

Fast 2018 – 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 10:1-3

1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. NKJV

- Results:
 - The angel defeated the Prince of Persia
 - Your answer is coming
 - Daniel was strengthened
 - Daniel received a vision of what will happen in the latter days
 - Commonly called “The Daniel Fast”

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
- My desire is 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

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

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

Isaiah 58:6-11

6 "Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? 8 Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'" If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday.

The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. NKJV

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

It may be the difference you make in just one life or you may find that He is using you to make a difference in the lives of millions

Fasting is dying to ourselves

John 12:24–26 (NKJV)

²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

John Chapter 4 – The Woman at the Well

The disciples didn't bring back someone they had raised from the dead or a demoniac they had set free

- The woman brought her whole town back
- The disciples brought Jesus a Happy Meal
- She brought Him souls

“Some are jealous of being successors of the Apostles. I would rather be a successor of the Samaritan woman, who—while the Apostles went for meat and forgot souls—forgot her water pot in her zeal to spread the good tidings.” – Hudson Taylor – 1832-1905

As more and more people gathered around Jesus the disciples urged Him to eat

John 4:32, 34 (NKJV)

³² But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

³⁴ Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

- The disciples wanted to fill their bellies with Food
- Jesus wanted to fill a city with revival
- The women left her water pot and went to bring others
- The people were hungry for more of Jesus the Messiah

In so many of our churches we have no room for more

- We sit and receive until we are full to our ears
- Belching in our “La-Z-Boy” pews with our remote controls
- Flipping through what we do or don’t like in a service
- So stuffed and full of ourselves that we have no room for more and no passion for Jesus

Fasting will empty us of ourselves and through humility
God can fill us with passion for Him

- God is looking for passionate people that He can bless in abundance
- The more He blesses them the hungrier they become
- The more passionate they become
- The more kingdom power will be released

Everything that Jesus endured through His suffering and crucifixion is called His *passion*

- Power follows passion!

If you are standing in a worship service and it doesn’t seem to have any power

- Remember power follows passion
- Is there any passion in my worship or is it just routine?
- Is there any passion in what is being preached or is it just another sermon?
- If you break through with passion power can be released

Am I guilty of holding the “*remote control*” at times because I don’t like the song, don’t like the music or don’t sense the passion in the message?

- Throw out the remote and bring the passion yourself
- I believe you will see a difference

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 quite
- 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
 - The disciples thought it was a waste
 - Jesus rebuked them on her behalf

John 12:1–7 (NKJV)

12 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³ Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. ⁴ But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. ⁷ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.

- 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
- Others can see that you've been with Jesus

Acts 4:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

“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

- That is what the fast God has chosen does
- It breaks the bondages and limitations off your life
- God can release His power through you to others
- God chooses a fast that loosens the bonds of wickedness
- Lifts heavy burdens
- Frees those who are oppressed
- Breaks every yoke

Do you feel like somethings 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 its hopeless?
- Like you've wasted far too much of your life?
- The fast God chooses can break every yoke!

Luke 15:13 (NKJV) The Prodigal

¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

- Have you wasted your life on drugs and alcohol or sexual addictions?
- Are you concerned for a spouse, a child, or a parent?

Isaiah 58:7, 12 (NKJV)

⁷ *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?*

¹² Those from among you shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

- Let God put a robe, shoes and a ring on it!
– Luke 15:22