

This Spiritual Discipline Can Help Move You Into Personal Spiritual Revival

As I was waking up one morning, I sensed the Lord speaking to my heart about the importance of including the spiritual discipline of fasting in my regular, weekly routine. He showed me that living a fasted lifestyle is never going to be convenient and will always require personal sacrifice. Isn't that the point?

Peter was thinking that Jesus should take the convenient road rather than sacrifice His life on the cross. But Jesus sharply rebuked Peter in that moment and went on to say, in essence, that willingly embracing a lifestyle of inconvenience and sacrifice for God's sake is the only way to find real spiritual life (see Matt. 16:21-26).

At times in my life when I've needed to hear from God or needed a spiritual breakthrough, fasting combined with prayer has made a noticeable difference in my sensitivity to His voice. If fasting doesn't include prayer, it may not only be miserable, but, more than likely, it may not be very useful. The intention of fasting isn't to earn brownie points with God. The primary purpose of fasting combined with prayer is to humbly lay aside the convenience of seeking one's own will and to sacrificially press into the heart of God—to come into full alignment with His will.

I've found through the years that if I wait around for convenient times to regularly include prayer and fasting in my weekly routine, it rarely happens. The sad thing is that convenience can easily rob me of so many spiritual blessings. Just as fasting food is often a helpful way to cleanse one's physical body, fasting while connecting with God in prayer can

also cleanse one's soul and accelerate spiritual growth. It is helpful in dividing soul from spirit because it helps one to resist the natural tendency of being ruled by the soul (see 1 Cor. 9:27).

My friend Joyce Miller says, "Gluttony is a sin listed in the Bible. Fasting regularly can keep us from being controlled by our body's lust for food. I tell my students to make sure that they control their phone use so that it does not control them. If we can fast, it helps prevent other addictive behaviors."

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8a).

Once while doing a partial fast, I had a vivid dream. In the dream, Jesus entered a room where I was seated. I immediately ran over to Him and desperately wanted to hug Him and express all of my thoughts and desires, but He stopped me before I could speak and seemed to want to say something vital. Then I woke up. As I've pondered this experience, I am sensing that He has some crucial things to say, but I'm often distracted by my thoughts and desires, which keep me from clearly hearing His still, small voice.

When Jesus appeared to the apostle John and inspired him to write the book of Revelation, Jesus spoke the following words several times: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." The days in which we are now living are a very crucial time. It's clear that God's prophetic timetable does not revolve around America, and yet, America does make up a significant percentage of the church.

Jonathan Cahn writes, "It is a season to rest from striving in our strength, ... a time to turn away from the world and back to God, ... returning to God through the transforming power of the Spirit. A season to count the cost of His Lordship ... and let go (of our own thoughts and desires. ... This is a critical time for spiritual choices and decisions. ... Seek to see what God sees and understand it." Isaiah 30 also speaks similarly. Two

well-recognized verses in this chapter are verse 15: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength"; and verse 21: "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'"

I'm sensing in my spirit the urgency of this hour to quiet my mind and intentionally hear what the Spirit is saying to His church. A season of quieting the soul and waiting on God in prayer and fasting could be crucial in this hour. *Will you take the next 40 days to seek personal revival and to come into full alignment with what Jesus is saying?*

For more on the Jesus Fast, which was called by Lou Engle and is endorsed by IHOPKC and others, we recommend Mike Bickle's message Contending for the Fullness of God's Promises. {eoa}

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