

Study 9. God's Secret Weapon: Fasting

Growing Faith in God

Warm-up Question: What is the most unusual food you have ever eaten?

In 1977, I lived for four months in Israel, the first of three times in the Holy Land. Most of the time was spent in Jerusalem, with a few long weekends in Haifa, Beersheba, and Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee. □ I was staying with a group of about 30 people, mostly young Christians. During this time, I learned a lot about spiritual disciplines. I also experienced a close community and a deep bond of fellowship, which influenced my early years as a new Christian. We would worship three nights a week at the Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu on Mount Zion (Galli-cantu means the place of the cock-crow in Latin). This was where Jesus was held until the morning, the same place where Peter denied that he knew Jesus. The church building was built on the grounds of the residence of Caiaphas, the High Priest in the time of Jesus. The presence of God would be in those meetings, and many times we would see healings.

My friends there gave themselves to long fasts, sometimes as much as forty day's duration on just water. I noticed during the times of fasting that there was a level of faith and power that was beyond what I had experienced. I was a young Christian at the time, but I observed that many of the people I lived with fasted regularly. It seemed to be an essential part of their Christian experience, and I knew that they expected me to fast also. I decided that this was something I needed to learn about and practice. I must admit that even though we had all decided to fast every Monday and Wednesday until sundown, I sometimes broke my fast on a bread roll and a banana when I was away from the group. It was hard to fast when someone else was expecting me to. I needed motivation for fasting. Fasting for the sake of disciplining the body was not enough for me—I love food too much! I had to have a reason to fast. It helped me to understand what the Bible says about fasting. Although we do not hear very much on this topic in the Western Christian church today, it was a vital part of the lives of the early church. □

Jesus Expected that His Disciples Would Fast

Behind our regular twice a week fasting was the desire to be obedient to Jesus on the three things that He has required of all Christians to regularly practice, found in Matthew's gospel, chapter six, verses 1-18:

- 1) The discipline of giving to the needs of those who are without (verses 1-4).
- 2) The regular discipline of prayer (verses 5-15).
- 3) The discipline of fasting (verses 16-18).

In the second verse, Jesus said, "**when** you give to the needy," not "**if**" you give to the needy. The Lord assumed that we would give to those who are poor. In verse five and again in verse six, he said, "**when** you pray," not "**if** you pray." He assumes that we will pray. Again, in verses sixteen and seventeen, twice he said, "**when** you fast," not **if** you fast. He expected that all Christians would practice these disciplines.

We all know that there are significant benefits to giving to the needs of those that have little, and praying for others, but for what reasons should we fast? What are the benefits of fasting?

There are spiritual benefits of fasting. The Book of Isaiah, chapter 58, talks about the “fast that God has chosen.”

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, ^[1]^[2]^[3]^[4]^[5]^[6]^[7]^[8]^[9]^[10]^[11]^[12]^[13]^[14]^[15]^[16]^[17]^[18]^[19]^[20]^[21]^[22]^[23]^[24]^[25]^[26]^[27]^[28]^[29]^[30]^[31]^[32]^[33]^[34]^[35]^[36]^[37]^[38]^[39]^[40]^[41]^[42]^[43]^[44]^[45]^[46]^[47]^[48]^[49]^[50]^[51]^[52]^[53]^[54]^[55]^[56]^[57]^[58]^[59]^[60]^[61]^[62]^[63]^[64]^[65]^[66]^[67]^[68]^[69]^[70]^[71]^[72]^[73]^[74]^[75]^[76]^[77]^[78]^[79]^[80]^[81]^[82]^[83]^[84]^[85]^[86]^[87]^[88]^[89]^[90]^[91]^[92]^[93]^[94]^[95]^[96]^[97]^[98]^[99]^[100]to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? ⁸Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. ⁹Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, ¹⁰and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. ¹¹The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. ¹²Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. ¹³“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’s holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, ¹⁴then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken (Isaiah 58:6-14).

The Lord says that fasting will “untie the cords of the yoke,” and “set the oppressed free” (v. 6). He also says that “light will break forth like the dawn” and “your healing will quickly appear” (v. 8). Another spiritual benefit that you will experience is that you will be able to hear God’s voice when you cry to Him for help (v. 9). There are also promises of God’s guidance, provision and strength. You will be like a well-watered garden; like a spring whose waters never fail (v. 11). If you are experiencing depression, joy will flow over you instead (v. 14). All this through fasting!

