

The Power of Fasting

Luke 4:1-2, 14 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days **he did eat nothing**: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered ... **And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit** into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

The power of prayer and fasting is quite evident in the earthly life and ministry of Jesus. His disciples, however, did not fast in those days. When someone asked Jesus why his disciples ate and drank while the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fasted often and made prayers, Jesus let them know that his disciples would fast after he was taken from them. He implied that they could gain, through fasting, what they would lose by his bodily absence. Then, in a parable, he made it clear that fasting is a spiritual discipline whose primary appeal would be for those who wanted to be more empowered by the Holy Ghost.

Luke 5:33-39 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

**The WINE is not the issue – there is no shortage in the Holy Ghost!
The BOTTLE is the issue – do you have a “new vessel” of desire?!**

The Pharisees fasted twice a week. Their fast had no spiritual relevancy, however; it was merely a memorial. Tradition said Moses ascended Sinai on a Thursday and returned on a Monday. His forty day fast produced more than a holy glow on his face; it resulted in the giving of the law. The Pharisees' fast on Mondays and Thursdays was a powerless ritual that gained them little more than weight loss and the acclaim of their peers.

The forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness was not without purpose. It produced a dimension of power he could get in no other way, and left a pattern for us. Here are some of the benefits of Jesus' fast ...

- **Fasting enabled Jesus to use the Scriptures with great authority.**

Luke 4:3-13 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

- **Fasting heightened Jesus' awareness of his identity and purpose.**

Has the devil ever tried to get you to question your spiritual sonship? Has he tempted you to “strut your stuff”? Has he allured you through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life? Has he, by means of one or more of the five senses, nearly persuaded you to cast off that which is invisible and eternal? Pray! Fast! Return from your temptations in the power of the Spirit!

- **Fasting gave Jesus a powerful anointing to preach and liberate.**

Luke 4:17-19 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

Prayer with fasting enables us to see the unseen, hear the unheard, know the unknown, and understand the things of the Spirit. The Bible becomes a living book to us!

- **Fasting gave Jesus the climate of faith he needed to work.**

John 4:31-34 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Matthew 17:19-21 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Isaiah 58:5-12

5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.