

When Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit He always used a personal pronoun. “*He*”, “*Him*”, or “*Himself*”. Never once did He refer to the Holy Spirit as “*it*” or a “*feeling*”

(see John 14-16)

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

(John 14:26, NKJV)

Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit with a personal pronoun because He related to the Holy Spirit as a real person

- Not an invisible, intangible, mysterious, or unknown entity

This is important to know because the Third Person of the Godhead possesses the attributes of personality

Just as Jesus is the perfect imprint and very image of the Father’s nature, the Holy Spirit perfectly represents the life and nature of Jesus Christ

We have already seen...

The Holy Spirit comforts us, indwells in us, Teaches Us, Reminds Us, Testifies With Us, Convicts Us, Convinces Us, Guides and Reveals to Us, Helps Us Worship

The Holy Spirit is Jealous For Us

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?” (James 4:4–5, NKJV)

- James couldn't have said anything more shocking, hurtful, or outrageous in this statement to believers
- These believers had been drawn into an improper relationship with the world
- This relationship was like the act of adultery between a husband and wife

The word adultery has all kinds of connotations, such as unfaithfulness, impurity, and violation of a commitment to marriage

- Nothing is harder on a marriage than adultery

What is friendship with the world?

The word friendship is a word that describes people who enjoy each other's company

It describes the relationship between family members as well as other human relationships

It describes two or more people who are fond of one another and are growing more deeply involved in each other's lives

Usually, the word used in our text conveys the idea of a friend with whom you desire a deeper relationship with

In a certain sense, this attraction is so great that it leads to being pre-occupied with someone or something

The phrase, *“friend of the world”* was not about owning things, rather it was about being consumed or preoccupied with things of this world

- Being seduced by the things of this world
- Rather than being concerned with the needs of others, they had become self-consumed with the things of the world
- We can see this was the case by backing up to Vs. 3

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” (James 4:3, NKJV)

- They were consumed with their own comfort and pleasure
- They had committed spiritual adultery
- Having material possessions in your hand is one thing, but having those things in your heart is another

The wording used in verse 4, *“wants to be a friend of the world”* gives the picture of a person convincing themselves that the lust and desires of their flesh are the most important thing in life

- It’s a picture of a person given over to the temptation of worldliness
- *“Well a little won't hurt” “I may grieve the Holy Spirit, but the Lord will forgive me”*

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,”
(Titus 2:11–12, NKJV)

- Is my life consumed with serving myself?
- Or am I concerned with serving the Lord and others?

Have I lost the spiritual fire that is intended to continually burn in our hearts?

- Worldliness tries to wrap its arms around all of us
- Not one of us is exempt from its seductive pull
- Take a moment to honestly evaluate yourself

Just think of the things you tolerate in your life today that you would never have tolerated ten years ago

- Do you watch television programs or movies today that you would have considered a sin ten years ago?
- Are you more permissive in your thinking about sin today than you used to be?
- Are there any areas of your life that used to be more on fire and less compromising than they are right now?
- Do you pray and witness as much as you once did?
- Have you remained faithful to your post?
- We must guard our eyes, ears, and mouth

Or are you allowing various forms of media, conversations with people, and so forth to poison you with compromise

- Don't be drawn into friendship with the world

Fast 2023 – Pray – Fast – Give

Matthew 6:6 – Pray

6 But you, **when you pray**, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. NKJV

Matthew 6:16-18 – Fast

16 "Moreover, **when you fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but **to your Father** who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. NKJV

Matthew 6:19-21 – Lay up

19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but **lay up for yourselves treasures** in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For **where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**. NKJV

- Have you lost the passion and focus you once had?
- Is your heart settled in heaven?
- Are you giving the way you should?
 - Time, Treasure, Talents

Matthew 6:25-34 – Don't Worry – Life, Clothes, Food

We will commit to...

- Make time to pray – Throughout the year
- Make time to fast – Throughout the year
- Learning to create “Space” for God

Types of Fasts:

- Specific food or activity fast
- Juice fast
- Water fast
- Total fast
- No pleasant food fast – Daniel fast

Fasting is a choice you make to interrupt your *“life as usual”* to hear what God wants to do and how He wants to use us to make a difference in someone else’s life

A faithful lifestyle of prayer and fasting will bring blessings into the lives of our families, marriages, finances, and business

- But there is so much more that God wants to do through our lives

“It is worth it all to separate yourselves from the addictions to sports, the addictions to food, and the addictions to entertainment, just to know the extreme pleasures of God’s love and to fulfill the prophetic destiny He has placed upon your lives to shape history with Him.”

