in the LORD. I will make you ride on the heights of the earth. I will feed you with the inheritance of your ancestor Jacob. The LORD has spoken.

Fasting

page 2

Fasting in the Bible

Prophet's Fast - a forty day fast which is directed by God for a special purpose. Moses (Deuteronomy 9: 9), Elijah (1 Kings 19:7-8), and Jesus (Matthew 4:2), fasted for forty days.

Daniel's Fast, a twenty-one day partial fast. (Daniel 10:2-3) *In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. (3) I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.*

Three day fast. (Esther 4:16) *Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.*

One Day - Fast Day of Atonement. The word "afflict your souls" means "Fasting". (Numbers 29:7) *And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein.*

In the Bible there are complete fasts where the people do not eat or drink for a certain period of time. And there are partial fasts where the people do not eat or drink certain things for a period of time. All true fasts from a pure heart are accepted with the Lord.

Praying and Fasting with a Purpose

Ezra the priest fasted for God's protection while carrying valuable things for God's temple. (Ezra 8:21-23) *Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. (22) For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. (23) So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.*

Daniel fasted because he was distraught over the sins of his people. (Daniel 9:3-5) *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: (4) And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; (5) We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.*

Daniel fasted a partial fast for three weeks for the fulfillment of God's promises, and received mighty revelations from God, Daniel 10. At the end of the fast an angel came to him to give him great revelations. (Daniel 10:11) *And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.*

David fasted for the healing of his son. (2 Samuel 12:16-17) *David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. (17) And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.*

Elijah needed to fast 40 days before he heard God's voice again. (1 Kings 19:8-9) *And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. (9) And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?*

Moses fasted to receive the Ten Commandments and the Law of God, and to see God's glory and goodness.

Fasting

page 3

Nineveh prayed and fasted as they repented before the Lord. (Jonah 3:4-5) And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. (5) So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

Jesus fasted and spoke the Word of God to overcome Satan and to begin His ministry, (Matthew 4:1-10; Luke 4:1-13). (Luke 4:14) And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Paul prayed and fasted often for the churches. (2 Corinthians 11: 27) In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Fasting With the Wrong Motives

Some people fast to themselves and not to God. (Zechariah 7:4-5) Then came the word of the Lord of hosts unto me, saying, (5) Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?

The Pharisees fasted often but they were hypocrites. (Matthew 9:14) Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

(Matthew 23:27-28) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. (28) Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

The Proper Fast

We fast to God, not like the Hypocrites. (Matthew 6:16-18) Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (17) But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; (18) That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

We humble and chasten ourselves with fasting. (Psalm 35:13) But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

Fasting with pure motives. (Isaiah 58:6-7) *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? (7) Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*

When someone is fasting, it is important that he pray to receive a whole benefit from the fast. (Matthew 17:21) Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

When Should We Fast?

When God lead us. (Luke 4:1-2) And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, (2) Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

When someone feel the need for fasting. (Matthew 6:16-18) Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (17) But thou, when

thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; (18) That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

When the church calls for a time of Fasting and Praying. (Joel 1:14) Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.

Some Results of Fasting in the Bible

A whole nation was delivered from death. (Esther 4:15-17) Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer*, (16) Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. (17) So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

City of Nineveh was delivered from the Judgement of God. (Jonah 3:9-10) Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? (10) And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

People will be delivered from demons and addictions. (Matthew 17:18-21) And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. (19) Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? (20) And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. (21) Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Elders were ordained in Churches. (Acts 14:23) And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

The will of God was revealed. (Acts 13:1-3) Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (3) And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Prayer and fasting will bring about a great out-pouring of God's Spirit. (Joel 2:12, 28) Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. (28) And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

The Pain of Fasting

Fasting is not easy. The pain of fasting is twofold. The physical pain is due to the detoxification of our bodies. All the accumulate poison and garbage starts to come into our blood and we feel dreadful. This can be alleviated by fasting on juice. With juice fasting you have some control on the speed of your body's detoxification.

The pain of the soul is due to the conflict in the spiritual realm between your flesh and the Spirit of God. This goes beyond the natural desire to eat. There is this pain because:

1. Most times our bodies are demanding food 2 or 3 times a day and complain that food is needed when they are denied. A little training in fasting soon clears up this misconception.
2. You are brought face to face with other painful issues in your life. God reveals the need for you to forgive others, to repent of your wicked ways, to stop running from Him and start trusting Him. This is the spiritual and soulish detoxification which happens when we fast.
3. You will be attacked by demonic forces seeking to induce you to give up the fast. Jesus experienced this in the wilderness with Satan (Matthew 4:1-10). Great spiritual victories are won or lost on our willingness to endure spiritual hardship and temptation out of love and faithfulness to the Lord.
4. You will experience weakness at times, and we like to feel strong and in control. Fasting teaches us dependence upon God.

The Power of Fasting

Fasting and prayer is one of the most powerful spiritual combinations on earth. True fasting brings humility and alignment with God. It breaks the power of flesh and demons. It kills unbelief and brings answers to prayer when nothing else works.

It has been well said that prayer is not preparation for the battle - prayer IS the battle. And of all the things we can do to enhance the power and focus of prayer, fasting is doubtless the most potent. This is where the power is at, because fasting puts us in harmony with the All Powerful God who demands humility from those who wish to be close to Him. Fasting humbles the flesh. When it is done for that purpose, it pleases God.

Fasting is not magic, nor does it twist the arm of God. Instead, it changes us to be more like our God. It brings us closer to Him in a way like nothing else can do. For when we humble ourselves and draw closer to Him, He draws closer to us. Then great things will be done in our midst. Through prayer and fasting nations have been delivered, people have been set free, the will of God became known, leaders were anointed, and demons fled from oppressing and possessing people. This is done because when we pray and fast we are tapping into the mind and power of God. The greater our determination to draw closer to God, the greater His Glory and Grace will be upon His people. Great things lie before us. Let us remember that our motivation in prayer and fasting is to seek the kingdom of God. **(Matthew 6:10, 33) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.** Once we tap into the will of God, then the anointing and blessings of heaven will be poured out upon us.