



“BENEFITS OF PRAYER AND FASTING”

Matthew 17:14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, ¹⁵ Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. ¹⁶ And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. ¹⁸ And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. ¹⁹ Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? ²⁰ 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.

Mark 9: 29 And he said unto them, ***this kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.***

In this particular situation the disciples were confronted with an issue beyond their capability to handle. This is their failure to help the man's son. Their failure brought the man to Jesus begging for help telling Jesus that he has no choice but to bother him because His disciples who tried to help his son failed.

It is important to note here that Jesus tied the disciple's failure in their lack of faith. He said "O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? I don't think that Jesus is

showing His frustrations here. I believe when He said these statements He is emphatically making a clear statement, a statement that opened the minds of His disciples, a statement that solidly caught their attention bringing them to a clear understanding on what is needed to succeed in this particular issue.

There are two things that Jesus mentioned in this passage that the disciples must do.

- First, they must have real faith. Little faith is not a real faith. Jesus used the mustard seed as his object lesson here. He said if you have faith as small as mustard seed you can say to this mountain move and it will move. Nothing is impossible for you. Mustard seed is a very tiny seed but it is a real seed, and real seeds no matter how small they are once they are planted, they will start growing and producing fruit. Jesus is not talking about the size of the faith we have, rather, I believe He is referring to the authenticity of our faith.
- Secondly, v. 21 ***Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.***

There are situations in life where all we need is faith. But there are situations where faith is not enough we have to couple it with prayer and fasting. And these situations are the situations where the devil is directly involved.

Prayer and fasting enrich your faith taking it to a level where it will work wonders.

When my son was two years old, he had a high fever that lasted for about a week. On the onset of the fever, we brought him to the doctor but the doctor couldn't find anything wrong. He was given a FEVER medication but it didn't make a difference. We brought him back to the doctor after a few days the result was the same the doctor still couldn't find anything wrong.

I don't know what I was thinking then, but for some reason a thought came to my mind challenging me to fast and pray for my son's healing until he is

miraculously healed. I was young then and still have that feeling or better still the illusion of invincibility common to young generation so I took the challenge and started fasting until my son is healed. Well, fortunately, God took pity on my reckless faith or perhaps He does not want His name to be associated with a servant who died of self inflicted starvation so He decided to touch my son and miraculously healed him after my second day of fasting. Today, as I look back at that seemingly suicidal like decision I made, it sends chill on my spine. I could not help but shake my head in disbelief on how I ever came up with that Idea. Nevertheless, that decision may be reckless, suicidal or even outright stupidity; it does one thing in my life. It strengthened my resolved that prayer coupled with fasting makes a big difference.

WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

I. PHYSICAL BENEFITS.

Detoxification - is a normal body process of eliminating or neutralizing toxins through the colon, liver, kidneys, lungs, lymph glands, and skin." (5). This process is precipitated by fasting because when food is no longer entering the body, the body turns to fat reserves for energy. "Human fat is valued at 3,500 calories per pound," These fat reserves were created when excess glucose and carbohydrates were not used for energy or growth, not excreted, and therefore converted into fat. When the fat reserves are used for energy during a fast, it releases the chemicals from the fatty acids into the system which are then eliminated through the aforementioned organs.

Healing process - During a fast energy is diverted away from the digestive system due to its lack of use and towards the metabolism and immune system. (6) The healing process during a fast is precipitated by the body's search for energy sources. Abnormal growths within the body, tumors and the like, do not have the full support of the body's supplies and therefore are more susceptible to autolysis. Furthermore,

"production of protein for replacement of damaged cells (protein synthesis) occurs more efficiently because fewer 'mistakes' are made by the DNA/RNA genetic controls which govern this process." A higher efficiency in protein synthesis results in healthier cells, tissues and organs. (7) This is one reason that animals stop eating when they are wounded, and why humans lose hunger during influenza. Hunger has been proven absent in illnesses such as gastritis, tonsillitis and colds. (2) Therefore, when one is fasting, the person is consciously diverting energy from the digestive system to the immune system.

