

The Cure for Unbelief (Prayer & Fasting)

Bible Reading: Matthew 17:14-21

Emphasis: Jude 20, But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

Purpose: Building Faith, through prayer and fasting

Focus: What kind of faith do you have?

Introduction: 1. Fasting defined: Going without food (abstention from food, or some types of food).

2. Cure defined: treat illness successfully; resolve problem.

3. Unbelief defined: lack of faith/belief

Fasting is often viewed as 'getting the hand of God' to move or the 'for God to answer' prayer. Let us take a different look into the purpose of fasting and the results such action.

It takes prayer and fasting working in conjunction or together, in order to produce results. While fasting or abstaining for food (the physical intake), use the time for spiritual intake. At those times of eating, use the time to feed spiritually (prayer, reading/studying and/or meditating on God's word)

1. Fasting: Personal Discipline (self-denial or denying self)
2. Prayer: Personal Petitioning (dependence on God)

16, And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

- Looking to men to do God's job.
- Jesus Christ is the healer, not men or women.
- Men and women can be used as a vessel used by God.
- Without Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, the sick will not be healed.

17, Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

- Jesus suffered long (1 Cor. 13, charity [divine love] is longsuffering.

18, And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

- Immediate results
- No dramatics, loud prayers, simple faith/belief in the power of God.

19, Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

- Man's question to God.
- Why??? Maybe because personal pride; God not receiving the glory and man being praised, etc.....

20, And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

- The answer to many of our questions: unbelief in the power of God.

21, Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

- This kind (kind of faith: unwavering, not doubting, believing, trusting, confidence).
- What kind of faith do you have?
- Make it a issue of prayer in your life: What kind of faith do I really have, God?

The disciples asked the Lord why they could not heal a lunatic boy. Jesus said, "Because of your unbelief...Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:14-21).

Faith needs prayer for its development and full growth, and prayer needs fasting for the same reason.

Fasting has done wonders when used in combination with prayer and faith. This is a Biblical doctrine.

To fast means to abstain from food-that which caused the fall of man.

- Fasting humbles the soul before God (Psalm 35:13);
- Chastens the soul (Psalm 69:10);
- Crucifies the appetites and denies them so as to give the entire time to prayer (2 Samuel 12:16-23; Matthew 4:1-11).
- It manifests earnestness before God to the exclusion of all else (1 Cor. 7:5);

- Shows obedience; Gives the digestive system a rest (Matthew 6:16-18; Matthew 9:15; Luke 5:33);
- • Demonstrates the mastery of man over appetites;
- • Aids in victory over temptation;
- • Helps to attain power over demons;
- • Develops faith; Crucifies unbelief; Aids in prayer (Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 17:14-21).

All believers are supposed to fast, but no regulations or set rules are given as to how long or how often.

That is determined by individual desire and needs (Matthew 9:14-15; 1 Cor. 7:5; Acts 13:1-5).

- Men should fast when under chastening (2 Sam. 12:16-23)
- o Under judgment (1 Kings 21:27); in need (Ezra 8:21)
- o In danger (Esther 4)
- o When worried (Daniel 6:18)
- o In trouble (Acts 27:9,33)
- o In spiritual conflict (Matthew 4:1-11)
- o When desperate in prayer (Acts 9)

Thirty-five Bible Fasts

	Who Fasted	Length	Scriptures
1.	Ahab	?	(1 Kings 21:27-29)
2.	Judah	?	(2 Chron. 20:1-25)
3.	Judah	?	(Ezra 8:21-23)
4.	Ezra	?	(Ezra 10:6-17)
5.	Nineveh	?	(Jonah 3)
6.	Nehemiah	?	(Neh. 1:4-2:10)
7.	Jews	?	(Esther 4:1-3; Esther 9:1-3)
8.	David	?	(Psa. 35:13; 69:10; 109:24)
9.	John's disciples	?	(Matthew 9:14-15)
10.	Anna	?	(Luke 2:37)
11.	Church at Antioch	?	(Acts 13:1-5)
12.	Paul	?	(Acts 27:9-11)

13.	Cornelius	?	(Acts 10)
14.	Many churches	?	(Acts 14:23)
15.	Paul	?	(2 Cor. 6:5; 2 Cor. 11:27)
16.	David	1 day	(2 Samuel 3:35)
17.	Judah	1 day	(Neh. 9:1-4)
18.	Judah	1 day	(Jeremiah 36:6)
19.	Daniel	1 day	(Daniel 9:3,20-27)
20.	Pharisee	1 day	(Luke 18:9-14)
21.	Israel	1 day	(Judges 20:26-35)
22.	Israel	1 day	(1 Samuel 7:6-14)
23.	David	1 day	(2 Samuel 1:12)
24.	Darius	1 night	(Daniel 6:18-24)
25.	Esther & Mordecai	3 days	(Esther 4:13-9:3)
26.	Many people	3 days	(Matthew 15:32-39)
27.	Paul	3 days	(Acts 9:9,17)
28.	David	7 days	(2 Samuel 12:16-23)
29.	Israel	7 days	(1 Samuel 31:13)
30.	Paul and 276 men	14 days	(Acts 27:33-34)
31.	Daniel	21 days	(Daniel 10:3-13)
32.	Moses	40 days	(Deut. 9:9-10:10)
33.	Joshua	40 days	(Exodus 24:13-18;32:15-17)
34.	Elijah	40 days	(1 Kings 19:7-18)
35.	Jesus	40 days	(Matthew 4:1-11)

Since fasting and prayer are so prominent in the Bible, modern Christians should do more of this until they receive power with God over all the powers of the devil.

Many things about fasting and its benefits are not known to modern men, but those through the ages who have been men of great prayer have also fasted much.