

# Jentezen Franklin: Put on a Garment of Praise

You never forget the feeling of sorrow and loss that occurs when someone close to you dies.

I loved my father dearly. When he passed away in 1991, it took me weeks to get beyond the initial impact of grief and mourning.

Each day when I awoke, that sense of loss would hit me again as I thought, "My daddy is dead." He was a wonderful father and grandfather. I am thankful that we had the opportunity to make so many wonderful memories together. His life was indeed a celebration. Though I knew Dad was with the Lord, his absence from this life left a void that took awhile to get over.



In Matthew 9, we see the disciples of John the Baptist coming to Jesus to ask, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" (v. 14).

Jesus answered, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast," (v. 15).

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This is not the only time you see the words mourn and fast used interchangeably in the Bible. The example the Lord gives in this passage makes it clear that fasting is much like mourning. When you are on a fast, you usually do not feel like celebrating. It is a time to press into God, to seek Him and

to forsake the things of the flesh. Within hours of beginning a fast, you may find that food is the first thing on your mind (right before your stomach begins to growl).

## **Fasting Breaks the Spirit of Heaviness**

The spirit of heaviness has to do with despondency, depression and oppression. Sadly, the biggest pitfall in America is the oldest in the world. Americans use drinking, smoking, drugs, medications, overeating and other harmful behaviors to try to lift the spirit of heaviness. Think about all the commercials you see for weight loss, smoking cures, antidepressants, etc. Seldom do you turn on a television program without being bombarded by drug company commercials.

Instead of looking for more stuff to put into our bodies to ease the pain, we should fast and seek the God who gives us a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that afflicts so many. Why is it a garment of praise? You will find that you wear depression and oppression like a garment. It shrouds you in darkness and despair. It is a heavy garment that continues to drag you down. It keeps you from lifting your head and from raising your hands in praise to God.

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Heaviness drains worship out of your life. Church is depressing unless you learn to worship. I know that is a strange statement, but it is true. There is nothing worse than a Spirit-filled church that loses the garment of praise and picks up the spirit of heaviness. God desires our praise more than our mere church attendance. That is not to say we should forsake assembling together as a corporate body. But our times together, just as our times alone, should be to glorify and praise our awesome, mighty God. Praise pushes back the enemy!

No matter what is going on in your life right now, you can set yourself to fasting and praying to seek the God who sees you as having great worth. Don't believe the lies of the enemy. Don't sink further under the spirit of heaviness. God has a garment of praise for you. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. As you fast, you will begin to see yourself through His eyes.{eoa}

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

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