

FASTING - AN IMPLEMENT OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

INTRO

The prophet Joel in the Old Testament foretold of an outpouring of the Spirit in the Last Days (Joel 2:23,24). In connection with the outpouring there would be a wholehearted turning to God in fasting and prayer (Joel 2:12-15). The outpouring on Pentecost in Acts 2 is a fulfillment of Joel's prophesy and the Holy Spirit is today restoring balance to all the implements of spiritual warfare available to the church today.

I. Types/Timing of Fasting.

A. Types of fasting:

1. Normal- abstain from all forms of food not water.
2. Absolute- abstain from all forms of food and water.
3. Partial- abstain from certain forms of food.
4. Power- abstain from any thing that has a power over you to break its hold.
5. Daniel- abstain from pleasant bread (snacks, sweets, etc.).

B. Timing or when to fast:

1. By the leading of the Holy Spirit directly to you personally.
2. By the leading of the Holy Spirit indirectly through leadership.
3. By a personal choice to give yourself to it.

II. Fasting During the Age of the Absent Bridegroom Matthew 9:10-17.

A. Analogy of the Bridegroom applied to Jesus.

1. The guests at the wedding feast rejoice because while He was with them it was the time for feasting not fasting.
2. The days would come that the bridegroom would depart. From the time He departs until the time He returns, His followers would fast.
3. The age of the absent Bridegroom is now, so Jesus endorsed fasting during the Church Age, which are the times of His absence. It is to be done until the next time for feasting which is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
4. There will be a new form attached to it (new clothe), and a new spirit put into it (new wine).
5. Our fasting is not to mourn His absence, but to prepare for His return.

B. Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18.

1. Jesus implied fasting was expected by saying, "when ye fast," not "if you fast."
2. We are to put on a smile; do not do it for selfish reasons; do not do it for the praise of men; do not draw attention to yourself; carry on normal activities; do it in secret toward God although some communication may be necessary to those close to you.

III. Fasting Can Sensitize Us to the Last Days.

A. Luke 21:34 Overindulgence dulls spiritual perception.

B. Genesis 2,3 To indulge a natural desire is associated with the ruin of the human race. The cry of man's natural desire drowned out the voice of God. The devil knew he could make a strong play towards man by appealing to natural desire.

C. Genesis 25:28; Hebrews 12:14-17 Esau sold his birthright blessing by trading it for a short-term pleasure and temporary indulgence.

D. Luke 2:36-39 Anna served God with fasting and prayers, and she was sensitive to Jesus' visitation.

IV. Rewards of Fasting.

- #### A. Fasting is not for punishment, but for presence and open rewards Matthew 6:18 (see also Isaiah 58). Believe God for the open rewards.

- B. Isaiah 58 Fasting brings the presence of God or a higher walk in the Spirit.
1. v. 1-5 Wrong reasons for fast.
 2. v. 6,7 Two reasons to fast.
 - a. For revelation which brings release (loose, undo, free, break).
 - b. To do compassionate acts of mercy (feed, house poor, clothe).
 3. v.8-14 Promised rewards.
 - a. God's light on your darkness.
 - b. Speed healing and recovery processes.
 - c. Righteousness leading you.
 - d. The glory will protect His presence on your life.
 - e. Answered prayers.
 - f. Clarity to the voice of God.
 - g. Light rising in what has been obscure and dark to you.
 - h. Guidance.
 - i. Satisfaction.
 - j. Strength and refreshing.
 - k. Raise the standard, repair the breach, restore paths.
 - l. A walk in the Spirit higher than ever before.
 - m. Receive your inheritance (double portion).
- C. The keys that unlock situations in your life and others are the knowledge that is revealed from seeking Him in fasting and prayer.
1. That light and knowledge brings freedom.
 2. That light and knowledge brings anointing.
 3. That light and knowledge reveals grace to help in time of need.