

## Praying and Fasting for a Powerful 09

*“Come and Dine in 2009”*

*“Leave the Plate and 2008”*

**Prayer and Fasting draws us close to the Lord and helps us to discover God’s Agenda**

### Mark 1:35

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed”

- \* It was common knowledge among the disciples that they would find Jesus praying during the early morning hours.
- \* When they needed Him, they knew to go to the place of prayer.
- \* When Judas betrayed Jesus, he led his cohorts to Jesus’ place of prayer.

### **Illustration**

In one Leadership cartoon, a man at a church meeting says to himself, Oh great! Here comes Bob. I told him I'd pray for him! "Dear God, help Bob. Amen." He reaches out his hand to Bob and enthusiastically says, "Hey, Bob, been prayin' for you!"

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**Every time the Lord Jesus faced an *important decision*; He prayed**

- \* When He was being tempted to do things by the world’s methods instead of the Father’s; Jesus fasted and prayed.

### Matthew 4: 1-2 [NIV]

[The Temptation of Jesus]

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry”

2.

**This morning you are getting a great sermon deal, because our focus will not be on one but two of the classic spiritual disciplines...specifically: Prayer and Fasting.**

\* Both are practices, spiritual disciplines that God has given us to provide us a way to deepen our relationship with Him.

We are going to look at the disciplines of prayer and fasting...something that most Christians these days are not familiar with at all.

**Fasting is mentioned many times in the Bible**

**Moses' 40-day fasts as he prayed concerning Israel**

**Deuteronomy 9: 11**

**“11 At the end of the forty days and forty nights, the LORD gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant”**

**Deuteronomy 9: 25-26**

**[25] “I lay prostrate [Position of intercession] before the LORD those forty days and forty nights because the LORD had said he would destroy you.  
26 I prayed to the LORD...”**

\* A mountain top time of fasting and prayer

\* Moses fasted and prayed 40 days and 40 nights and received the commandments while at the bottom of the mountain Aaron and the Israelites were making a golden calf to worship - but fasting and prayer made the difference.

**Fasting and Prayer reveals many things**

\* Long periods of Fasting sometimes reveals sin as in the case of Moses and Israel - Personal times of fast are most important.

3.

### The Second Time

#### Deuteronomy 10: 10-11

“10 Now I had stayed on the mountain forty days and nights, *as I did the first time*, and the LORD listened to me at this time also. *It was not his will to destroy you.*

11 "Go," the LORD said to me, "*and lead the people on their way, so that they may enter and possess the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.*"

- \* Godly leaders especially are to fast and pray
- \* Fasting and Prayer exposed and purged things that needed to come out before the people could be led into the land that they were to possess.
- \* When Moses climb the mountain he thought things were good but fasting and prayer revealed hidden hearts.

### The Lord made a proclamation

#### Deuteronomy 10:12

“12 And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?”

Because Moses fasted and prayed Israel was moving forward into the blessings of the Lord.

### A Word for the Lord came forth with clear direction:

1. The Lord your God ask of you Fear the Lord your God
2. To Walk in His ways
3. To Love Him
4. To Serve the Lord you God with all your heart and with all your soul
5. To Observe the Lord's commands and decrees

[Let's agree together that in 2009 this fast will draw us closer to the Lord in the Deuteronomy 10: 12 ways]

4.

## Fasting and Prayer for Protection and Direction

### Ezra 8:21

“Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions”

\* A Fast / Corporate Fasting

\* A Fast birthed in humility

\* A Fast seeking the **RIGHT WAY** [simply His Way] for them and their children and for all their possessions.

[Let's agree together with this passage in Ezra 8: 21, that in 2009 this fast will draw us closer to the Lord as humble servants that He will show us the right way for us and our children and all our possessions]

## Prayer and Fasting for Deliverance and the Healing of the Sick

### Matthew 17:21

“However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting”

### Matthew 17: 14-21

14 And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying,

15 “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

16 So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.”

17 Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.” 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”

20 So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting”

5.

### Mark 9: 25-29

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!"

26 Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead."

27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

28 And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting"

[Let's agree together with this passage in Matthew 17 and Mark 9, that in 2009 this fast will draw us closer to the Lord, our faith will be strong and that demons and sickness will be broken!]

### Fasting and Prayer for Marriages

#### 1 Corinthians 7:5 [Marriage Covering]

"Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control"

[Let's agree together with this passage in 1 Corinthians 7, that in 2009 this fast will draw us closer to the Lord, our faith will be strong and that marriages will be protected and made stronger!]

### Now what exactly is FASTING?

- \* Well, it's not dieting / It's not skipping meals to lose weight.
- \* No, whenever fasting is mentioned in the Bible it refers to, abstaining from food, increasing our times of prayer for the purpose of growing spiritually and has many affects.

6.

**The main benefit of Fasting is SPIRITUAL**

**\* Fasting teaches us self-control and encourages a prolonged undistracted focus on the Lord rather than on the temporary pleasures of this material world.**

**\* Through this discipline we begin to see how easily we allow nonessentials to take precedence...how quickly we allow our desire for things that we don't really need to enslave us.**

**\* And how we can move toward carnal means instead of spiritual.**