

**A Christian
and
Fasting Life**

By Fredrick G. Omondi

Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures quotations are taken from King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a sequel to the first volume where I dwelt on prayers at length and touched on the following: what prayer is and that it is a commandment of God and the importance of prayer and types of prayer, the length and frequency of prayer, places of prayer as well as postures in prayer, worthy and unworthy prayers, the need for holy living and the reasons why some prayers are not answered.

In this volume I have dwelt on the second segment which is on fasting and have gone into the finer details for your ease of reference and do trust it will be of great use to you as truly Christian.

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Chapter 1

What is Fasting?

It can be said that Fasting is the denial of physical nourishment and leisure of life in order to pursue spiritual benefits. It is a gentle rest in God. It is drawing near to God and humbling oneself before the Lord. It is a weapon for them that have come to the end of themselves. When one is weak, unable or defeated it gives God a chance to do something for them. This is normally done just at some specific period of time because of some pressing need in one's life which need some immediate attention.

Where prayer alone has not yielded any fruit, prayer and fasting is needed - fasting becoming very handy in such a situation.

Through fasting with prayer, experience has shown that many things have been sorted out or revealed through such to the saints of God.

The importance of fasting cannot be over emphasized. But it can be said to be the key to the impossible, coupled with prayer. Fasting alone is not enough as it must be escorted with prayer. Fasting alone is just like boycotting meals and it becomes meaningless. It is only meaningful when you

also pray by talking to God the Father. Even with our biological father if you have a problem, you cannot go in his presence and then keep mum, you have to approach him and tell him the problem which you have for him to see how he is going to solve it for you. It is the same with our spiritual Father who is in heaven. But don't say that as for him, he knows everything. Sure, he knows, but you have to say it to him what you want done. God himself is saying that we need to make our requests to him, although he knows them. So just do what God says.

In fasting you need to talk as well, just like in prayer only that in fasting there is a lot of waiting for the Lord in quietness, say for God to talk to you and so on. Also, you need be absorbed in meditating on the word of God after reading it. Look at these scriptures that touch on asking God and letting our requests known to him.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your, Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Matthew 7:7-11

To me, I think the first part of verse 7 about asking has more to do with prayer and the others following have more to do with fasting why? Knocking talks of a closed place or a blockage which when it is opened you can move in (that touches on the word that you have a break through - an opening) same to seeking. It is only by seeking and attempting to know more can one come to getting a solution or an answer to a problem (a big problem). All that calls for fasting, that is, digging deeper to get an answer; to get to the root cause. In the above scripture in verse 8 to 11 both talk of making known to our biological father or spiritual Father issues that affects us so that they can be solved and there is nothing in those verses that says that we just have to keep quiet and do nothing to get our needs or have our problems sorted out.

Chapter 2

Why should one fast?

There are many reasons why one should fast. Some of the reasons are as follows:

- Receiving bad news
- Grief (and there are many in life)
- Disaster
- Impending danger
- Emotional problems

Among many others.

IT came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Am'-m-no-ites, came against Je'-hosh'-a-phat to battle.

Then there came some that told Je'-hosh'-a-phat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side of Syria; and behold, they be in Haz'-a-zon-ta'-mar, which is En-ge'-di.

And Je'-hosh'-a-phat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

And Je'-hosh'-a-phat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever?

And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Se'-ir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade,

when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;

Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

Then upon Ja-ha'-zi-el, the son of Zech-a-ri'-ah, the son of Be-nai-ah, the son of Jei'-el, the son of Mat-ta-ni'-ah, a Levite of the sons of A'-saph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;

And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Je-hosh'-a-phat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

Tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Je-ru'-el.

Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you,

O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.

And Je-hosh'-a-phat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.

And the Levites, of the children of the Ko'-hath-ites, and of the children of Kor'-hites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

And they rose up early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Te-ko'-a: and as they went forth, Je-hosh'-a-phat, stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe in his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.

And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and

mount Se'-ir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Se'-ir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Se'-ir, every man helped to destroy another.

And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked at the multitude, and behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.

And when Je-hosh'-a-phat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

2 Chronicles 20:1-25

In the above case we find that king Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem went to seek the Lord in fasting and praying for God's protection and they found grace in the sight of the Lord God who fought the battle for them.

Many of us may have fought battles which were the Lord's unaware instead of fasting and praying and thereby giving the Lord an opportunity to fight for us.

And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to A-ha'-va; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi.

Then sent I for El-i-e'-zer, for Ar'-i-el, for Shem-ai'-ah, and for El-na'-than, and for Nathan, and for Zech-a-ri'-ah, and for Me'-shul'-lam, chief men; also for Joi'-a-rib, and for El-na'-than, men of understanding.

And I sent them with commandment unto Id'-do the chief at the place Cas-i-phi'-a, and I told them what they should say unto Id'-do, and to his brethren the Neth'-i-nim, at the place Cas-i-phi'-a, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God.

And by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mah'-li, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sher'-e-bi'-ah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;

And Hash-a-bi'-ah, and with him Jeshai'-ah of the sons of Me-rar'-i, his brethren and their sons, twenty;

Also of the Neth'-i-nim, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Neth'-i-nim: all of them were expressed by name.

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of A-ha'-va, that we might afflict ourselves before God, to seek of him a right way for us and for our little ones, and all our substance.

For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying. The hand of God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us

Ezra 8: 15-23

Ezra before returning to Jerusalem to restore the house of the Lord with vessels of: gold, silver and fine copper they first sook the Lord for protection against their enemies on the way by fasting and the Lord entreated them.

