

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

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

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?

- Extend your life to those who are afflicted
- Take away the pointing of the finger
- The speaking of wickedness
- Your light and healing will break forth like the morning

Isaiah 58:11

11 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

“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

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

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?
- Its 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

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

- Especially when it comes to jobs
- Overly worshipped entertainment
- Convenience

Its impossible to do God's will with human zeal

- It requires fasting and prayer

Are you facing something that seems impossible?

Nearly 150 years after the Assyrians conquered the northern tribes of Israel and the Babylonian armies had taken the tribes of Judah captive

- The city of Jerusalem sat in ruins
- The temple had been destroyed
- The wall was broken down
- The gates were burned
- Only a few families remained
 - Moving around the piles of rubble
- Nearly 800 miles away
- Nehemiah worked in the palace for the king of Shushan
- God gave Nehemiah a burden for the city of his people

Nehemiah 1:4 (NKJV)

⁴ So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

- Nehemiah knew he had to do something
- He fasted and prayed
- Interceding for the sins of the people of Israel
- Asking God for favor with his boss, the king

God gave Nehemiah a dream to rebuild the walls

- It was a huge task
- Only God could make it happen

God not only empowered and equipped Nehemiah and made a way for him to do it

- He finished it in a ridiculously short time
- 52 Days
- The feat encouraged the people
- It also put awe and a fear of God in their enemies

Nehemiah 6:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth *day* of Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And it happened, when all our enemies heard *of it*, and all the nations around us saw *these things*, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

- You may not be building city walls
- What dreams has God put in your heart
- Business, career, family, ministry, adoption
- Fast and pray for God's power to accomplish the task

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 – **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

Two kinds of people that need wings

1 – Those who have devastated by horrible events

- They are left feeling like their life is over
- Hope is crushed
- Caught in the rubble of broken pieces
- Feeling like they will never be put back together again
- They can no longer rise above the circumstances

God has given you a promise

- If you wait on Him He will give you wings to rise above your circumstance
- He will give you strength to run your race with endurance

2 – Those who are fighting for their dreams

Are you relying on your own zeal to make it happen?

- You will only get so far
- Ultimately, you can't get off the ground

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 in to 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.

- Are you fasting to draw closer to God?
- Are you fasting for your family?
- Do you need a financial breakthrough?
- Is it healing?

Define your reason and plan to succeed

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

- You can do far more in the anointing of God than human zeal could ever produce

James 4:4, 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
- If we are not growing closer to God than we are drifting further away
- 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, your marriage!

- When you go into battle, you are fighting to win!