

FASTING – PRESSING INTO GOD FOR BREAKTHROUGH

INTRO

The prophet Joel 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 prophecy, and the Holy Spirit is restoring fasting to the Church today. Fasting is for breakthrough or to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke Isaiah 58:6.

I. Fasting is for Preparation of Jesus' Return Matthew 9:10-17.

- A. Jesus (the Bridegroom) is coming again.
- B. We live in the age of the absent Bridegroom.
- C. Jesus implied from the time He departs until the time He returns His followers would fast.
- D. There would be a new form to it and a new spirit put into it.
- E. Our fasting is not to mourn His absence but to prepare for His return.
- F. The Last Days would be characterized by overindulgence which dulls spiritual perception to the nearness of His return Luke 21:34. Fasting sensitizes us to the nearness of Jesus' return.

II. Fasting is for Pursuing God Joel 2:12-17.

- A. Fasting intensifies our pursuit and seeking of God.
- B. God promises to reward the diligent seeker Hebrews 11:6.
- C. Seeking the Lord will cause us to prosper (2 Chronicles 26:5) and understand all things Proverbs 28:5.
- D. Fasting shows our wholehearted turning to God and diligent seeking of God.
- E. We shut down the outer man to feed the inner man in our pursuit of God.

III. Fasting is for Power Over Desire 1 Corinthians 6:12; 1 Peter 2:11.

- A. The ruin of the human race by the first Adam is associated with his indulging a natural desire Genesis 2, 3.
- B. Never underestimate the power and influence of one act of disobedience Romans 6:19(a).
- C. Jesus, the second Adam, mastered the devils' tempting Him through natural desire Matthew 4:1-11. Where the First Adam lost the Second Adam won.
- D. Never underestimate the power of one act of obedience Romans 6:19(b).
- E. Esau sold his birthright blessing (long term spiritual benefit) by trading it for short term temporary pleasure when he indulged a natural desire Genesis 25:28; Hebrews 12:14-17.
- F. We will never satisfy a desire illegitimately without it costing us something.
- G. Some things have a power over us and the issue is not how bad it is but what good is it.
- H. Abstaining from a natural desire in one area increases our power to abstain from other fleshly desires.
- I. During a fast we are to substitute time with God for the time we would have indulged our desire.

IV. Fasting is for Promised Rewards Isaiah 58:8-14.

- A. Jesus said if we fasted properly the Father would reward us **openly or publicly** Matthew 6:16-18.
- B. Fasting is for a release or breakthrough (Isaiah 58:6) and to do compassionate acts Isaiah 58:7.
- C. God's promised rewards to fasting Isaiah 58:8-14.
- D. Declare the purpose of your fast and claim the rewards by faith at the beginning of the fast.