WHEN Mor'-de-ca-i perceived all that was done, Mor'-de-ca-i rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was a great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her.

Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mor'-de-ca-i, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.

Then called Esther for Ha'-tach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mor'-de-ca-i, to know what it was, and why it was.

So Ha'-tach went forth to Mor'-de-ca-i unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate.

And Mor'-de-ca-i, told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Ha'-man had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shu'-shan to destroy them, to show it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

And Ha'-tach came and told Esther the words of Mor'-de-ca-i.

Again Esther spake unto Ha'-tach, and gave him commandment unto Mor'-de-ca-i;

All the king's servants, and the people of the king provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

And they told to Mor'-de-ca-i Esther's words.

Then Mor'-de-ca-i, commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

The Esther bade them return Mor'-de-ca-i this answer.

Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shu'-shan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night and day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Esther 4

Esther received the challenge from Mordecai and took courage and obliged to go into a fast as the rest of the Jews and it worked if you read the next chapters of the book of Esther. What she requested Mordecai and the Jews in Shushan was a dry fast - no food and no drink for three days.

THE words of Ne-hem-i'-ah the son of Hach-a-li'-ah. And it came to pass in the month of Chis'-leu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shu'-shan the palace,

That Ha-na'-ni, one of my brethren came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

And I said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel,

which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the utter most part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

O LORD, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

AND it came to pass in the month Ni'-san, in the twentieth that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave

it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

And said unto the king, Let the king live forever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchers, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulches, that I may build it.

And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return?

So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, Let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

And a letter unto A'-saph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

When San-bal'-lat the Hor'-on-ite, and To-bi'-ah the servant, the Am'-mon-ite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.

Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.

Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.

And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said,

Let us rise up and build so they strengthened their hands for this good work.

But when San-bal'-ah the servant, the Am'-mon-ite, and Ge'-shem and Ara'-bian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn,

and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do?
will ye rebel against the king

Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 1 and 2

We can clearly see for ourselves that fasting and praying did it for Nehemiah and the men that were with him. Nehemiah found much favor in the sight of the king as a result of that fast and all his requests to the king were granted. Thanks be to the Lord God, the God of heaven who did intervene making it easy for Nehemiah to do that good work.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the

darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Ephesians 6:10-18

We are in a fierce spiritual warfare with the forces of darkness and for us to be strong in the spirit and in the power of the Lord's might, we must make all efforts including fasting to overcome the devil. Jesus Christ had gone for 40 days and 40 nights in fasting and when the

devil came to tempt him, the devil could not succeed and was utterly defeated in all his efforts (Matthew 4:1-11). No wonder Jesus taught his disciples the methodology of fasting (Matthew 6:16-18).

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.

Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 6:16-18

An interesting fact to note in verse 17- when thou fast, meaning fasting is a command from the Lord and is part and parcel in the Christian Walk.

And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.

If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:12-14

Fasting is crucial when there is a calamity in the land. Fasting is a sure way of humbling oneself before the Lord while seeking his face in prayer and of course repenting of one's sins to him. The soul is chastened when one is in fasting.

When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.

Psalms 69:10-11

Christians do go through many storms in life and it is in fasting and praying that one can calm the storms. Fasting can be likened to a Christian's service bay where one sorts

out spiritual matters that have negatively impacted on his or her life.

BUT the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for A'-chan, the son of Car'-mi, the son of Zab'-di, the son of Zer'-ah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

And Joshua sent men from Jericho to A'-i, which is beside Beth-a'-ven, on the east side of Beth-el, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed A'-i.

And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite A'-i; and make not all the people to labor thither; for they are but few.

So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of A'-i.

And the men of A'-i smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Sheb'-a-rim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their head.

And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Am'-o-rites, to destroy us would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!.

O Lord, What shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

For the Ca'-na-an-ites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies,

because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thee of; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.

And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

Joshua 7:1-15

The children of Israel had committed a trespass in the accursed thing and therefore they were defeated before their enemies and for that matter Joshua was perturbed and took to himself and the elders of Israel to fast and pray

seeking from God divine direction and the Lord God of Israel informed them of what had transpired and what they need to do.

And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these were men of war.

And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up first.

And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gib'-e-ah.

And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gib'-e-ah.

And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gib'-e-ah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men.

And the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.

(And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him)

And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day.

And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gib'-e-ah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword.

Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came up unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

And the children of Israel inquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, And Phin'-e-has, the son of El-e-a'-zar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother,

or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for tomorrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

And Israel set liers in wait round about Gib'-e-ah.

And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gib'-e-ah, as at other times.

And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gib'-e-ah in the field, about thirty men of Israel.

And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways.

And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Ba'-al-ta'-mar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gib'-e-ah.

And there came against Gib'-e-ah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil was near them.

And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and hundred men: all these drew the sword.

Judges 20:17-35

Quite an interesting twist of events! The children of Israel prayed to God twice seeking counsel to know if they need to go to battle against the children of Benjamin their brother and in all instances God gave them a go ahead but yet they were smitten and it is only when they fasted and prayed seeking counsel that the Lord not only gave them a go ahead but also told them of his deliverance against the children of Benjamin. Also, to note is that the children of Israel used a different approach in the battle by putting liars in wait and God for sure smote the children of Benjamin. The lesson here is that fasting and praying can bring a total difference where prayer alone has failed.