Some of the tangible benefits you may experience, especially on a fast of several days or more, are detoxification, clarity of mind, and after your initial weakness subsides, one usually experiences a surge in strength and even a feeling of euphoria. When you begin to fast, you may experience dizziness, headache, and constipation. You may also notice an unpleasant taste in your mouth, nausea, and weakness, a natural reaction to the fasting process as your body begins to rid itself of toxins. Fasting cleanses your body and gives your digestive system a rest.

When Jesus began His ministry, He first went to John the Baptist and was baptized by him in the River Jordan. “The Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove” (Luke 3:22). When He left John the Baptist, He was, “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1). Many of us would think that if He was full of the Holy Spirit when He left the Jordan River, why didn’t He go

straight away to Galilee and start his ministry? Instead, we read that the Spirit led Him into the dry and barren wilderness of Judea and a forty-day fast on nothing but water, where at His weakest point, He was tempted by Satan (Luke 4:2). What were the results of the forty days fast and temptation at the hands of Satan? He *returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit* (Luke 4:14).

What do you think is the difference between being *full of the Spirit* and being under *the power of the Spirit*?

The full potential of the Spirit manifested in Christ after a time of fasting, solitude, and prayer. He was a perfect model for us because of His obedience to the Spirit of God and giving Him full control of His life. Our bodies have a way of dictating to us what it wants. When we fast, we serve notice to our bodies that our spirit is in charge and that our bodies are to be obedient to the Holy Spirit's dictates, not the other way around. Like a stallion has to be brought under control by its rider, so our bodies (if you will allow Him), through fasting, are brought under control by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?" ¹⁹Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. ²⁰But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast (Mark 2:18-20).

The Pharisees at the time of Christ fasted from sun up till sun down on Mondays and Thursdays, and it was possible that this criticism was leveled at the disciples on one of those days. The Scriptures only required one day of fasting a year on the Jewish people, on the Day of Atonement, a national day of repentance and humbling of the soul (Leviticus 16:29-34). Jesus answered the Pharisees by reminding them that it was traditional for the guests of a wedding to be relieved of all religious duties such as fasting, while they were attending the wedding festivities that went on for the week after the wedding. He saw His time on earth as a time of marriage celebration—not a time of mourning and fasting. While Christ was still on the planet, Jesus wanted to enjoy being with His people and not mandate which days they would fast. When He left and ascended to the Father, then it would be time for them to fast. We are living in that time when Christ's bodily presence is not among us; therefore this is the time mentioned that we are expected to fast, as well as give to the needy and pray. □

Growing in Faith through Fasting

¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ¹⁵"Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him." ¹⁷"O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." ¹⁸Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment. ¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" ²⁰He replied,

"Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." ²¹But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:14-21). Verse 21 has been taken out of the New International Version by the editors and put at the bottom of the page due to some manuscripts having this verse left out).

The purpose for our meditations on Growing Faith has been to discover from the Scriptures our identity in Christ and to reveal to us the power and authority that is available to us as the people of God, being led by the Spirit of God. In the passage above, we see Jesus returning from the Mount of Transfiguration with three of His disciples, Peter, James and John (Matthew 17:1-13). When they get back down from the mountain to meet up with the nine disciples, Jesus was confronted by a man whose son had a demon that was inducing seizures. I want to be quick to say that not all people who are having seizures have demons! But on this occasion, what the boy's father saw as seizures were a result of demonic infiltration in the boy's life. This diagnosis becomes clear when one reads the parallel passages found in Mark 9:14-28 and also Luke 9:37-43. When the Lord heard of the nine disciple's failure to cast out the spirit out of the boy, He reacted with disappointment and frustration. He said, "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? (v. 17).

