

THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND PRAYER AND FASTING

5/2/21

*The first time fasting is mentioned in the bible. **EXO 34:28** And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. Jesus also prayed and fasted for forty days as he prepared the New Testament.*

*A clear demonstration of prayer and fasting delivering mercy. **1 KIN 21:25** But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. **26** And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. **27** And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. **28** And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, **29** Seest thou how Ahab **humbleth himself before me?** because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house. *There was no holy spirit or gifts available for him... (the 7th and worst king?).**

Fasting is a form of self discipline... exercising personal humility.

Prayer is a form of self discipline... exercising spiritual humility.

Self discipline is one of the strongest ways we can truly love ourselves and build what we stand for: sacrificing now for a better result later. We can't love others in the scriptural sense until we learn to love ourselves.

In the New Testament, the building of faith has many other opportunities as well as prayer and fasting.

Faith is now a gift of the Spirit... **1COR 12:9** To another faith by the same Spirit...

Faith comes by hearing... **ROM 10:17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith comes through exercising spiritual powers... **1COR 2:5** That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power (dunamis) of God. Serving the Lord in deeds and actions.

Praying and fasting is a means to an end (the building of faith)... but, we need to act upon our prayers to get a result. In the spirit filled church, we are always using faith, trying to exercise one or more spiritual gifts. Abstaining from natural interests opens the door to faith building. Sacrificing time for fellowship, prayer, reading, meditating, witnessing, assisting others, etc. These are all faith building, because they all involve the use of spiritual gifts. If these activities are lacking, so is the faith and overcoming that comes with them.

We have many other spiritual tools which build faith... they should also be sought after with the same sort of enthusiasm.

The gifts offer a lot more than we might think. **1COR 1:4** I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; **5** That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; **6** Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: **7** So that ye come behind in no gift (all exercised by faith); waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The aim of all spiritual disciplines is to build faith and get results.

The first gift, tongues. **ROM 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. **27** And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Praying in the spirit gives God all the room he needs.

We need to understand who we are talking to! Builds trust and confidence.

What are your expectations when you talk to your father and best friend? **MAT 6:7** But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. **8** Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. A high level of faith is offered by God because he identifies himself as our father... but he goes one better than that.

*****JOH 15:13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. **14** Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. **15** Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. God has revealed that he is both a father and friend, thus our perceptions and faith behind our prayers should reflect these two great truths. When we ask a good friend (or our dad) for something and he agrees to do it, then we get on with life with the comforting knowledge, that it is being looked after. We do not go to our friend every 10 minutes and ask him again and again for something that is already agreed to.***

*****ROM 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. **17** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith (walking in the spirit as many ways as possible).***

Living by faith is a way of life using every resource possible that the Lord has given us.

*****JUDE 1:20** But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Buried talent (MAT 25:30)... no one is going to fail because they never fasted, but many will perish for not using the spirit.***

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