I can testify that many things have been revealed to me through fasting and praying which I wouldn't have known if I had not fasted. I do recall that after my conversion it took about a year or more and I happened to go to a night vigil in another town and one of the ministers challenged

the congregation by posing this question “Anyone who has brought even one soul to Christ since one was saved let him or her raise his or her hand up”. There were only a few hands that were raised up and I happened to be among those whose hand was down. The minister went on further and said that many who have been saved have not made any effort to witness to people so as to win even a single soul into the kingdom of God.

When I went back home, that question lingered in my mind and really disturbed me to the point I asked myself why I had not gotten even one soul to Christ yet I have been preaching to people? Maybe I had imposed myself by doing so or I am not worthy to serve the Lord, so I thought. After that incident and before long, a brother who was my prayer partner asked me to accompany him to a fast where they were to assemble with other brethren but I told him I was not able but requested him to remember me in prayer. The report I got from the brother was that another brother in the fast God spoke to this way “there is a brother here who has been sent by another brother to enquire from the Lord if he had made a mistake by preaching to people without any coming to the Lord. Go tell the brother that the

Lord has said “I the Lord is going to use him and confirm my word in miracles and signs”. When I received this good tiding, I was encouraged in my spirit and continued to preach and since then many, many, souls have been won to Christ to date, for His own glory, Alleluia.

God is faithful in his word. The early church practiced fasting and praying and had great breakthroughs (Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4, 4:23-31, 9:1-19, 13:1-3) and we too need emulate them.

From that experience I took fasting seriously and in life take time to fast and pray now and then.

The secret of killing the flesh is only by fasting as in fasting the flesh is weakened and the spirit is strengthened and when one is not fasting the flesh is strengthened and the spirit is weakened. No wonder apostle Paul said the kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking. It is only in fasting can one stand strong in the Lord. But fasting will not work for financial breakthrough unless one has been faithful and regular in paying out tithes and giving offerings to the Lord at one's local church.

Therefore brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Romans 8:12-14

Quite a challenge. Not to fast in the walk of faith is to live after the flesh and do lead to spiritual death. The deeds of the body can only be killed by God's Spirit through fasting or else it is very active and can lead one to fall into sin.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Galatians 5:16-17

Fasting enables one to walk in the Spirit as it strengthens one's spirit and weakens the body so that the Spirit leads in one's life as it is stronger.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

Colossians 3:5-6

The deeds of the body, that is flesh, must be killed in fasting for one to overcome the world.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Philippians 3:17-19

To keep on eating and drinking make one's belly be one's God, devoid of fasting and therefore becoming an enemy of the cross of Christ and that can eventually lead to destruction! To mind earthly things is to be too busy with the things of the world and to forget to fast in seeking the face of God. Remember man fell in the Garden of Eden by eating the forbidden fruit. Read James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17.

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distress for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:10

That statement by Apostle Paul being led by the Holy Spirit is quite puzzling that when he is weak, then he is strong!!! How? When one is made weak in the body through fasting, one is actually strong in the spirit by the Holy Spirit. Nothing mattered much to Apostle Paul but to be strong in God in his spirit.

In that scripture we do see that he had visions and revelations of the Lord and such occurrences are more in an environment of fasting than in any other environment. Let me give you some scriptures.

But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

Luke 5:30-35

My interest is in verses 33 to 35, being the subject matter. Jesus Christ as the bridegroom was with his disciples (the Church) as the bride and as Jesus was their Master and Lord, he was doing a lot for them and therefore there was no much need for them to fast then. But when Christ left them, they now had a lot of opposition with persecutions

and it was now necessary that they must fast. In fact, the Lord told them in advance that they will face a lot of suffering. (Matthew 10: 16-33). Look at verse 33 in the book of Luke chapter 5 it is talking of fasting together with prayer. Fasting has to be complemented with prayer to give it real meaning and to really be effective and complete.

Now you are going to see another scripture that shows that the disciples were shown tell-tale signs that it was going to reach a point when they must fast though with Jesus Christ with them, he solved such problems for them.

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

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

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.

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

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

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.

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

Matthew 17:14-21

Things that are not possible with prayer alone are made possible by both prayer and fasting. So here is a good reason why one need to go into a fast apart from prayer alone. Prayer as well as fasting complement each other in a way so that the combination produces a formidable spiritual force able to tackle any force before it.

Now here is a good example of the reason for going into a fast. An occurrence of a catastrophe.

THE word of the LORD that came to Jo'-el the son of Pe-thu'-el.

Hear this, ye old man, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

For a nation is come up upon my land; strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and hath the cheek of a great lion.

He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.

The meat offering and drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD'S ministers, mourn.

The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and barley; because the harvest of the field is perished.

The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of the LORD your God. Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD you God, and cry unto the LORD,

Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

Is not meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

The seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered.

How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.

O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

Joel 1

The prophet Joel received the word of the Lord and was giving prophecy of what would befall the land of Judah in the form of locust plagues and long dry spells and that the children of Israel need to sanctify a fast all the inhabitants of the land need to cry to the Lord in repentance as those coming events indicates some kind of judgment to come from the Lord. He is ready to intercede if the people do the

needful. The impact of the judgment to be so bad that even drunkards (people who are not sober in mind) are requested to awake as there will be no new wine for them, and that they need to weep and howl, the priests will lack, why? because in the house of the Lord there will be no meat offering and drink offering as the people will have none to bring to the house of the Lord (And mind you, the priests depended on the offerings of the people to the Lord for their livelihood (Deuteronomy 18:1-8)), even the livestock and the beasts were going to be affected. It would be that bad, a total breakdown on the agriculture of the land- a disaster.

