

Fast for the Little Ones

God sees far beyond what our limited minds can comprehend. For the most part, whenever we hear Joshua's words, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," (Josh. 24:15), we think of our spouses, our children, maybe even our grandchildren. God sees generations.



In the more recent corporate fasts at Free Chapel, the Lord has laid on my heart this passage from Ezra:

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him a good route for us, our little ones, and all our substance. For I was ashamed to ask the king for an escort of foot and horse soldiers to help us against the enemy on the way, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all who seek Him for good, but His power and His wrath are against all who forsake Him." So we fasted and sought our God for this, and He was moved by our prayers.

After 70 years of Babylonian captivity, Ezra was about to lead the remnant of Israel—an entire generation of young people who had never seen the temple of Jerusalem, including some very small children—back to the Holy Land. It was going to be a treacherous journey home, but they had boasted of God's mighty hand of protection before heading out, so they had to act in faith and believe their own words.

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Settled by the river, Ezra proclaimed a fast so that the people might humble themselves before God and seek His face. They needed to know the way they should take, for their

protection and for the protection of their little ones.

We fast because we need to know the right way for our lives. We do not need to be confused as to our future or the choices before us. Fast, seek His face, and have faith that He will guide you. Should you take that new job? Should you marry her? Should you marry him?

It is biblical to fast and seek God for the right direction for your life. Examples are found in Judges 20:26 (Israel seeking to know if they should go into battle against the tribe of Benjamin); 1 Samuel 7:6 (seeking God at Mizpeh for forgiveness and protection against the Philistine army); and 2 Chronicles 20:3 (Jehoshaphat inquiring about the army that was about to attack).

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We also fast for our little ones. I had not noticed the tenderness in that language before. Usually it is assumed that there were children in the midst of the pilgrims. But here, Ezra sees such promise, such potential and such grave danger for the next generation. It was tempting to request an army to go with them. A few verses later, we see that God heard and answered their prayers.

Fasting with prayer just seems to open a different frequency in God's ear! Ezra recorded that they left the river Ahava after 12 days to set out for Jerusalem. He also testified, "The hand of our God was on us, and He protected us from enemies and bandits along the way," (Ezra 8:31, NIV). God's hand was upon them, His right hand protecting them and their little ones!{eoa}

To learn more about the spiritual impact fasting has on your life, click here!

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