

Fast 2019 – Pray – Fast – Give

Matthew 6:6, 16-21 – Pray – Fast – Give

Matthew 6:16-18

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 6:25-34 – 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

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

“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 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 inheritance on prodigal living?
- Have distractions captured your attention?
- Starve your distractions, feed your focus

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 impossible to do God's will with human zeal

- It requires fasting and prayer

Are you facing something that seems impossible?

Fasting will cause breakthroughs to continue in families, cities, nations, finances, church growth, salvation, healing, and deliverance

- It will help believers to break through all opposition from the enemy
- It starts with humbling ourselves and seeing our need

James 4:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Pride, rebellion, manipulation and witchcraft are rampant in our society

- Humility and meekness are seldom seen in the lives of people
- But humility is a key to promotion and blessing

1 Peter 5:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

- The Bible says that we should be clothed with humility
- One of the greatest benefits of fasting is the humbling of the soul

Fasting helps break the power of pride and rebellion and will put you in a position to receive an increased measure of God’s grace

- God’s grace is supernatural access to His strength, power, and ability

More benefits of fasting:

- Fasting will break the spirit of fear and poverty over your life and will prepare the way for prosperity – **Joel 2:15, 18-19, 21, 24-26**
- Fasting will break the stronghold of sexual impurity – **1 Corinthians 6:15-20**
- Fasting will break the powers of carnality, division, and strife – **Philippians 3:18,19, 1 Corinthians 3**
- Fasting will cause the joy and the presence of the Lord to return – **Mark 2:20**
- Fasting will release the power of the Holy Spirit for the miraculous to occur – **Luke 4:14, 18**
- Fasting breaks unbelief and doubt – **Matthew 13:58, 17:20, 21**

Isaiah 58:5-6, 8-9, 11-12

- Fasting will break the power of sickness and infirmity and release healing in your life
- Fasting will release God's glory for your protection
- Fasting will result in answered prayer
- Fasting releases divine guidance
- Fasting will break generational curses

Isaiah 58:12

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. NKJV

- Fasting closes breaches and brings forth restoration and rebuilding
- Fasting will prepare the way for you and your children and deliver you from enemies that lie in wait

Ezra 8:21, 31 (NKJV)

²¹ Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions.

³¹ Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road.

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

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.

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

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 progress but you haven't seen breakthrough

- You are trying
- You are fighting for it
- But somehow you need more
- It's 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

Qualities to Help us Build a Good Foundation Together for the Generations to Come

Loyalty and Reliability

Proverbs 3:3-4 The Message (MSG)

³⁻⁴ Don't lose your grip on Love and Loyalty. Tie them around your neck; carve their initials on your heart. Earn a reputation for living well in God's eyes and the eyes of the people.

Live in a way that allows people to predict your loyalty

- Be a trustworthy friend
- Don't be constantly moved by changing tides and shifting circumstances of life

Your boss, family and friends need to know that you are reliable

- Predictable in your commitment to do what you said you would do
- Don't be unpredictable when it comes to showing up
- When you're reliable, people know that you can be counted on
- A person that can be called on when adversity or opportunity knocks

Belief

2 Timothy 1:12 (NKJV)

¹² For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

- Do you know what you believe?
- Do you know the foundations of your faith?
- We must be resolute in our beliefs, not chasing wishy-washy fads
- We need to be confident in both what and Who we believe in

Hebrews 6:1–2 (NKJV) *The Peril of Not Progressing*

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

- The Cross, the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit
- We cannot allow circumstances to sway our belief
- We must be confident in what we know and ready to share it

Keep Your Word and Your Commitments

Matthew 5:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Is your word better than a contract?

- Be honest and strait forward in your dealings and communication
- Don't give people any room to assume that you're not telling the truth
- *Yes* means *yes*, not *maybe* or *perhaps not*
- Honesty will propel you forward in your destiny with God

Too many people are good starters but poor finishers

- Be a finisher
- We all make resolutions at the beginning of the year but where are we at the end of the year?
- It's not how you start that matters it's how you finish

2 Timothy 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Vision

Acts 2:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ *'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.*

- Realize who and what you are about
- Don't be easily swayed off course or discouraged
- Live with a vision that is attached to the cause of Christ
- No matter your age there is room in the Kingdom for you
- Everyone can make a contribution

The Great Commission doesn't have an age, race, creed or culture attached to it

- He just said, GO!
- People my age are thinking about retirement
- I'm sixty and never felt better!
- The word of God is generational
- Abraham, the Isaac, then Jacob

Psalms 145:4 (HCSB)

⁴ *One generation will declare Your works to the next and will proclaim Your mighty acts.*

- I'm not done declaring yet
- How about you?

What will your legacy, and the generations that follow say about you?

Deuteronomy 29:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ “The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we may do all the words of this law.*

- Do you want to know all that’s been revealed?
- Are you passionate for the things of God
- Are you spiritually alive?
- Vibrant, grace filled, faith filled, welcoming and unjudgmental?
- Do I love God, love people and have a love for life?
- Am I constantly focusing on the Great Commission wherever needed regardless of the cost?
- Youthful in spirit, generous at heart, faith filled?

1 Corinthians 2:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ But as it is written: “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*” ¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Let’s commit to living a life that is alert, active, enthusiastic, and moving forward to access everything God is doing