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Prayer - Your Foundation For Success

9. Fasting and Prayer

This chapter teaches what biblical fasting is and is not. It distinguishes the proclaimed (corporate) fast from the personal fast Jesus described, argues fasting changes you rather than God, and lays out the rewards and purpose of a 'fasted life.'

Key takeaways

- You do not fast to impress or pressure God. Fasting changes you, not Him.
- A proclaimed fast unites believers and fixes their attention on God, so He can speak — as with Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20 and the church at Antioch in Acts 13.
- The personal fast is done in secret; Jesus said 'when' you fast, not 'if.' Seek God's open reward, not men's admiration.
- God does not punish born-again believers physically. He instructs ('chastens') through His Word. New Testament repentance means to turn around and change your mind.
- Isaiah 58 defines the chosen fast: loosing bonds of wickedness, lifting burdens, freeing the oppressed, breaking every yoke — and it requires putting away strife and operating in love.

- Fasting quiets the five senses so the spirit man dominates the flesh, letting you walk in the spirit and lay hold of healing and your inheritance.
- Five steps: decide the purpose, proclaim the fast, believe you receive the reward beforehand, minister to the Lord, then minister to others.

Passages worth keeping

> *"Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's."*
>
> The word God gave through Jahaziel — the result the fasting congregation was seeking.

> *"If you'll give up that low life, you will find the high life."*
>
> The author's paraphrase of Matthew 10:39, framing the fasted life as gain, not loss.

How it connects

The chapter ties fasting to walking in the spirit (Proverbs 4:20-23): quieting the flesh lets faith, healing, and the fruit of the spirit flow from the reborn heart.

Scripture referenced

- **2 Chronicles 20:1-15** -- Model of a proclaimed fast; God answers Jehoshaphat through Jahaziel

- **Matthew 6:16-18** -- The personal fast done in secret, rewarded openly
- **Acts 13:1-2** -- The Holy Ghost sends out Barnabas and Saul as the church fasts
- **Isaiah 58:6-8** -- God's chosen fast and its rewards of light and health
- **Hebrews 12:6-9** -- God chastens by instruction, not physical punishment
- **Galatians 5:22-23** -- The fruit of the spirit a fasted life produces