Why would Jesus be frustrated and disappointed with the nine disciples?□

By this time, Jesus had already taught them how to minister in power to heal the sick and to cast out demons. They had already gone out in groups of two to do the works of the kingdom (Luke 9:1-6). But here they are without power and lacking in faith. Jesus was frustrated at them because He wanted them to work under the power of the Holy Spirit, and not rely only on what they could do. He knew that His time on earth with them was limited and He wanted them to get this! Human intelligence and soul energy was not going to change the world. The power of God was, and is, the need of the hour! God's work needs God's power. When they asked why they couldn't cast out the spirit from the boy, He told them it was because of their lack of faith. But then he explained something interesting, which some translations take out from the original Greek. "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21). Some Greek manuscripts do not include this passage, so the New International Version translators decided to put the passage down at the bottom of the page. The King James Version includes it. I am thankful for this nugget of truth, for it explains that there are some situations we will encounter, which can only be resolved by a greater level of the presence and power of God upon us, which can only come about through a life of regular prayer and fasting. One needs time to fast and pray. It is often not possible to ask a person to come back at a later time so that we could fast and pray. If only the nine had known beforehand that they would encounter a spirit that would resist their commands to come out of the boy, they would have prepared themselves for the encounter. Jesus is advocating a lifestyle of prayer and fasting so that He would always be ready for any situation. I don't believe the words, "this kind," refers only to a strong evil spirit, I think it refers to stubborn situations that each of us goes through which a normal habit of prayer has not resolved. In these instances, there can be a spiritual stronghold which needs to be broken through prayer and fasting. I like to think of fasting as the Atom Bomb of the Holy Spirit. A desperate situation resolved through desperate measures—fasting. Fasting adds intensity,

earnestness, and authority to prayer. Jesus is saying that if they would live a life of prayer and fasting they would have the faith of God to move mountains. I don't believe that He was talking about literal mountains; He was using a figure of speech concerning situations that are immovable apart from God's Spirit moving them for us. When Zerubbabel was building the second temple after Israel's dispersion in Babylon, he had such difficulties in the building work that the prophet Zechariah was sent to him, saying:

*6*So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. *7*"What are you, *O mighty mountain?* Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!' " *8*Then the word of the LORD came to me: *9*"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. (Zechariah 4:6-9).

It would not be according to any might that Zerubbabel might be able to pump up by his abilities. In the passage above he was told that God would step into the situation by His Spirit, and the mountain of difficulties would become a level plain as he exercised faith in God. Sure, I do agree that God can move mountains, but I don't see any occasion where God would expect any of us to speak to real mountains to move out of our way. But He certainly will use us to speak authoritatively to situations that are like immovable mountains and see them become a level plain by God's Spirit. A mountain speaks of something that will not move; a situation where you cannot go around it, you have to go through it. We need the power of God to move the mountain! □

Is there a stubborn situation in your life or in the life of a close friend or relative that may require fasting and prayer? If you can, share the situation.

The Early Church Practiced Fasting

*1*In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. *2*While they were **worshipping the Lord and fasting**, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." *3*So after they had **fasted and prayed**, they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:1-3).

Acts 11:21 describe the church at Antioch as having a high number of people that turned to the Lord. We see in the passage above that a leadership team of individuals were spending time with God, worshipping and fasting together. Since there were prophetic people amongst them, (v. 1) the Holy Spirit spoke through one of them to release into a unique ministry, Barnabas, the encourager (Acts 4:36), and Saul, also named Paul the Apostle. God spoke to them in a time of worshipping and fasting. They were sent out as a missionary team by the Body of Christ there in Antioch. Twice fasting was mentioned.

*21*They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, *22*strengthening the disciples and

encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. ²³Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with **prayer and fasting**, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. (Acts 14:21-23).

After their first missionary journey, Barnabas and Paul later went back and sought the Lord's blessing on the new leadership of the young churches by praying and fasting for insight into who were the leaders that God wanted in the governmental position of elders. We cannot tell from the text if it was just Paul and Barnabas that were fasting or the whole church was engaged in the fast together.

In 2 Corinthians 11:27, Paul said, "**I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food.**" The words "gone without food" should be translated that Paul had "often fasted." Just previously he wrote he involuntarily had known hunger and thirst, but he also voluntarily fasted from the food that he had available. The King James Version translates the same passage: **In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in *hunger and thirst, in fastings often*, in cold and nakedness (2 Corinthians 11:27).**

If Paul was in a lifestyle of prayer and fasting often, and God used him so powerfully, we need to realize that this same power is available to us today. Perhaps the amount of prayer and fasting that Paul engaged in was the very thing that resulted in the great grace that was upon his life. Yes, God had a plan for Paul. The Lord answers when faith is expressed. Paul had a zealous faith and would not let God go. In one place he wrote:

⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for **my power is made perfect in weakness.**" Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for Christ's sake, **I delight in weaknesses,** in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For **when I am weak, then I am strong** (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Paul's testimony was that he found a secret—the weakness of his own strength brought the power of God upon him. He said he delighted in being weak so that Christ's power may rest upon him. One thing is sure; we need the power of God to be at work in the Church of the 21st century. It will take men and women who are dedicated to labor with God's energy at work in them and not the strength of our abilities apart from God's enablement. In another place, Paul writes:

To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so **powerfully** works in me (Colossians 1:29).

