

This Overlooked Step in Fasting Could Lead to the Miracle You Need

When we think of fasting, it is usually only regarding what we need to receive from the Lord. And it is true that fasting moves us to the place where we can receive what God already desires to release to us. But fasting should be more than us just doing without and pleading with God for breakthrough's in our lives.

There is a fascinating passage regarding fasting found in Acts 13. The writer gives us a list of prophets and teachers at the church in Antioch and then tells us that "In the church that was in Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they worshipped the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:1-3). This is a fascinating passage because it makes a direct correlation between fasting and worship.

How often do you connect worship with fasting? I believe worship is one of the most overlooked elements of effective fasting. As you fast, I encourage you to set aside time to wait in His presence and minister to the Lord only. I am amazed by the idea that we can "bless" the Lord. King David commanded the people of Israel to, "Bless now the Lord your God" (1 Chron. 29:20a). Typically; it is the greater who blesses, the lesser. However, there is a genuine and tangible way in which we, who are the lessers, are called to be a blessing to the greatest.

Worship is not about stroking God's ego. Thankfully, He is not an egotistical maniac. Neither is worship about bribing God, so He will give us what we want. He is just as much God without our worship as He is with it. And He is just as good before we worship as He is after. Yet, our worship blesses Him. Our service ministers to His heart. It seems He enjoys spending time with us as much as we enjoy spending time with Him. Wow. What a privilege! What an honor for our presence to be so valued by the One who has fullness of joy (fullness of all things) in His presence (Ps. 16:11).

In Antioch, the prophets and teachers took some time to go without food and just spend time worshipping the Lord. It seems they had no agenda but to minister to the Lord and love Jesus. Andrew Murray said, "Prayer is reaching out after the unseen; fasting is letting go of all that is seen and temporal. Fasting helps express, deepen, confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, even ourselves to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God." They fasted to let go of the visible, natural things and they grasped hold of the king of the Kingdom. Worship is a key element in setting yourself in a position to hear the heart of God. During your days of fasting, set your heart above everything else to pursue the presence of King Jesus.

Let your reward be Jesus. His promise to Abraham is His promise to you, "Do not fear, Abram, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward" (Gen. 15:1). As you learn to value His presence and seek Him you will soon discover that all you need is in Him. When you get Jesus, He is what you need. As they worshipped with fasting, the Holy Spirit gave them instructions that would change the course of multitudes, indeed the course of history. The instruction to appoint and send Saul and Barnabas to the Gentile world proved to be the key to the release of multitudes. Think about it: their time of worshipping with fasting literally changed the world and is the reason you and I are followers of Jesus Christ. If Paul

had not taken the gospel to Rome, it would not now be known in the United States where I am writing, and many of you are right now reading. This one instruction affected all of humanity from the first century to the twenty-first.

I wonder what might happen in our lives as we delight in delighting His heart through worship with fasting? I set myself in agreement with you that as you worship while fasting, you will experience breakthrough. As you bless the Lord, you will be blessed. As you minister to Him, He will minister to you. As you lift your voice to Him, He will speak to you. Keep your focus on Jesus, and you will rejoice as you rest in the fulfillment of His promises to you, in you and through you. {eoa}

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