Everybody was going to be affected by the impending danger and therefore all the inhabitants had to cry and weep and repent before the Lord for a solution. If there is an impending danger you don't just sit holding your hands but have to try and do as much as you can to avoid getting into the danger and being destroyed by it. That can be done by only seeking God for divine intervention. There is nothing that draws God's attention than justified (right) fasting. Why? Because if in the natural one does not take any meals or drinks those living with him or her will be concerned

and ask to know why? Same with God, if his child goes in fasting and prayer it is definite he will be concerned that whatever troubles / ails his child is serious and will quickly attend to it. So praying with fasting combined is the fastest way to reach God. It will move God the more.

But get to know that it need also involve crying, weeping and howling going by its nature.

In addition to the reasons raised earlier for a fast, one can fast and pray waiting upon God for a fresh anointing, that is, more of the glory of God. I now bring a scripture or two which may point to that fact.

THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and sitteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Matthew 4:1-10

Jesus Christ went into fasting 40 days and 40 nights prior to beginning his public ministry. He had fore seen the devil not only coming to tempt him, but the many challenges he would be facing in ministry including his arrest, persecutions and death. one need to fast too in advance for

the coming eventualities in life (which are many of course) fasting is a spiritual preparedness of some sort. We see that after the fast, Satan began to tempt Jesus to no avail. Jesus was well equipped and triumphed over the devil. One need fasting as a sharpening tool for spiritual alertness/ sharpness. Going without fasting and always drinking and eating only dulls one's spirit and activates the flesh (the body) the more (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

From the foregoing, one can see that there are many reasons for one to go into fasting. Make sure that you have a date to fast now and then in your life. Although it is not fun (enjoyable) to your body when doing so but it has a tremendous effect on your spirituality. Let me just share some few of the experiences I have had:

- When you want to go on a mission God can give you the message to take and even show to you what will happen at the mission field.
- Unlike when you go to minister and had not been in prayer and fasting; where only two or one and sometimes no one gets converted to Christ. By fasting and praying many, many souls are saved by

the Lord and you can be shocked and be joyful at the same time.

Fasting and praying is an issue with many Christians who find it easier to just continue with eating and drinking without any break at some point. That should not be the case as they just have to eat in moderation and often take time to fast and pray. Let us not be addicted to eating throughout as we don't live to eat but eat to live and when we stop eating for some time we don't die as I have never read even one case recorded in the Holy Scripture where one died as a result of fasting and praying.

During the time Noah lived people were fond of eating and drinking and were spiritually weak and were not attentive to spiritual matters and they perished in the floods and only Noah and his family were saved (Genesis 7, Matthew 24:36-42, Hebrews 11:7).

The Israelites also were fond of eating and drinking and gave much esteem to it and many ended dying in the wilderness and did not enter the promised land (Exodus 16:1-31, Numbers 11).

Now we Christians too if we are not careful on the issue of food of eating and eating, drinking and drinking we are no better than those people and we can find ourselves missing to enter heaven which is why we were saved so that we are reconciled back to God and have a golden opportunity to be with him eternally in heaven after the life here on earth.

Food in itself is not bad only we need moderate our eating for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

Therefore let us not be under the bondage of food eating throughout this life as God will destroy both food and our mortal bodies as heaven is a spiritual life altogether and eating and drinking is not a big issue at all (1 Corinthians 10:23, Romans 14:17), for there, it is praising and worshipping the Lord of Lords and the King of kings (Revelation 4).

We have been advised by the Lord Jesus himself that as Christians we need to be watchful in life. Now for sure one cannot be watchful enough or watchful at all unless one go into fasting and praying now and then (Matthew 26:36-46). Christianity is spirituality as Christ is a spiritual being though here on earth he took the form of man to reveal to us the deity of God and to bring salvation to us (all

mankind, as all had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 2:10-15, Romans 3:23-26). The exception on fasting can apply only to the sick and lactating mothers.

Chapter 3

Methods of fasting

First of all in fasting one need to teach oneself to be: Silent, quiet and wait as in God; fasting is the expression of waiting on God.

I WILL stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

Habakkuk 2:1

Habakkuk was saying he was going to be attentive to hear what the Lord had to say to him (that calls for keenness and quietness) in order to notice something and hear something.

There are at least three

methods one can go for a fast and those are as follows:

- A complete fast
- A partial fast
- A liquid fast

i) A complete fast

This is a method of fasting where one goes without both food and drink in praying and waiting on God. Examples are as follows:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water.

And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 34:27-28

And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of the meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

And he came thither unto a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and said unto him, What does thou here, E-li'-jah?

1 Kings 19:8-9

ii) Partial fast

This a method of fasting where one goes with no pleasant bread by refraining from certain meals or restricting the intake of certain foods.

IN the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Bel-te-shaz'-zar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long; and he understood the things, and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Daniel 10:1-3

iii) Liquid fast

This is a method of fasting where one goes without food but takes only liquids in small quantities at appointed/set times, such liquids as fresh juice or vegetable soup.

Things to do before a fast

1. If already married inform your spouse of your intention or if live with another person/s do inform and if live with parents inform them too.
2. If intending to go for a long fast, take a lot of fruits and vegetables for your digestive system, prior to the fast.
3. Determine the number of days your fast will take and inform the Lord. Also disengage all the opposing forces and cover yourself and your family members with the blood of Jesus Christ in faith.
4. Look for a quiet place where you cannot be disturbed by somebody and stay there unto the end of the fast.
5. Remember to begin talking to God as the first thing by reporting of known and unknown sins in your life and asking the Lord for forgiveness and cleansing before beginning to present your case to him.
6. Abstain from all forms of pleasure including sex (1 Corinthians 7:5)
7. Devote time to prayer, reading the Bible, self – examination followed by repentance if find some guilt in the process; meditate on the word of God and rest before the Lord.

