

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

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

Nehemiah

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
- God gave him favor with 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?
Maybe you've made some progress, but you haven't seen breakthrough

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

Maintaining your breakthrough

John 8:36 (NKJV)

³⁶ Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

- Seasons of prayer and fasting are an important part of the life of a believer
- Fasting leads to victory and deliverance from strongholds
- Fasting produces greater levels of spiritual strength and maturity

One of the main keys to maintaining deliverance that is obtained after a season of fasting and prayer is by activating the spiritual gift of self-control

Proverbs 25:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Whoever *has* no rule over his own spirit *Is like* a city broken down, without walls.

- CEB – “*a breached city, one with no walls.*”
- Cities without walls are open to invasion and attack from the enemy
- An undisciplined lifestyle will bring you right back into bondage
- There is no lasting deliverance and freedom without discipline

To maintain your deliverance you need to have self-control in these areas

Thinking

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

- The things you think on become actions
- Actions become habits
- Habits dictate the outcome of your life
- It's not what you do once and a while but daily

Appetites

Proverbs 23:2 (NKJV)

² And put a knife to your throat If you *are* a man given to appetite.

- Moderation is key in dietary consumption
- Too much of anything is not good for you, spiritually or naturally

Speaking

Proverbs 10:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips *is* wise.

- It is possible to talk too much
- Learning to keep our mouth shut is a great spiritual discipline

Sexual Character

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

- Undisciplined sexual character will blemish your witness
- Keep yourself pure in thought, word and actions
- 1 Corinthians 6:18 – “*Flee sexual immorality*”

Emotions

Proverbs 15:13 (NKJV)

¹³ A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

- Don't let depression take root
- The joy of the Lord is your strength

Temper

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.

Maintenance

- Read God's word daily
- Find a small group or bible study
- Pray with understanding and in other tongues
- Confess the blood and authority of Jesus
- Make a list where you have been taken captive by the enemy in the past and have a plan to stay free
- Take every thought captive – **2 Corinthians 10:5**
 - The mind is the battlefield
- Pray for the Lord fervently to make you alert and vigilant against wrong thoughts – **1 Peter 5:8-9**
 - Rebuke the familiar thought patterns
 - This is a signal that the enemy is approaching
 - Take authority over the enemy and release angels– **Luke 10:19, Hebrews 1:14**

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**

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