Finally, the most scientifically proven advantage to fasting is **the feeling of rejuvenation and extended life expectancy**. Part of this phenomenon is caused by a number of the benefits mentioned above. A slower metabolic rate, more efficient protein production, an improved immune system, and the increased production of hormones contributes to this long-term benefit of fasting. In addition to the Human Growth Hormone that is released more frequently during a fast, an anti-aging hormone is also produced more efficiently. (7) "The only reliable way to extend the lifespan of a mammal is under-nutrition without malnutrition." (5) A study was performed on earthworms that demonstrated the extension of life due to fasting. The experiment was performed in the 1930s by isolating one worm and putting it on a cycle of fasting and feeding. The isolated worm outlasted its relatives by 19 generations, while still maintaining its youthful physiological traits. The worm was able to survive on its own tissue for months. Once the size of the worm began to decrease, the scientists would resume feeding it at which point it showed great vigor and energy. "The life-span extension of these worms was the equivalent of keeping a man alive for 600 to 700 years."

II. SPIRITUAL BENEFITS

A. It changes you from the inside out. Deepens your spiritual life. It strengthens your resolve to live a holy life.

- ❖ It will change your values. Prayer and fasting will help you see what really matters in life. You will see that it is not how much you have but how much you have is used for God's glory.
- ❖ It cleanses your inner life. Mentally, it cleanses you from evil thoughts. Emotionally, it cleanses you from bitterness, unforgiveness, jealousy, and envy. Spiritually, it cleanses you from idolatry, pride, complacency, and spiritual neglect. As far as the will is concerned, it cleanses you from the influences of wrong decision.
- ❖ It will change your perspective. You will see things in positive light. When you are inside the tunnel your focus is not the darkness but the light at the end of the tunnel.
- ❖ It will change your feelings towards material things. It will change your priorities. Your priorities will shift from material to spiritual. You will stop pursuing spiritual things for material gain. Instead, you will start using your material and financial blessings to pursue spiritual gain. Your personal gain no longer matters with. What matters now is the gain of the Kingdom of God.
- ❖ Prayer and fasting will cause you to stop using God for your selfish end. Instead, you will start giving yourself to God so that He can use you as His instrument of blessings to others.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

B. It brings fresh revelations from God.

Deuteronomy 9:9 When I (Moses) went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the LORD had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water. ¹⁰ The LORD gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the LORD proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

Daniel 1:8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

Daniel 1:11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." ¹⁴ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹⁶ So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

Daniel 1:17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. ¹⁸ At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the

king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

When I was at the Seminary preparing for the ministry I was just an average student. My classmates were really good academically and I was always behind them. When I was in the pastoral ministry, I cannot rely on my average intelligence. I have to rely on the Holy Spirit through prayer and fasting. Many times I have to pray and fast for wisdom and fresh revelation so I could have a message to preach. Quite a number of the teachings I give is a direct result of prayer and fasting.

C. It brings down God's compassion.

Deuteronomy 9:25 I (Moses) lay prostrate before the LORD those forty days and forty nights because the LORD had said he would destroy you. 26 I prayed to the LORD and said, "O Sovereign LORD, do not destroy your people, your own inheritance that you redeemed by your great power and brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

Jonah 3:3 Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city--a visit required three days. 4 On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." 5 The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. 6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7 Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9 Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways,

he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

D. It releases God's Favor

One favor from God is worth more than the earnings from a million years of working. It is the favor of God that made Esther queen. It is the favor of God that made Daniel and his three friends become the top administrator of the Babylonian empire. It is the favor of God that brought Joseph out of the dungeons of Egypt into the King's palace as Egypt's Governor.

Prayer and fasting puts us in the place where God's favor flows.

E. It delivers victory against the enemy

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:" 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' 7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." 10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Judges 20 *“The whole army came to the land of the tribe of Benjamin to punish them because of their wickedness. But it is only after they prayed and fasted that they experienced victory.*

With faith you can deal with the problem but it takes prayer and fasting to deal with the source of the problem. To deal with the works of the devil, you only need faith. But to deal with the devil and his demons you need prayer and fasting.

