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Prayer And Fasting

Pastor Charles Mendenhall

We have begun a new year and not knowing what the new year may bring, we are looking at prayer and fasting for a guideline. The purpose of fasting is to get our flesh in control, learning to discipline our flesh. Fasting is a choice that we make; we are not going to make God do something just because we have chosen to fast.

Many people are choosing to go on what is called a "Daniel Fast", a 10 day period, denying themselves of certain foods. In the following scriptures, Daniel is referring to the 10 day fast, in chapters 9 and 10 of Daniel a longer fast is described.

Fasting does not have to be a total abstinence from food or water, but can be incorporated with certain foods; however, a person should never go without an adequate amount of water. There are examples in the Bible of people who fasted totally, Moses went 40 days without food or water which upon completing, he received the 10 commandments; Elijah was fed by the Lord supernaturally and then fasted 40 days and Esther fasted 3 days without food or water, that her people would be saved.

Daniel 1:8-17 "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. 11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. 14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. 16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse. 17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had

understanding in all visions and dreams." KJV

Pulse is a type of grain or something that is sown. The "Daniel Fast" includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes and some herbs and water. No coffee, tea and alcohol, drink nothing but water. No meat of any kind, no dairy products, cheese, yogurt, no bread with leaven, no sweets of any kind.

There are other types of fasts which do not include food, they can be things that we are addicted to or things which we do in excess or habits that we might have. Don't make decisions regarding a fast that might cause you to fail.

Matthew 17:20-21 "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. 21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." KJV

Jesus taught that it was unbelief that the disciples were unable to cast the demon out of the boy. Prayer and fasting allows for growing faith and with growing faith nothing is impossible to us. Many older preachers realized the importance of fasting; Paul said that he fasted often. Bro. Hagin spoke of fasting as a life style. Fasting is a way to discipline our lives.

In Matthew chapter 10 we are told that the disciples had been given power over all sickness and disease and demons.

There will be challenges in the new year 2015 that we will have to face, but we will win. Fasting and prayer together keeps us prepared to handle challenges, we must live in a state of preparedness spiritually. This will enable us to help others with challenges in their lives. God is not dead, He is living on the inside, we will not quit. Prayer and fasting will keep that alive on the inside of us, making us ready for anything.

Fasting does not cause God to do anything special for us, we cannot twist His arm. Fasting is all about us getting our flesh under and getting tuned into the Holy Spirit

John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." KJV

As we get our spirit tuned into the Holy Spirit and get our flesh under, letting the Spirit dominate, we shall hear the voice of God. God tells us in the book of Amos that He will forewarn his people of things to come, walking with Him will allow us know those things.

Fasting increases an awareness of God, gets the flesh under control, our flesh is our biggest enemy. Fasting can break the power ruling over us.

Galatians 5:16-17 "So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. 17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions." NLT

The sinful nature being our flesh, our un-renewed minds, is being ruled by our senses. We blame things that happen on the enemy and usually that is right, however, we need to realize that many times things that happen are because of bad choices we make in regards to our flesh. Our un-renewed mind or carnal mind is going to want to do what is easy and cry if it doesn't get its way. Delayed gratification is much better than instant gratification, or yielding to the flesh which brings about bad rewards.

1 Tim 4:1-5 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." KJV

This scripture is telling us that it is alright to eat anything; we do not have to be vegetarians, unless that is our desire. Everything that God has made is good.

Isaiah 58:6-14 "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 noon day: 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. 13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." KJV

This scripture tells us about the benefits of fasting Gods way. There is a proper way that we can be blessed by breaking the power of the flesh. Fasting is going to disconnect us from the things of the world, in order that someone will be helped, preparing us for challenges. Fasting without prayer is nothing more than a diet, which is fine, but if nothing spiritual is involved, i.e. prayer, bible study or worship, there can be no spiritual force. Give our flesh bounds in which to operate, fasting can bring health benefits if done properly; we will become more aware of things.

Isaiah 10:27 "And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing." KJV

Proverbs 19:17 "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." KJV

James 4:8 "Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world." NLT

1 Cor 6:19 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" KJV

Honoring God is an attitude of the heart and fasting will make us more aware of the things of God because our bodies are a temple for the Holy Ghost.