

# A CALL TO FAST AND PRAY

SEEKING THE HEART OF GOD  
FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATION

## MATTHEW CHAPTER 6:16-18

JACK'S SPECIAL #JHX214    DECEMBER 30, 2007

THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

**“AND WHEN YOU FAST...”**

*SEEKING THE LORD IN FASTING AND PRAYER FOR THE NATION,  
FOR THE CHURCH AND FOR LOST.*

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

**Fasting, Prayer, Devotion, Repentance, Revival, Healing**

Introduction to the Text; **Matthew 6:16-18**

**The Theme and Textual Summation of the Passage**

### Matthew 6:16-18

“Moreover, **when you fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. :17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, :18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

It is a confirmed fact, that throughout Europe and the West, fasting is the least used **resource** in the Christians **tool box**.

His **tool box** / His **war chest** /

**Why This Bible Study Now; & Why Today?**

**A personal Note About the Year That Is Before Us.....**

### Jeremiah 3:15

And I will give you shepherds according to My heart,  
who will **feed you** with knowledge and understanding.

**Why is Fasting not Taught On...**

We have in our minds a negative view of fasting. But why?  
Because it means self deprivation, it means self denial, self discipline.

**AND WHEN YOU FAST...**

## 1.) The “Whys” of Fasting

### THE WHY’S OF FASTING

#### 1a.) Why **should** we fast?

Because there will be a **divine initiative** on the part of God

A Stirring Up of Our Hearts and Minds to the Moment...

### Fasting Prepares the Believer to Receive What God is Wanting to Do

#### 2Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those whose heart is loyal to Him.*

#### Fasting Prepares The Believer

#### 1Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*. :25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for an imperishable crown*. :26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who beats the air*. :27 But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

#### Fasting is a Normal Discipline of the Believer’s Life

#### Matthew 6:16-18

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### Why should we fast? Because our heroes fasted.

1. Because **Moses** saw the need to fast
2. Because **Daniel** saw the need to fast
3. Because **Elijah** saw the need to fast
4. Because **Ezekiel** saw the need to fast
5. Because **Paul** saw the need to fast
6. Because the **disciples** saw the need to fast
7. Because the **church** saw the need to fast

## Jesus Gave Us an Example of Fasting

Matthew 4:1-4

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. :2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. :3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." :4 But He answered and said, "It is written, '*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*'"

### THE WHYS OF FASTING

#### 1b.) Why **must** we fast?

#### Because Fasting Leads to Greater Devotion

Luke 2:36-38

Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; :37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, **but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.** :38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

#### Why should *We* fast?

Because it opens **a new door** in our house with God.

1Samuel 7:5-6

And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you." :6 So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD. And **they fasted that day**, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD..."

### AND WHEN YOU FAST...

#### 2.) The "**What's**" of Fasting

### THE WHATS OF FASTING

#### 2a.) What will be **accomplished** by fasting?

It "**separates**" us from the "**noise**" of this world.

(1)

A **dependence** upon the Lord in a fresh way

(2)

A **reliance** upon His word the Bible

(3)

A **calming** of the soul and mind

(4)

A greater **awareness** to the Voice of God

(5)

A **realignment** of our Priorities

**Matthew 6:18c**

...your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

## THE WHATS OF FASTING

### 2b.) What can I **expect** when fasting?

(1)

A better **appreciation** for the Bible

(2)

**Answered** prayer

(3)

A greater **power** in our Christian lives

(4)

A **conforming** of my will to His

(5)

A deep **confidence** as you live your life

**Jeremiah 29:12-13**

Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. **:13** And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

**Matthew 17:18-21**

**: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."

## AND WHEN YOU FAST...

### 3.) The "**When's**" of Fasting

## THE WHENS OF FASTING

### 3a.) We fast as a **nation** when...

#### When The Nation sees its Sin and Repents and Mourns

##### Judges 20:26-27

Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, **went up** and **came to** the house of God and **wept**. They **sat** there before the LORD and **fasted** that day until evening; and they **offered** burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. :27 So the children of Israel **inquired** of the LORD...

##### 2Samuel 1:12

And the people **mourned** and **wept** and **fasted** until evening...

##### 2Chronicles 7:13-14

At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or I might command locusts to devour your crops, or I might send plagues among you. :14 Then if my people who are called by my name will **humble** themselves and **pray** and **seek** my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.

### THE WHENS OF FASTING

### 3b.) We fast as **church** when...

#### When, As a Church We want His Presence

##### Mark 2:18-20

The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" :19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. :20 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.

#### When, As a Church We want His Plan

##### Acts 13:1-4

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. :2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, **the Holy Spirit said**, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." :3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away. :4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

### Acts 14:21-23

And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, :22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." :23 So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

## THE WHEN'S OF FASTING

### 3c.) When should I fast as a **Christian**?

#### Fasting for Your Family

##### 1Corinthians 7:3-5

Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. :4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. :5 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.

##### Job 1:5c

Job would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings  
*according to* the number of all his children.

### An invitation to FAST & PRAY AND SEEK the LORD

***At bed time Tuesday night, we will begin to fast as a church until after Wednesday night's service. We will end our fast after service Wednesday night.***

***You will get instructions tomorrow night  
10:30 pm right here***

*End of Study*