

The Key to Walking in God's Divine Strategy for Your Life

In every hour of history there are divine strategies and measures of grace that God chooses to release. Our job is to press into the fullness of whatever God is offering His people in the season of history in which we live.

Contending for the fullness of God means working against the obstacles that keep God's purpose from being manifested in our generation. It means doing everything God has in mind to heal the sick, deliver the demonized and draw the unbeliever to saving faith through lifestyles of prayer, fasting, happy holiness and wholeheartedness for God.

Jude gave a strong exhortation, saying: " found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (v. 3, NKJV).

Jude was saying we must fight for the apostolic faith and power of New Testament Christianity that was delivered to us by the apostles and to the apostles by the Lord Jesus Himself. This apostolic faith should be a hallmark of Christianity at all times of history.

Typically, Christians in our day limit the meaning of "contending for faith" to fighting for sound doctrine. But there is a power dimension to apostolic faith that we see manifested clearly in the book of Acts and throughout the New Testament. This is inseparable from the other facets of the faith.

We must have the power to deliver the oppressed and needy. By the same token, it's not sufficient to experience power in ministry while living in secret sin or espousing false doctrine.

We need all three—lifestyles of radiant righteousness, sound doctrine and the power of God to deliver the oppressed. We must resist any tide of popularity that minimizes any aspect of the faith.

Seeking God's Face and Not His Hand There is a familiar saying that we should seek God's face and not His hand. Seeking His face refers to intimacy, but seeking His hand speaks of God's blessings, which includes His power to set the captives free to experience intimacy with Jesus.

Seeking God's power isn't wrong unless it becomes a higher priority than intimacy. But it is equally wrong to neglect seeking power at all.

We need a fresh release of apostolic power to cast demons out and heal the sick today. People are tired of reading about the way the gospel worked back then without seeing it at work now.

I believe that Acts 19:11 is a vision statement from God's heart to us in this generation. It says, "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul" (NIV).

God is going to release unusual miracles by the hands of His servants. I believe people are going to have such a life in God that they will be known in hell itself.

Paul had an authority that was known in the realm of the angels and the demons because of his life in God. We have the same opportunity to lead that kind of life.

The Lord is calling us right now to shift out of the common mode of Christian ministry into a lifestyle of apostolic, New Testament power. I want to see unusual miracles and demons backing away through the prayers of the saints. I believe this is happening to a point, but not as it will when we exercise the kind of authority God wants to release to His children.

The introductory dimensions of grace and anointing that come

to us at salvation are automatic. But there are greater realms God gives to those who take the kingdom by force, who press in to His heart with a vision for the fullness of God's power (see Matt. 11:12).

To enter into the greater realms takes a fierce determination. You enter by weakness, meaning not sinfulness but a lifestyle of fasting, praying, serving and bearing up under persecution (see 2 Cor. 11-12).

Man's way is to rush into doing the works of the kingdom, bypassing the step of weakness because this message is offensive. But historically, when people have persistently fasted and prayed, given freely and borne the stigma of the anointing, God has always released power in a greater dimension.

We must persevere through the ups and downs of the moment. We must not only contend for power; we must also live holy and radically abandoned to Jesus. And I believe He's calling people to do this through a lifestyle of fasting (see Joel 2:12-17).

Benefits of the Fasted Life Regardless of what you might think, fasting is exhilarating. It enlarges our hearts by helping us encounter the beauty of our Bridegroom.

Through fasting Jesus opens our hearts in a way that no other dimension in the grace of God can. The fast of the Old Testament was mostly for external purposes, but the Bridegroom fast of the New Testament touches the heart.

As we pursue the Lord by the grace of God through fasting, our physical, emotional and spiritual appetites change dramatically. Jesus imparts new desires to us so that fasting is an indescribable privilege that brings us closer to Him. When our desires line up properly, life is wonderful, but when our desires are out of line, life is very hard and

disappointing.

Fasting releases supernatural joy when our sights are set on the benefits. The following are some of the main benefits of a fasted lifestyle:

Fasting tenderizes the heart to God. Over time we gain a supernatural ability to feel and experience God, specifically His love, beauty and the glory of His plan for us. Fasting helps us build the foundation of the divine romance.

In Scripture, the fast John the Baptist undertook was for the enlargement of his heart in God. Scripture says clearly that John did no miracles, but fasting made him great before God (see Matt. 11:11).