It is Christ in us, the hope of glory that must do the works of the kingdom. When a man or woman seeks, through prayer and fasting, for God's Spirit to have the reins of one's life, then God can get the glory by doing His work through us. Heaven forbid that the Church should seek for the glory that is due only to Christ. That's why Paul could say to the church in Rome: "**I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ**" (Romans 15:29). He had learned that the Spirit would work powerfully through him as he served the Lord through fasting and prayer. He fully expected that he would come with the Spirit's power. □

How can fasting be worked into a busy schedule? What would you say to a person who said that they would be too weak to fast and pray?

Practical Advice about Fasting

- 1) Don't start fasting for more than a day if you have never done it before. Building on success is wise. Start by fasting breakfast and lunch and plan to eat in the evening. Lengthen the amount of time as God leads you.
- 2) If you usually drink tea or coffee, plan to kick the caffeine a day early so that the first day of a fast you are not dealing with a massive headache as well as no food in your stomach. I would encourage you to drink only water during fasting. Water helps in the natural cleansing during fasting. There are one or two places where a person fasted having no water, but it is dangerous to go longer than three days without water. Moses was on a supernatural fast when he was with the Lord and fasting food and water. A person can die by going longer than three days without water. □
- 3) Keep a record of what you are experiencing and the kinds of prayers you are speaking. Later on, when you look back over your time of fasting, you will be much encouraged at the way God has answered prayer during your fast. □
- 4) If you are on medicine, check with your doctor and let him know what you are doing.
- 5) Get hold of some books on fasting to encourage you. One of the best books I have read on fasting is *God's Chosen Fast* by Arthur Wallis. I can also recommend Mahesh Chavda's book, *The Hidden Power of Prayer and Fasting*, as well as Derek Prince's book called, *Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting*.
- 6) Set aside normal meal times by going to your room and praying. Being around when food is cooking is challenging to overcome, especially in the first three days of a fast.
- 7) Beware of the TV. One becomes aware of how many commercials on food there is on TV.
- 8) In the first three or four days, the body burns up many of the toxins that are in our bodies due to the kinds of foods we consume in most western countries. You will feel weakness by the end of the first day until around the fourth day. This burning of the toxins is very healthy for you. During this time your urine becomes yellow, your breath smells horrible, and if it is winter, your body can get cold easily. If you are on a fast of over four days, your strength will return once the toxins are burnt up. Fasting becomes easier at that point.
- 9) You will experience greater clarity of mind during fasting. Read the Scriptures often and draw near to God in the midst of your fast. □
- 10) Fasting is not damaging to your health—fasting is normal to the animal kingdom. The hunger pangs that one starts to experience toward the end of the first day is just the body's way of telling you that it is time for food. The cravings will die down.
- 11) Read chapter 58 of the Book of Isaiah, the section on fasting, and be watchful over your motives.
- 12) Fasting breaks bondages of sin and loosens the hold of bad habits and their rulership over your life.

- 13) Pray for God to release the gifts of the Spirit in your life. Fasting opens one's life to new spiritual gifts from God because our spirit is humbled and sensitive to the Spirit of God's leading. □
- 14) Fasting helps in the loss of weight. Be careful that you don't overeat when you return to eating. During the fast, your stomach will shrink and to overeat after a fast can be dangerous. Anytime longer than a six-day fast should be broken with broth or easily digested food.
- 15) There are different kinds of fasts. Daniel and his three friends went on a vegetable and water fast (Daniel 1:12). Later on, he fasted for three weeks on no choice food, meat or wine touched his lips (Daniel 10:2-3). Decide for yourself how you are going to fast. Ask God to show you what kind of fast you are to undertake.
- 16) Try to avoid heavy exercising or taking long walks. It is easy to get so tired and want to break your fast early.
- 17) An average healthy person can fast up to 40 days. Around that time, a person's hunger pangs will return, and at that point, a person starts to starve. Beyond 40 days our bodies begin to consume living cells rather than fat. Jesus fasted for forty days, and at that point, the Bible tells us that He was hungry. When the hunger pangs return, it is time to break your fast. Satan's temptation of Jesus began at the forty-day mark when the hunger pangs started, tempting Him with bread (Matthew 4:2-3). It seems more than likely that all three temptations came on one day, the last day of His fast.

