

One Thing Can Stop God's Power Dead in its Tracks

Fasting is seen in the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus Himself fasted 40 days prior to beginning His ministry. So what is the purpose of fasting?

For a start, fasting jars your body into "waking up." Just as our spirit must be cleansed (1 Thess. 5:23) and our soul renewed, our physiology also needs a sanctifying work. Our body is, after all, the temple of the Holy Spirit. God chooses to manifest Himself through our members!

Often, we need to do actions that awaken us out of old routines and bondage we have been trained to operate in. When we get out of bed, we may have to give ourselves a talking to "Wake up you Son/Daughter of God!" When Satan's entrapment of heaviness looms over us, we can actively take authority over our own body and choose to engage in ecstatic praise.

Paul even said that he "beat his body into submission" (1 Cor. 9:27). We must tell our bodies what to do, and we can exercise physical actions and disciplines to train ourselves in godliness! Fasting starves our appetites, and our hunger pains signal us to draw near to God. Most importantly, it is a time to limit distractions, address addictions and those things we rely on to comfort us, and make God our deeper source. The distractions in our truly blessed country are often a main hindrance to our walk with God. We are starving for intimacy with God and others, and though we have every tool at our disposal, we struggle to engage God deeply. Fasting helps get our focus back.

The key is cultivating a lifestyle of prayer and fasting in which we have regular seasons set apart to draw nearer to God. A deeper dimension of fasting is that it creates in us a

dependency and a trust in the Lord like that of a young child. This expectant attitude enables God to move in power and allows that power to flow through us in joyful exuberance. When this truly happens, God's kingdom is unstoppable.

There is something, however, that will stop God's power dead in its tracks, and that is an atmosphere of unbelief. Jesus could not do miracles in his hometown of Nazareth because of it (Mark 6), and His disciples failed to cast a dumb spirit (that is a spirit that afflicts mental capacities in a variety of ways, including learning disabilities, ability to read and process the Bible, focus and so forth) out of a boy because of the lack of faith and unbelief in the people of the land (Mark 9)!

The "dumb" spirit limits mental functioning (not used in the way we say "dumb" to mean someone is not intelligent), the ability to process the deep things of God, to read the Bible and be able to engage God and others without distractions. It encompasses a hoard of learning disabilities, ranging from foggy thinking to developmental delays and learning disabilities, and is often used in Scripture in conjunction with a "deaf" spirit, which includes loss of physical hearing. The enemy knows that a dumb spirit will limit us greatly from being able to walk in the fruitful existence that God has for us, as it blocks our spiritual hearing.

In response to the disciples inability to cast the spirit out, Jesus exclaimed, "Faithless generation!" The problem was not just in the boy or his family, but in what the entire generation carried. We need to put aside clichés that make us feel like we need to try harder, ones like "I need more faith." But that's not the point here.

Look again to the response of the boy's father. He didn't respond by trying harder. He confessed His unbelief publicly and asked for help! This dumb spirit was not in operation on its own, but was there because of an atmosphere of unbelief in

the land! The connection to our own country and our spiritual and physical battles is striking. We are so blessed, yet so riddled with learning disabilities and an inability to live in God's fruitfulness. Our streets are lined with church buildings, but where is the power of the New Testament church?

Unbelief has crept into our midst quietly. It has come through disappointments. It has slid in through religious upbringings that lacked authenticity and power. It has subtly promised us refuge from the potential to be hurt again and enticed us to stay back, where there is both no risk and no potential for greatness. It has stolen from us our great God who moves in signs, wonders and miracles, and has tamed His Word into a storybook, and it has taken our hope and prevented us from believing in ourselves.

Finally, Jesus responds to the disciples, "This kind can only come out by prayer and fasting," developing an expectant, childlike, unfettered reliance on God as a regular way of life. It's time for us to step up to the plate and reclaim what has been stolen from us by the enemy. All it takes is a repentant heart, the desire to seek God more deeply, and the courage to leave behind false comforts and security blankets that limit our potential.

God is eagerly waiting for you to take all that He is giving to you. Follow the example of the boy's father in this passage in Mark and confess your unbelief. Ask Father God to heal your heart of woundedness that opened the door for the enemy to put up walls of fear and unbelief. Let Him show you how to trust again. Allow Him to open up for you a whole new picture of who He is and who He created you to be!

It will be a process, so seek Him diligently. Let's break through the stronghold of unbelief and see our lives and relationships restored! During this time of fasting, I pray God would release you into a more childlike faith in Him that endures trials and disappointments, knowing they are God's

proving ground for His children to grow. {eoa}

Mark DeJesus has been equipping people in a full-time capacity since 1995, serving in various roles, including teaching people of all ages, communicating through music, authoring books, leading and mentoring. Mark's deepest love is his family: his wife, Melissa; son, Maximus; and daughter, Abigail. Mark is a teacher, author and mentor who uses many communication mediums, including the written word, a weekly radio podcast show and videos. His deepest call involves equipping people to live as overcomers. Through understanding inside-out transformation, Mark's message involves getting to the root of issues that contribute to the breakdown of our relationships, our health and our day-to-day peace. He is passionately reaching his world with a transforming message of love, healing and freedom. Out of their own personal renewal, Mark and Melissa founded Turning Hearts Ministries, a ministry dedicated to inside-out transformation. Mark also founded Transformed You, a communication platform for Mark's teachings, writing and broadcasts that are designed to encourage people in their journey of transformation.

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