– Lou Engle – “The Call” prayer gatherings

Fasting is not just another religious exercise

Matthew 15:8–9 (NLT)

⁸ ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁹ Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’”

- Brokenness is precious in the eyes of the Lord
- I desire that everyone at RLC would bring a true spirit of brokenness to our worship
- Not just going through the motions but truly hungry for God

Brokenness makes room for God to release His strength through our weakness in order to accomplish His plans

- That is a crucial difference that we need to understand

Isaiah 58:5 AMP

Is such a fast as yours what I have chosen, a day for a man to humble himself with sorrow in his soul? [Is true fasting merely mechanical?] Is it only to bow down his head like a bulrush and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him [to indicate a condition of heart that he does not have]? Will you call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord?

- God saw right through that religious fast as just routine
- Fasting is supposed to break the routine
- Not become another passionless performance
- It's our spirit crying out for our Bridegroom – **Mark 2:20**

Bulrush – a tall grassy reed that grew along the rivers

- Hollow on the inside and easily bent over by its own weight

If we are not careful any one of us can become hardened to the Spirit of God and indifferent in our worship

- No brokenness – No passion

A faithful lifestyle of prayer and fasting will bring blessings into the lives of our families, marriages, finances, and business

- But there is so much more that God wants to do through our lives

The brokenness that comes through fasting starts with throwing everything aside that we identify with in our own strength

- Acknowledge that Jesus can do more through me broken than I could ever attempt to do on my own

Do you feel like something is holding you back from your destiny?

- Do you live with the weight of depression and discouragement?
- Do you feel the weight of finances and family obligations?
- As you cry out to the Lord in fasting and prayer He will break those bonds and lift those burdens
- He will put the pieces of your life back together
- It is one of the rewards of fasting
- He will then use you to bring freedom to others

Do you feel like you are yoked, weighed down, or held back?

- Are you yoked to something that is ruining your life?
- Do you have bad habits that are keeping you in bondage?
- Do you feel like it's hopeless?
- Like you've wasted far too much of your life?
- The fast God chooses can break every yoke!
- We are exchanging our hunger for the lusts of the world with the hunger for Him

Are You Hungry?

Most of us have no problem knowing when to eat a meal

- Most of us eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner at a specific time every day
- Basically, we eat when we're hungry

But how do we recognize spiritual hunger?

- How do we know when to fast?
- It's beyond these 21 days
- There are times to fast together
- There are times throughout the year we need to fast personally

Your spirit hungers for the things of God just as your stomach hungers for food

When you engage in seasons of fasting and prayer your stomach hungers but eventually fades

- Yet, your spiritual hunger rises up
- It can only be satisfied with the will of God and fulfilling His call on your life

It's so easy to come up with reasons we can't fast

- Especially when it comes to jobs – fast dinner
- Overly worshipped entertainment
- Convenience

It's impossible to do God's will with human zeal

- It requires fasting and prayer

Hebrews 10:24 (ESV)

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works

2 Timothy 1:6 (ESV)

⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands

2 Peter 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*

- Where there is hunger there is passion
- Where there is passion there is power
- David danced with passion

Blind Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus even though He was told to be quiet

- Zacchaeus climbed a tree to get the attention of Jesus
- The woman with the issue of blood risked everything to get to Jesus and touch His robe
- Mary poured out her expensive perfume – **John 12:1-7**
 - The disciples thought it was a waste
 - Jesus rebuked them on her behalf

When you spend time with Jesus, what's on Jesus will rub off on you

- You can't truly pour out your worship on Jesus without some of that fragrance coming back on you
- That's what happens when you spend time in broken worship

We should be praying as we fast, but fasting is a form of prayer

Essentially, when we fast we are waiting on the Lord

Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

³¹ But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

- As we wait on the Lord we renew our strength
- You will also mount up with wings like eagles
- Not wings like sparrows or butterflies
- Eagles! – One of the strongest birds God created

Maybe you've made some leaps but you're yet to soar

- You are trying
- You are fighting for it
- But somehow you need more
- Its kind of like Nehemiah rebuilding the walls

He never would have accomplished it in 52 days if he hadn't humbled himself with fasting and prayer

What do you do while you're waiting on the Lord?

Psalm 46:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

- Quiet yourself
- Turn off the distractions of life
- Press into God's presence
- Open God's word and devour it
- The Bible contains the answer to every dilemma you face
- As you fast and read the word, God *WILL* speak to you!

James 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

There are two powers at work when we fast

- The human will and the supernatural power of God

When we put our will under submission to God His power helps us succeed

James 4:6, 10 (NKJV)

⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "*God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.*" ⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

- We are either resisting the devil or resisting God
- Fasting is a choice to break the allure of the world
- Fasting will cleanse and purify your heart
- Fasting gives you a fresh anointing to fight for your family, your kids, and your marriage!
- When you go into battle, you are fighting to win!