8. Ideally one should not be working during a fast unless that is absolutely necessary and it is light work.
9. Bathe your body frequently.
10. Brush your teeth daily

In your fast don't involve in any of these:

- The drinking of tea or coffee
- The eating of sweets
- The chewing of chew gums

Things to do after a fast

1. Break your fast gradually especially if it was a complete fast. You start with liquids like dilute fresh juices, vegetable soups and porridge.
2. When finally starting to eat solid food, don't start by eating a lot as your digestive system has been idle for quite some time, or else you will end up with stomach pains.
3. Do not break a fast with such things like soft drinks, bread or meat but get to normal eating slowly.

The attire that can be used in a fast.

And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth.

Isaiah 22:12

And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

1 Kings 21:27

The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.

For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.

Jeremiah 4:7-8

Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of

my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD.

Joel 1:13-14

And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

Daniel 9:3

AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

Arise, go unto Nin'-e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nin'-e-veh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nin'-e-veh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'-e-veh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nin'-e-veh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greater of them even to the least of them.

For word came to the king of Nin'-e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nin'-e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water:

But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Jonah 3

By their fast and in genuine repentance God stopped judging of that city of Nineveh. If the people did not

believe the word of God from the prophet Jonah, they would have perished in forty days.

Fasting is normally done for a specific cause one at a time for God's intervention in a particular situation or for direction.

A fast should have agendas but ideally should have one agenda at worst two agendas. Fasting must include prayer as well (Psalm 35:13) Fasting equally is for chastening and humbling the soul (Psalms 69:10; 35:13).

Chapter 4

Types of fasting

There are three types of fasts going by the number of individuals involved in it and are as follows:

- Individual
- Corporate
- Chain
- National

a) Individual fast

As the name implies, an individual can decide to go on a fast, examples are as follows in the various records of scriptures.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water.

And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Exodus 34:27-28

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD.

And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that U-ri'-ah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

2 Samuel 12:13-17

THE words of Ne-hem-i'-ah the son of Hach-a-li'-ah. And it came to pass in the month Chis'-leu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shu'-shan the palace,

That Ha-na'-ni, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there is the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 1:1-4

IN the first year of Da-ri'-us the son of A-has-u-e'-rus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chal-de'-ans;

In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood the books and the number of years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

Daniel 9:1-3

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phan'-u-el, of the tribe of Asher: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day.

Luke 2:36-37

And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

And he was three days, without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

Acts 9:8-9

b) Corporate fast

This is a fast where a group of church members or the whole congregation, or a family or friends can decide to go on a fast jointly together.

Examples of corporate fasting is as follows below:

And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they came and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

Mark 2:18

NOW there was in the church that was at An'-ti-och certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Ni'-ger and Lu'-ci-us of Cy-re-ne, and Man'-a-en, which had been brought up with Herod the te'-trarch, and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 13:1-3

c) Chain fasting

This is a fast where a group decides to fast for a period of time on a particular issue but allocating a day each to fast

on the issue such that it is a daily chain of fasting for each member in the group until all the members have had a chance, that is, if it was a group of say 30 people the chain fasting would last 30 days without a break in the fast. This kind of fast is common in some churches.

d) National fast

This fast is where a whole nation can decide to go on a fast necessitated by say a National disaster and can be proclaimed by the king or president of that nation or by a prophet of God. Examples are as listed hereunder:

And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Miz'-peh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

And they gathered together to Miz'-peh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, we have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Miz'-peh.

1 Samuel 7:5-6

IT came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Am'-mo-n-ites, came against Je-hosh'-a-phat to battle.

Then there came some that told Je-hosh'-a-phat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against there from beyond the sea on this side of Syria; and behold, they be in Haz'-a-zon-ta'-mar, which is En-ge'-di.

And Je-hosh'-a-phat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

2 Chronicles 20:1-3

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of A-ha'-va, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

Ezra 8:21

The Esther bade them return Mor'-de-ca-i this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shu'-shan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night and day: I also and my maidens will fast

likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Esther 4:15-16

The vine is dried up and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD,

Joel 1:12-14

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:

Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.

Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

Joel 2:12-17

AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

Arise, go unto Nin'-e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nin'-e-veh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nin'-e-veh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nin'-e-veh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greater of them even to the least of them.

For word came to the king of Nin'-e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and he of Nin'-e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nin'-e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water:

But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Jonah 3

Chapter 5

The Importance of Fasting

In fasting and praying one abstains from taking in food just as God told Adam to abstain (never to take) the fruit lest he dies (Genesis 2:15-17). That fruit had mixed elements of both good and evil making it to be a bad fruit.

God is holy and wanted man to remain pure. God we know is for holiness and purity hence not for any impurity or defilement of any sort (Isaiah 5:20, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Revelation 3:14-16).

Now going back to my earlier scripture (Genesis 2:15-17) God knew that if Adam knew evil he would go ahead and do it and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a). Sin brings first a spiritual death and breaks God's relationship with man and then physical death follow later. (Colossians 2:1-2, Romans 5:12, Hebrews 9:27). But God created both Adam and Eve for good works in righteousness as He himself is a Righteous God and therefore after man's fall God had to send his Son Jesus Christ to the earth to restore man back to God and to good works (2 Corinthians 5:21, Titus 2:11-14).