My Personal Experience of Fasting

I have practiced fasting, although not as much as I would like. Each year I try to set apart a few days for prayer and fasting. My fasting has usually been between 3-5 days on just water. Several years ago, my wife and I felt an urgent need to fast and pray for a person close to us. We were led to fast for a ten-day period on water for a person struggling with her faith. We felt this was an attack of the enemy to separate her, not only from us but from her new found faith in Christ. After ten days of prayer and fasting for this individual, she arrived at our door in tearful brokenness. We prayed and talked. Before this knock on the door by her, we had not made contact with her or asked her to come over; the Holy Spirit prompted her to go to our door. It was an answer to prayer. Although this individual still had some difficult years ahead, she returned to her faith in Christ and now has her own stories of answered prayer. Fasting will help to loosen bonds that the enemy has on a person's life, enabling them to respond freely to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Maybe you have a loved one who you have been praying for, and you desperately want to see a breakthrough. Is God asking you to fast and pray for them? Some situations will not change until one enters the fray with prayer and fasting. Fasting, along with fervent prayer, is a powerful combination.

Mahesh Chavda tells the story of a young boy who God used to teach him about the power of fasting and prayer. As a young man starting out in the ministry, God led Mahesh to a state school in Lubbock, Texas. It was a school for profoundly handicapped children. One of these children, who he calls Stevie, suffered from a compulsion to self-mutilate. He would cry out and beat himself in the face continually. The skin on his face was hard like alligator skin because of the constant beating. The staff psychologist at the school had secured permission from state officials in Austin, Texas to administer electric shock therapy to Stevie for a six-month period. This

"negative operant conditioning," as they called it, was meant to modify Stevie's behavior by administering electric shocks any time he beat himself. They graphed his behavior over that period, and Mahesh states that he did not see any improvement during that time; in fact, Stevie seemed to get worse. Finally, the attendants tied Stevie's hands in splints so that he couldn't bend his arms to reach his face. The only problem was, Stevie could not protect himself and other children invented a cruel game. They would push Stevie over, and he was not able to gain his balance with his arms at his sides. He would fall, and they often found him face down on the floor, sometimes with blood streaming from his nose and mouth. Mahesh was overcome with sorrow and love for this young boy. He asked God "*What is the answer for Stevie?*" Mahesh felt that he heard the Lord say; "This kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting." Mahesh started fasting. On the fourteenth day, his fast ended and he felt that God told him "Now pray for Stevie." The following is a direct quote:

"When I arrived for my shift at the school that day, I took Stevie into my little office cubicle and said, 'Stevie, I know your mind may not understand what I'm saying, but your spirit is eternal. I want to tell you that I am a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. I've come to preach good news to you. I want you to know that Jesus Christ came to set the captives free.' Then I said, 'In the name of Jesus, you evil spirit of mutilation, you let him go now in the name of Jesus.' Suddenly Stevie's body was flung about eight feet away from me and hit the other wall of the cubicle. When Stevie hit the wall, his body was elevated about three feet above the floor, and then he slid down to the floor and let out a loud sigh. Immediately, I smelled an incredibly foul smell of rotten eggs and burning sulfur in the room, which gradually faded away. I quickly went to Stevie, cradled him in my arms, and removed his splints while he watched with wide eyes. Then Stevie began to bend his arms and gently feel his face. I watched him softly touch his eyes, his nose, and his ears, and then he started sobbing. He realized that for the first time he was not being driven to beat himself. He was gently touching his face, and he had been delivered. In that unforgettable moment, the Lord revealed to me what a powerful weapon He has given us to pull down strongholds and set captives free. Within a few months, all the scabs had fallen off of Stevie's face. He had begun to heal because he had stopped beating himself."¹

What a beautiful story of the power of God released through prayer and fasting! Ask God to teach you to develop the discipline of fasting. When combined with prayer, it is the most potent weapon we have to practically demonstrate the mastery of our spirit over our physical needs and cravings. It is a mystery hard to understand, but in some way, fasting tips the scales toward the spiritual end, and releases power over the enemy in a way that prayer alone does not. If we make fasting a part of our spiritual lives, we will be ready when faced with situations that call for this type of faith and spiritual strength.

Prayer: Father, would you help us as we grow in faith by fasting and prayer. Our world needs people that will be full of the Spirit and empowered by you with prayer and fasting. We want to be involved in the work of your kingdom and carry out your will on earth. We want to see answers so miraculous, that it will be evident to all that you have answered. □

¹ Mahesh Chavda, *The Hidden Power of Prayer and Fasting*, Printed by Destiny Image, Pages 11-14.

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A website for free Bible studies: www.groupbiblestudy.com