

# Fastíng and Prayer: Our Lost Treasure

Women's Retreat 2019

**Biblical fasting** is the voluntary denial of food for a specific period of **time** by an **individual**, by a family, a community or a nation for a **spiritual purpose**.

- **It is a partner to prayer.**
- It is usually motivated by a great need for help, for repentance or for mourning

Before we can study: Examine these two things on our “map”

- 1) A **compass rose** - To display the orientation of the cardinal directions - North, South, East, West - this feature of a map never changes — always the same
- 2) A **legend or a map key** - It is included with a map to unlock it. It gives you the information needed for the map to make sense. Symbols in the key might be pictures or icons that represent different things on the map. This feature of a map changes — depending on the terrain.

## **Our Compass Rose - God**

Study out Joel 2:12-14

Q. What does rend (tear) mean? How does this apply to our hearts?

Q. Why does God want us to rend our hearts?

Q. What does God reveal about himself here? How does he feel about us?

God is reassuring us — he is our all powerful Father who reigns with unlimited resources; He is full of mercy and compassion, slow to get angry and full of unfailing love.

Q. Do we trust our Compass Rose? — he who orients us + he never changes

**Are there any ways and thoughts that you need to let go of to be truly aligned and trusting of our God?**

It's hard to believe in the power of prayer and fasting if you don't trust who you're praying to.

Fasting and praying can evoke different thoughts and emotions from us depending on how these Christian disciplines have gone on in our lives. Identify these things and decide to break ungodly thoughts and release them to God - trust his heart for you and your situations.

## **Our Map Key - Daniel** (other scriptures also explain more about fasting and prayer)

What actually happens when we fast and pray?

Study out Daniel 1, 9 and 10

Q. What kind of fasting did Daniel do?

Q. Why did he fast? What motivated these fasts?

Q. What answers did he get?

Did you see supernatural things happening?

We have a very special privilege here; a “sneak peak” of what is going on in the spiritual realm. **Based on these scriptures** we receive insight, direction, clarity and understanding, knowledge and wisdom. We know that angels are commanded by God to look after us. But when we fast and pray, they are

empowered to exercise their authority more boldly. God is showing us that fasting with prayer empower angels to act on our behalf.

[Test this out. I cannot convince you — God usually leads us in a time of fasting. You must try it.]

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**If you need more understanding and conviction, look at these following “key” verses**

Mark 9:14-32; Judges 20; Ps. 35:13-14; Jonah 3; Joel 2; 1 Sam. 7:2-17; Nehemiah 9 & 10  
Esther 4-6; 2 Chron. 20:1-29; Ezra 8:21-23; Matthew 4; Acts 9:1-9; Acts 13:1-3

In these key verses, look for:

- Background — What were the difficulties, fears, excuses, big decisions that needed to be made, etc.
  - Did they fast and pray?
  - Did they gain any insight or revelation? Spiritually and physically did anything change?
  - How did fasting change their hearts, minds and their future?
  - Are there any lasting effects that you see happened due to prayer and fasting?
  - Did God deliver them from their difficulties?
  - What does this tell you about God’s character and the spiritual powers available to us?
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**Q. What stops us from fasting and having effective and powerful prayers?**

**READ Mark 9:14-29**

- Here we have a very difficult and unusual situation. Jesus obviously didn’t need to fast to perform a miracle here. But I think that he addresses a few things that can help us be more effective in our faith.
- A demon-possessed child that Jesus says in v. 29 can come out by prayer and fasting
- Do note that the disciples have casted out demon possessed and sick people prior to this event. But for some reason — this one needed an extra source of power
- Can you relate?
- **Think and write down at least one difficulty you are facing right now... something that is difficult to “drive out”.**

**The first thing Jesus addresses — Their view of things/life**

V. 19 “O unbelieving and perverse generation!”

- As much as this is a rebuke, I believe it is also a statement of their reality
- **Unbelieving** - (Greek— apistos)
  - unfaithful, faithless, unbelieving, incredulous, without trust (in God)
- **Perverse** - (Greek — diastrephō)
  - to distort, turn aside, to oppose, plot against the saving purposes and plans of God
  - to turn aside from the right path, to pervert, corrupt
  - **to misinterpret**

definition of **distortion** =

a change to the intended or true meaning of something;

a change, twist, or exaggeration that makes something appear different from the way it really is;

the action of giving a misleading account or impression.

