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Mighty Prevailing Prayer: Experiencing the Power of Answered Prayer

31. Fasting Strengthens Prayer

This chapter argues that fasting is a biblical partner to prayer. It does two things: it deepens ordinary devotional prayer, and it intensifies 'prevailing' prayer for hard battles where Satan is entrenched. The bulk of the chapter lists the ways fasting empowers prayer, then covers united (group) fasting and practical how-to advice.

Key takeaways

- Fasting is not required for all prayer, but it strengthens it — especially in stubborn spiritual battles.
- Seven benefits: it deepens humility, deepens hunger for God, sharpens concentration, hardens determination, feeds faith, opens you to the Spirit, and fires zeal.
- God condemns hypocritical fasting (fasting without obedience), not fasting itself — genuine fasting helps your prayer be heard.
- United fasting multiplies the effect: Jehoshaphat, Nineveh, Esther, and the Antioch church all saw God act through corporate fasting and prayer.

- Practical start: fast one meal occasionally and pray in that time; make it a regular, flexible (non-legalistic) rhythm; feast on Scripture first, then focus on one or two concerns.
- Cautions: don't attempt long (20–40 day) fasts without guidance, keep drinking water, tell someone, and check with a doctor if older or unwell.
- Keep fasting private, between you and God, and give God all the glory for any victory.

Passages worth keeping

“Prayer needs fasting for its full and perfect development.”

Andrew Murray, summarizing the chapter's whole thesis.

“You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.”

Isaiah's rebuke of empty, disobedient fasting — the negative that proves the positive.

How it connects

The chapter frames fasting as 'preparing the way of the Lord' — self-denial that clears the natural clutter so faith and the Spirit can work more freely, echoing Joel 2's call to return to God with fasting and weeping.

Scripture referenced

- **Ps. 35:13** -- David humbled himself with fasting when prayers went unanswered.
- **1 Peter 5:6** -- Humble yourself so God will lift you up — humility as the key to prevailing prayer.
- **Luke 4:14** -- Jesus returned 'in the power of the Spirit' after His 40-day fast.
- **2 Chron. 20** -- Jehoshaphat's fast; God routs the enemy without Judah fighting.
- **Acts 13:2** -- The missionary movement began through the Antioch church's prayer and fasting.
- **Isa. 58:4** -- God rejects fasting joined to disobedience.