F. It brings forth a harvest of souls

Years before we came over to the US to start a Church in Tacoma, we already started praying and fasting for the people of Tacoma. Somebody gave us a list of names of Filipinos in Tacoma that we could pray for and I am here to tell you that at least one person we remembered from that list is now with us and is being used by the Lord to bring people into his kingdom.

When we started the Church planting ministry in Tacoma, there were many strategies that we tried to implement but the only thing that really works is prayer and fasting.

III. CONCLUSION

What I have shared above with regards to the Benefits of Prayer and Fasting is just a fraction of the total Benefits that we will reap if we do pray and fast. I cannot speak for others, I can only speak for myself, as far as my experience is concerned every time I do pray and fast, the only negative effect that I had is the feeling of physical hunger and physical weakness but the blessings that I received during and after fasting is tremendous.

It is my prayer that through this lesson you will be inspired to include Prayer and Fasting as one of the Spiritual Discipline that you will constantly practice in your entire life.

Strengthen your inner being

- A. Strengthen your resolve to live a holy life
- B. Increase God's anointing in your life
- C. Opens the door for divine revelation
- D. Brings forth a harvest of soul
- E. For cleansing
Physical, Cleansing from toxins

A. **Daniel** – To usher the answer to prayers

PS 35:13 Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humble myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered,

B. **Esther** – Reversal of fortune

2CH 20:2 Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea. It is already in Hazazon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi).³ Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah.⁴ The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him. **VICTORY**

EZR 8:21 There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions.²² I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from

enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him." ²³ So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer. **PROTECTION**

JDG 20:26 Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel, and there they sat weeping before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD. ²⁷ And the Israelites inquired of the LORD. (In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there, ²⁸ with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, "Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?"

The LORD responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands."

1SA 7:2 It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the LORD. ³ And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." ⁴ So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

1SA 7:5 Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the LORD for you." ⁶ When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel was leader of Israel at Mizpah.

JER 36:4 So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the LORD had spoken to him, Baruch

wrote them on the scroll. ⁵ Then Jeremiah told Baruch, "I am restricted; I cannot go to the LORD's temple. ⁶ **So you go to the house of the LORD on a day of fasting and read** to the people from the scroll the words of the LORD that you wrote as I dictated. Read them to all the people of Judah who come in from their towns. ⁷ Perhaps they will bring their petition before the LORD, and each will turn from his wicked ways, for the anger and wrath pronounced against this people by the LORD are great."

C. Divine Guidance

AC 13:1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

NE 1:4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵ Then I said:

AC 14:21 They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, ²² strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. ²³ Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. ²⁴ After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, ²⁵ and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

In The Name Of The Lord

**Crowds Have Lined The Narrow Street
To See This Man From Galilee
Just A Carpenter Some Say Leading Fools Astray
Yet Many Kneel To Give Him Praise**

**And In His Eyes They Glimpse The Power
That Sees The Heart Of All Men
And He Knows His Fathers Mind And He Speaks His Fathers Words
For He Comes In The Name Of The Lord**

**There Is Strength In The Name Of The Lord
There Is Power In The Name Of The Lord
There Is Hope In The Name Of The Lord
Blessed Is He Who Comes In The Name Of The Lord**

**When My Plans Have Fallen Through
And When My Strength Is Nearly Gone
When Theres Nothing Left To Do But Just Depend On You
And The Power Of Your Name**

**And When We Call Upon Your Name
Your Strength Through Weakness To Show
We Can Know The Master Plan Extend The Masters Hand
When We Come In The Name Of The Lord**

**There Is Strength In The Name Of The Lord
There Is Power In The Name Of The Lord
There Is Hope In The Name Of The Lord
Blessed Is He Who Comes In The Name Of The Lord**

**His Name Will Be Worshipped Forever
Creator Redeemer And King And King**

**There Is Strength In The Name Of The Lord
There Is Power In The Name Of The Lord
There Is Hope In The Name Of The Lord
Blessed Is He Who Comes
Blessed Is He Who Comes
Blessed Is He Who Comes In The Name Of The Lord
In The Name Of The Lord**