**Jesus wants us to pause and examine how we see and think of our situation at hand.**

*Point # 1— Ask Jesus, let there be light!*

Satan is the father of lies and deceit — he distorts, twists, misleads and wants us to misinterpret. He fools and deceives us — and it shows in powerless prayers; it shows when our first thoughts after an interaction with someone are ungodly or hurtful or self-promoting; it shows when our worldview is about us and not God.

Q. When something is challenging in your life — a person, a task, a conversation, an emotion, etc. — what are your first thoughts?

Q. How have you been viewing your life? Your situations you are in? How are you seeing the challenges that drive you to fast? Are you praying with misty eyes? Are you without faith?

*Be open to the idea that Satan and his demons are distorting your view and causing you to misinterpret your situation. Remember that the true reality we live in — there is a DAILY spiritual warfare around us! It helps me to remember Adam and Eve. They had no sin, had everything perfect — including an intimate relationship with God — yet they were fooled by Satan by his distortions and words of misinterpretation. Let's not be naive.*

**Ask Jesus to shed light and give you HIS interpretation of your situation AND wait for an answer.**

*Point # 2 — We are at war — Who's your partner?*

The next words that came out from Jesus' mouth are equally as powerful:

Mark 9:19b — "Bring the boy to me."

[In other miraculous passages - Jesus would say, "Take me to him," or he says the word and the person is healed.] In short, Jesus wants us to partner up and be intimately involved. He knows that this spiritual war cannot be won without him.

We see this in Luke 11. **Jesus — the man who knew how to pray best** — tells us to ask for his kingdom to come (with all the authority and power it brings) & for his will to be done on earth... implying that this is not happening everywhere... just look at the state of our world.

**He is teaching us to ask God to bring His kingdom/power/authority and his will into what you are praying about or concerned about. Do you see WHY?**

Think of raiding a drug facility by yourself (pretending you were a cop/FBI agent) — would you go by yourself though you're authorized? We are "raiding"/"stopping" evil — we cannot think to go by ourselves. Ask Jesus in prayer, **"I am asking you to come into this situation and invite you to be present. Lead me and guide me... what should I pray for about this person/situation... wait for his answer." Or "What direction do you want me to go with in this situation, with this thought, with this person?" (Partner up). It's not always just about people and their sin. There is a war that Satan is working on against each one of us. His demons are all around tempting us. They park themselves around us... Looking for ways to entrap and devour us.**

**My prayers are not just for the defensive but for the offensive moves.**

- Q. Do you believe that there is a spiritual war going on around you?  
Q. Are you going into situations alone — without (direction from) Jesus?

**Bring Jesus with you! This is a partnership, a union!**

*Point # 3 — Boldly Fight with the Authority and Power of Christ*

**READ Mark 9:25**

“You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

- See the command of power and authority of Jesus.

**Command** (Greek — epitassō)

- to enjoin upon, order, command, charge, to put upon one as a duty

**Study the following:**

Ephesians 6: 10 - 20; Colossians 2; Ephesians 1 & 2; Hebrews 1:14

These are just a few passages that tell us of some of the gifts we have. Through Christ we have access to power, angels, rights, a confidence and boldness that comes with being under Christ. We must remember what we have and use them/declare them and wield them in prayer (Just like Jesus did in Matthew 4).

Q. What power and authority do we have under Christ? List them.

[**ALSO**, look for other spiritual blessings we have in Christ — search for them as treasures to be found in the scriptures!]

Think of your birthright/passport/ID — these represent a freedom and a confidence and a boldness you can have and should have.

- If you have an ID for your workplace — you can swipe that badge and you know you’ll pass through without feeling insecure.
- With your passport — you can receive the benefits of your country and use them at will. And you receive certain rights & privileges because of it.
- With your birthright — you get to have **all** that your parents own.

God is our Father, the Creator, Provider and Sustainer. The Holy Spirit is our Counselor, Comforter, Strength and Guide. Jesus is our Brother and the Lord of ALL. He conquered death and he reigns victoriously... BUT why do we live and act so cowardly? So faithlessly? So faint-hearted? So unsure?

**Conclusion —**

- As you face life and it’s challenges, big and small, let us not misinterpret the events/people in our lives. Satan works to distort our view. Invite Jesus to bring Light so we can see clearly.
- Let us ask him to join us in every situation — literally ask him to be present — to direct us.
- May we boldly fast & pray knowing that we have Jesus’ FULL blessings, power and authority accessible at all times? We just have to bring it forth and declare them in prayer.
- Give fasting and prayer a try with the knowledge and confidence that God wants to bless us.