

Trump Presses Into Revival

“Trump calls for prayer and fasting,” read some of the headlines this week. But what is the significance of fasting? Is it still for us today?

In Matthew 17:21, Jesus said that a certain evil spirit does not go out of a person except by prayer and fasting. Some manuscripts disagree on whether this verse should be included or not, but the principle is found throughout Scripture: Fasting applies pressure to the spiritual realm. Arthur Wallis notes, “Often, pressure has to be maintained before there is a breakthrough in heavenly warfare.” It appears that some demonic activity is not released until pressure is applied through prayer and fasting.

The weapons we use to fight Satan are not physical; they are spiritual. The weapons should match the warfare! Satan cannot be eliminated with an AR-15, but we can fast and pray. Those two high-caliber spiritual bullets do substantial damage. Open the Word, pray, meditate, and worship for the fatal blow: “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6). So yes, I would definitely encourage you to fast during this difficult season in our history.

A Hunger Strike Against Hell

Two wills cannot successfully live in the same body—our self-will and God’s will. We can’t defeat what we feed. God’s Word states, “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:16).

Society says, “Be yourself! Embrace your longings! Feed your desires!” However, we know that gluttony and indulging the flesh never lead to spiritual victory, or any victory for that matter. Some strongholds hang on piece by piece. We must “resist the devil” and he will eventually flee (James 4:7).

Fasting disciplines the body, prayer and worship bind the enemy, and the Word provides wisdom. Fasting ignites a hunger for God and provides direction.

Don't misconstrue—I'm not promoting a works-based religion. I'm demonstrating the importance of spiritual disciplines that produce godly fruit. What is dead in your life that you know God is wanting to resurrect? What dream, goal, or godly ambition is waiting to be realized? Is there a stronghold that has been gripping your life? Do you desire a deeper walk with God and increased spiritual hunger? Do you need help in self-discipline and temperance? Do you need a breakthrough, direction, or peace? Is all hell breaking loose in your life? Are there great obstacles ahead? Then it's time to prepare for battle through prayer and fasting.

Ask God for direction and set a target date. Remove the hindrances within your home such as junk food and junk media—out of sight, out of mind. Fuel the completion of your fast by praying, reading, worshiping, and listening to sermons on fasting. Have a prayer list available. It's a battle—a hunger strike against hell. It's challenging and difficult, but the pain of discipline far outweighs the pain of regret.

Our Fullness is our Downfall

After I stumbled through my first seven-day water fast a few years ago, Fox News contacted me to fly to New York to debate a pastor with opposing views on morality. My wife and I also met two Christian men who have encouraged me through their ministries—Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, and actor, producer, and evangelist Kirk Cameron. Additionally, God grew our church, expanded its reach, and healed old wounds. A perfect fast didn't do this, but God, through His mercy, honored my feeble attempt, and He will do the same for you.

The vast majority of the heroes of the faith fasted, and it's

still very common in many places. But in America, our fullness is our downfall. Leonard Ravenhill once said, "When there's something in the Bible that churches don't like [such as fasting], they call it legalism."

Whether it's on the radio, television, the internet, or at church, we often hear that God has a wonderful plan for our life and that Christianity is easy and carefree. We have changed following Christ into an easy path rather than a narrow road. We've made Jesus a butler rather than a King. We want the cross light, the road easy, and the burdens lifted.

Spiritual disciplines are intended to not only break down strongholds but also to build us up. Yes, God blesses His people—we should pray for, enjoy, and encourage His blessings. But a wonderful, comfortable life is not always a blessing. As the Bible teaches, the presence and the power of God in our lives is always a blessing: "The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace" (Ps. 29:11 NIV).

We Crave What We Feed

A Christian is called to be a lean, fighting machine. I'm not talking about body weight but spiritual weight—weight to pull down strongholds. Leonard Ravenhill has said, "How can you pull down strongholds of Satan if you don't even have the strength to turn off your TV?" We could add "How can we pull down strongholds of Satan if we don't even have the strength to say no to food?"

I'm not teaching perfectionism. No one has complete mastery over the flesh, but our goal should be victory rather than constant defeat. Deeply embedded addictions can be reversed by starving the flesh. We are not powerless. We give control to either the flesh or the Spirit. James 4:5 reminds us that our spirit has "envious yearnings." Do we yield to these yearnings, or do we give in to the pull of the flesh? We will

crave more of what we feed. Fasting silences the voice of the flesh.

We all fall short. The only difference between those who succeed and those who fail is that those who succeed get back up again. Fasting doesn't twist God's arm; it realigns our heart with His and gets us back on track; it gives us wisdom and discernment for crucial issues. Discernment is one of our greatest challenges today. I came across this news clip some time ago that illustrates my point:

A 17-year old Dutch girl who died on Monday during a bungee jump misheard instructions and jumped on the "no jump" instruction. One of the Spanish instructors on the bridge when the teenager plunged 40 meters to her death told the police that the girl jumped before her harness was clipped on to the bungee cord. An instructor told Spanish television channel RTVE that she had said, "No jump. No jump," but that the girl may have misheard and thought she said, "Now jump."

So tragic. Too many today are listening to the wrong voice. Are you? The goal of sin is to destroy our testimony and our lives by following the wrong voice. Obviously, we are to spend time in God's Word seeking wisdom and discernment, but fasting aids the process. We don't want to "go" when God says, "No!"
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NOTE: If you'd like to join our church for Octoberfast, like us here or subscribe here. Our focus in October will be on prayer and fasting for our nation. More to come in the following weeks.

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