There must be times for a Christian to put aside food and drinks and be in serious business with God in fasting and praying as it is with food that Satan came and tempted Jesus (Matthew 4:1-4) and later man and still continue to do the same to date by having people to love foods and drinks all the time and to engage in all sorts of leisure, leaving no room in their lives for God and thereby pleasing the body more than pleasing their God.

No wonder God reminds Christians and warns them of such love in the scriptures (James 4:4-5, 1 John 2:15-17).

Fasting is important as it enhances a Christian's spiritual well being.

Fasting is a very important tool for a Christian and must be used to get results where prayer alone has not born any fruit. Fasting is a weapon of deliverance. The early church knew about this important truth and had breakthroughs in ministry work. We too can borrow a leaf and do likewise. It is through fasting that one wages fierce spiritual warfare against the kingdom of Satan as it is a very dangerous weapon.

It is also through fasting that a Christian is able to tame (humble) the body by weakening the body and at the same

time strengthening the spirit. I doubt if there is any better way to humble oneself except in fasting with prayers. The goings in the Christian Walk can get really tough and a Christian has only one option to get tougher, by engaging in prayer with fasting. I have realized that many tough issues are overcome by fasting.

Also, on the same note, many puzzles in one's life can only be unraveled by seeking the face of the Lord in prayer and fasting.

Many revelations can be received from God when seeking for his face in prayer and fasting example is in the case of Daniel the prophet of God. Just as Jesus told his disciples on the issue of the importance of prayer, the same applies to the importance of fasting. Many temptations and some disasters in life can be overcome and avoided by these two: frequency in prayer as well as in fasting. A good example is in the case of the life of Samson that ended rather badly on his life. It is not recorded even once, that Samson went into prayer or into fasting and the result was tragic. (Judges 16: 4-21). The Bible records both Moses and David as humble men, Moses it says was very meek above all the

men which were upon the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3). Both these two were men of prayer and fasting.

AFTERWARD he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh east ward, and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

Ezekiel 47: 1-5

AND it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gen-nes'-a-ret,

And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zeb'-e-dee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

Luke 5:1-10

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

(But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

John 7:37-39

All the above three scriptures talk of water and water is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

Hence the need for us to be submerged in fasting and praying for more anointing and revelation from the Lord.

Launching into the deep can be equated to getting into fasting and praying (as it is in the physical so is in the spiritual). Without doing that we remain in the flesh and all our efforts usually comes to nought (as the case of Simon in verse 4 and 5 of the book of Luke). The only thing we are left with is to repent (as Simon did in verses 7 and 8) for not doing what is expected of us as Christians (to fast and pray).

We need to be reminded that Moses, Elijah and Jesus at some point fasted for 40 days and 40 nights and we can see how that impacted on their ministries.

But on the above example get me right - we have not been commanded to fast for 40 days and 40 nights as the trio did, but the command is that we be fasting and praying. The number of days the Holy Spirit shall guide us going by the prevailing circumstances we are in.

IN the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Bel-te-shaz'-zar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hid'-de-kel;

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of U'-phaz:

His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and feet like a color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the Palms of my hands.

And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, am I am come for thy words.

Daniel 10:1-12

Daniel who loved to pray and fast before the Lord had a vision and understood what was to come during this end-time. An angel was officially sent to him to explain/enlighten him further on those coming events.

The angel referred to Daniel as a man greatly beloved. Probably because of his attitude of liking to know more of the things of God through seeking the face of God in fasting and prayer. Remember even in the previous chapter of chapter 9, Daniel was at it, seeking the face of the Lord in prayer and fasting. No wonder his words were heard by God on the first day he began to fast before God- very great. As if that was not enough, a messenger was sent with the answer to his prayer and fasting- very great indeed.

Now if you and I want to begin to get revelations from the throne room of God, we better begin to do the same, though not necessarily fasting for three weeks, but as the Spirit will lead us. Very good indeed. These received the word of the Lord telling them where Barnabas and Saul (Paul) ought to be working. Suppose they had not fasted and prayed? Could they have known the will of God at that particular time?

I doubt it. That also, shows how important it is to go into a fast-much can be revealed to you as you can see recorded in the scriptures.

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Acts 14:23

Apostles Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted and then chose and ordained elders in each church, commending them to the Lord. That I believe was made possible by fasting where God could reveal a lot of information on the state of each church and those in it.

The apostles did not know them individually as they had not been long with them, but God knows everyone fully- and is the one who can guide on who need to be in leadership and so on.

Then Esther bade them return Mor'-de-ca-i this answer, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shu'-shan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Esther 4:15-16

If you read chapter 3 you find Haman's plot to have all the Jews killed but in chapter 4 it is only the fasting that saved the Jews, as you read further chapter 5 through to 7, And therefore fasting is very important. In the true fact the war was a spiritual one and was won spiritually by the fast that Jews resorted to.

So the people of Nin'-e-veh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

For word came unto the king of Nin'-e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from his throne, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Jonah 3:5-6, 10

I like the people of Nineveh as well as their king. When they got word warning them by the mouth of prophet Jonah they knew God was serious and they swung into action immediately and saved themselves.

Why can't other nations fear God and do likewise!?

GIVE ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:

Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.

Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the

bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.