If you want to be great before the Lord and have a heart tenderized toward Him, try fasting. You will understand what this reward is about.

Fasting illuminates the mind with the spirit of revelation. Since I began fasting, I have had a significant increase of spiritual dreams about Jesus related to the Bridegroom. I have had more dreams in which the Lord is speaking to me about the Word, awakening my heart to specific parts that relate to my ministry.

On the road to Emmaus Jesus opened His disciples' understanding (see Luke 24: 32), and that is what the Bridegroom fast does. It opens your understanding, either through direct study of the Word or through dreams and visions the Lord gives you.

A billion dollars cannot buy you the secrets of God. You cannot manipulate your way into those regions of God's heart, but praying and fasting escort you there.

Fasting enlarges our emotions. As we fast, our emotional chemistry changes radically, not just in the realm of feeling

the love of Jesus, but also in having zeal for God's purpose and God's ways. We discover more of His emotions, and He grants us a divine perspective on life.

Sadly, many believers are content to live lives of spiritual boredom. But a fasted lifestyle will open the realm of exploration into the unimaginable complexity and wonder of God's emotions.

Fasting sharpens your decision-making power. In John's Gospel, the people came to make Jesus king by force, but He refused (see 6:15). Jesus was unmoved because He got satisfaction from His internal reality with the Father.

Most believers have no power to discern a promotion that is outside of the will of God. Promotion blinds them with euphoria, and they lose the ability to see that promotion out of the will of God is actually a distraction.

Fasting will give you perspective on promotion. You will make better decisions because they will be based on what's really important.

Fasting strengthens your spiritual identity. Many people flounder for years without a sense of who they really are. Paradoxically, this produces an excessive preoccupation with self, which is natural. It is supernatural not to have a preoccupation with self.

But the Bridegroom fast strengthens our identity. It weakens the hold of jealousy and insecurity in our lives.

John the Baptist didn't need to be known by men because he heard the voice of the Bridegroom (see John 3:29). When you hear the voice of the Bridegroom, it changes what you want and what you fear losing.

Your list gets filled with things you cannot lose, such as the anointing of the Spirit on your heart before God. No man can

take that away from you.

Nobody can imprison you and take your spirit of revelation or cause you not to be great in the sight of the Lord. You find a fearless resolve, and you operate in the power of a romanced heart.

Spiritual Intensity Since the days of John the Baptist there has been a new principle in the kingdom. In Matthew 11, Jesus was saying: "I am announcing something really awesome! From now on, the kingdom of God permits and rewards spiritual intensity. Spiritually intense people can take it by force if they want it" (see v. 12).

I believe there is no such thing as spiritual intensity without fasting. It is not just about food but about our motivations and habits in many areas of our lives.

Fasting means paring down everything we do to serve the purpose of our Bridegroom. It is not about moving God to do something. We fast because God has already moved on our hearts.

The Lord is going to raise up multitudes of people across the earth to live a fasted lifestyle before a Bridegroom God. This must happen because we cannot continue on this path of insensitivity toward the purposes of God.

God's people must be endued with power and illuminating righteousness. I'm talking about a day when we cast demons out of insane children, heal paralytics by one word and empty out insane asylums.

I envision apostolic teams sent out to the nations of the world, thousands of churches planted and miracles beyond measure breaking forth. I challenge you to dare to believe all the way, with no way out.

Get trained and equipped. Get in the middle of what God's

doing, and let's go for broke. Let's go for the whole thing!

Let The Forerunners Arise Micah prophesied about a future day when the Messiah would lead Israel with a "breaker anointing" that would help them break out of the old way and break open new dimensions of the purpose of God (see Mic. 2:12). Jesus is the ultimate expression of one who breaks open new dimensions of the Spirit for others to enter into.

We should follow the Lord and embrace the breaker anointing He is giving to many of us. God will use us to break open new dimensions in the Holy Spirit and make the church a dwelling place of His power where cancer, AIDS, disease, demons of pornography, drugs and alcohol cannot survive.

The Holy Spirit is raising up forerunners today who will break out and break through because they are contending for the power of God and the fullness of the apostolic faith. It is not a matter of convincing God to release His power; He is waiting to convince us. God wants to give us the fullness of power for our generation, but only after He has established an intimacy with us so that we are able to handle it.

Read a companion devotional.

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