He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck, honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;

Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bastan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he

forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

Deuteronomy 32:1-15

Before Moses' death God had told him in advance of his imminent death (Deuteronomy 31:14-16). Earlier God had warned the Israelites not to forget and forsake him when they reach the promised land (Deuteronomy 6:1-12; 8:1-20) but the children of Israel forsook their God and Moses spoke to them in a song as you have read in the above scripture. Now there lies the danger of over eating and drinking by Christians and being complacent in life. However sweet life may be one must always take time now and then to go into fasting and praying in seeking the Lord and his will. If that is not done one's belly becomes a god (Philippians 3:17-21) and one loses the esteem on godly virtues and slides back to the life in the flesh thereby forsaking the Rock of one's salvation.

Chapter 6

The length of a fast

The determination of the length of a fast depends on the magnitude and seriousness and the urgency of the matter at hand. It can also depend on the leading of the Holy Spirit in the individual directing how long one should be in a fast.

In the scriptures we have record of those who fasted and the number of days they took in the fast. That can serve as a guide though I do think one may go on a fast for any other number of days, apart from the ones recorded. The important factor is that one need to fast and fast in the right way which is acceptable before God and which you have already read in the previous chapter. A one day fast as recorded in the scripture equals 24 hours (that is, a day and a night).

1. A 1 day's fast

Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.

2. A 3 days' fast

Then Esther bade them return Mor'-de-cai this answer,
Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shu'-
shan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three
days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast
likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not
according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Esther 4:15-16

3. A 7 days' fast

David therefore besought God for the child; and David
fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.
And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise
him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat
bread with them.

2 Samuel 12:16-17

4. A 14 days' fast

And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

Acts 27:33-36

5. A 21 days' fast

IN the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Bel-te-shaz'-zar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Daniel 10:1-3

6. A 40 days' fast

And the LORD said unto Moses,

Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments,

Exodus 34:27-28

The meaning of the fasts.

1. 3 Days' fast (Esther 4)

It is an **urgent fast** and is related with emergencies - matters threatening life or property e.g. a court case etc. It should be a dry fast.

7 Days' fast (2 Samuel 12)

It is a **sanctification fast** for such cases as adultery or fornication. It should be a dry fast. Three days to be laid as a foundation and then from day 4 onwards to go on warm water. Bath daily.

David fasted for 7 days so as to be cleansed completely of his sin (the number 7 stands for complete or perfect). Naaman was told to go dip himself seven times in river Jordan for the cleansing and healing of his leprosy (a physical act) for he was more conversant with physical battles which he fought and not in spiritual warfare (fasting) as what he was told was an easier option just as his servants advised when he complained on the prophet's instruction and was adamant (2 Kings 5:1-14).

14 Days' fast (Acts 27)

This is a **storms' fast** and is when you continue to have same problem over and over e.g. in health, finance etc. To be a dry fast for 3 days as a foundation and to go on warm water from day 4 onwards to the end. Bath daily.

21 Days' fast (Daniel 10)

This is a **prophetic fast** and is where the Lord had promised you a thing and it has not happened in that you have not received. God leads you to fast, looking at a promise that is now long overdue e.g. In one years' time, but after one and a half years or two years' time you have not received the promise. To be a dry fast and having 3 days as a foundation and from day 4 onwards to the end go on warm water. Bath daily.

40 Days' fast (Matthew 4)

This is a **leadership fast, a decreed fast'**. Mainly decreed by God to leaders to prepare them to accomplish a thing-specific, divine purpose. To be a dry fast lay 3 days as a foundation. From day 4 onwards to day 40 go on warm water. Bath daily.

Note: One can test going for a fast as a beginner by say half a day and next time a whole day and keep on increasing progressively as one gets the grace to withstand it. As for dry fasting 3 days is a standard or a platform and if one has to continue from day 4 onwards because of the limitations of the human body (which can go completely without water

for only 3 days and without food for 40 days) one need to be taking some water from day 4 of fasting up to the end of one's fasting period (Matthew 4:1-2, Luke 4:1-2). When going beyond 3 days' fast one can choose a partial fast or a liquid fast as one need not come out of fasting midway before the days of the fast as it can be a futile exercise. So it is important to be led by the Holy Spirit in the number of days (Luke 4:1-2).

Chapter 7

The right and wrong way of a fast

There is something like the right way of fasting (fasting acceptable before God) and the wrong way of fasting (fasting not acceptable before God).

A. The right way of fasting

God recognizes the following in a fast:

- Sincerity of heart
- Repentance
- Humility
- Justice

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Psalm 51:17

And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses.

And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal.

And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat:

When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Exodus 40:29-32

The washing of the hands and the feet was but a fore shadow of the need of repentance by those that approach God. Christians are priests by virtue of putting their faith in Christ Jesus (1 Peter 2:7-9) and are obliged to repent of all sin prior to presenting their prayers to God when in a fast.

And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.

If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their

wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:12-14

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isaiah 57:15

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Luke 18:13-14

Surely he scorneth the scorers: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Proverbs 3:34

Is it not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward.

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be

like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

Isaiah 58:6-12

And the word of the LORD came unto Zech-a-ri'-ah, saying,

Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

And oppress not the widow, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

Zechariah 7:8-10

The above are some of the things to observe prior to entering in a fast. Other advices is from the following scriptures:

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 6:9-14

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face;

That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

B. The wrong way of fasting

God hates a fast entered in by strife, by ill motive, by pleasures, with pride and for showing off, as well in unrepentance.

CRY aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou taketh no knowledge?

Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors.

Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

Isaiah 58:1-5

But Jez'-e-bel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jez'-reel-ite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

And Jez'-e-bel his wife said unto him, Dost thou not govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jez'-reel-ite.

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

And set two men, sons of Be'-li-al, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

1 Kings 21:5-10

Very wicked indeed and proclaim a fast before a holy God!

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in a week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Luke 18:9-14

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. They have their reward.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which seeth in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 6:16-18

AND the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in a city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds.

But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

And I gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed U-ri'-ah the Hit'-tite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of U'-ri-ah the Hit'-tite to be thy wife.

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David,

The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that U'-ri'-ah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died.

And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshiped: then he came to his own

house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

2 Samuel 12:1-20

In the above account we see David had sinned before God and God sent prophet Nathan to him to point to him his sin (for him to acknowledge in repentance) which he did and God forgave him. But David went ahead to fast for the baby's life, as if he had no child. That act was uncalled for and if it were not for God's love on him, God would have killed him instead and left the child to live. But God saw the child as a product of sin and decided to take the child away but still punish David accordingly as he is a righteous God (verses 10 to 12). Read also Galatians 6:7 and Matthew 7:12. I think David did not know God was not happy to see him fasting (actually boycotting to eat before God). Luckily enough David saw his servants whispering among themselves and perceived the child had died. If he did not, he would have continued boycotting to eat probably to his death as even his servants feared to go back to him to persuade him or give him the sad news (verses 17 to 18).

My advice to you reader is that think soberly before you take a decision to go in prayer and fasting, if you don't you may end up more or else like David- wasting your time and energy.

Chapter 8

Examples of fasts

The following are sampled examples of fasts which were done by different individuals as is recorded in the scriptures.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water.

And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Si'-nai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone, while he talked with him.

Exodus 34:27-30

AND Ahab told Jez'-e-bel all that E-li'-jah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

Then Jez'-e-bel sent a messenger unto E-li'-jah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.

And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-she'-ba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Hor'-eb the mount of God.

1 Kings 19:1-8

AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

Arise, go unto Nin'-e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nin'-e-veh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nin'-e-veh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'-e-veh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nin'-e-veh, believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

Jonah 3:1-5

THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

Matthew 4:1-2

IN the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Bel-te-shaz'-zar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

In those days Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hid'-de-kel;

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of U'-phaz:

His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength.

Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

But, the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes,

came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I become dumb.

And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my Lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

For how can the servant of this my Lord talk with this my Lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.

And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Then said he, knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee?
and now will I return, to fight with the prince of Persia: and
when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.
But I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of
truth: and there is none that holdeth me in these things, but
Michael your prince.

Daniel 10

From the above account we see that fasting and praying is
involved with spiritual warfare and the enemy must finally
be overcome. We also do note that many things we come to
understand only by fasting and praying just as it happened
to Daniel. Much was revealed to him just as we can see
also in the next two chapters (Chapters 11 and 12).

NOW there were in the church that was at An'-ti-och
certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that
was called Ni'-ger, and Lu'-ci-us of Cy-re'-ne, and Man'-
a-en, which had been brought up with Herod the te'-trarch,
and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost
said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work
whereunto I have called them.

And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 13:1-3

And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to A-ha'-va; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi.

Then sent I for El-i-e'-zer, for Ar'-i-el, for Shem-ai'-ah, and for El-na'-than, and for Nathan, and for Zech-a-ri'-ah, and for Me'-shul'-lam, chief men; also for Joi'-a-rib, and for El-na'-than, men of understanding.

And I sent them with commandment unto Id'-do the chief at the place Cas-i-phi'-a, and I told them what they should say unto Id'-do, and to his brethren the Neth'-i-nim, at the place Cas-i-phi'-a, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God.

And by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mah'-li, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sher'-e-bi'-ah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;

And Hash-a-bi'-ah, and with him Jeshai'-ah of the sons of Me-rar'-i, his brethren and their sons, twenty;

Also of the Neth'-i-nim, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Neth'-i-nim: all of them were expressed by name.

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of A-ha'-va, that we might afflict ourselves before God, to seek of him a right way for us and for our little ones, and all our substance.

For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying. The hand of God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.

Ezra 8: 15-21

Ezra and the people, the priests, and the chief men of Israel did fast asking God for protection on their return journey back to Jerusalem and God heard and answered their prayers and protected them.

Then there came some that told Je'-hosh'-a-phat, saying,
There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond
the sea on this side of Syria; and behold, they be in Haz'-a-
zon-ta'-mar, which is En-ge'-di.

And Je'-hosh'-a-phat feared, and set himself to seek the
LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the
LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek
the LORD.

And Je'-hosh'-a-phat stood in the congregation of Judah
and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new
court,

And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in
heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the
heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so
that none is able to withstand thee?

Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of
this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed
of Abraham thy friend for ever?

And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary
therein for thy name, saying,

If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Se'-ir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;

Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

Then upon Ja-ha'-zi-el, the son of Zech-a-ri'-ah, the son of Be-nai-ah, the son of Jei'-el, the son of Mat-ta-ni'-ah, a Levite of the sons of A'-saph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;

And he said, Harken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Je-hosh'-a-phat, Thus saith the

LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but Gods.

Tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of brook, before the wilderness of Je-ru'-el.

Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.

2 Chronicles 20:1-17

Notes to the reader

I take this opportunity to thank you for reading this second volume of ‘A Christian and Fasting Life’ and believe it has been of good use to you. In case you have any comments to make please do so using the address given below.

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