

## Matthew 6:7 & 17

***And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.***

***But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face.***

(Underlined for emphasis)

When was the last time fasted?

"I've never fasted" you may say. But in response you may say to me or other Christian who you know that fast, "You fast, wow, you're one of those Christians" or "You're a really strong Christian cause you fast." My, or our reply is, no I'm a weak Christian, that's why I need to fast. Also when you say to someone who you think is super spiritual or a strong Christian "You're one of those Christians?" Really, I thought we were all the same Christians. There are no different Christians. Sure we all have different gifts, but there are things that Jesus tells us all to do as Christians.

Notice that there are two things that Jesus said in today's devotion verses. "***when you pray***" and "***when you fast***" Noticed He did say if you Fast or if you Pray, but WHEN. Also notice He didn't say that if you have been a Christian for a certain amount of time or if you are a pastor or serve in the church or have certain gifts. No, praying and fasting is something that each and every Christian should be doing.

Are you struggling with a particular sin and can't seem to get rid of it? You have tried praying and praying about it, but still you fail. Have you tried praying and fasting about it?

Your kid is hooked on drugs and/or alcohol. He or she goes out and parties all the time and you pray and pray for him or her, but there is no change. Have you tried praying and fasting for him or her?

Jesus said this in regards to a demon possessed man who the disciples could not cast the demon out of.

✠ **Mark 9:29** So He said to them, "***This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.***"

There's a huge decision you need to make in your life, and you have prayed and prayed about it, but no answer from the Lord. Have you prayed and fasted about it?

Queen Esther had something huge that needed to be done. Even though she was Queen, she could not simply go before the king (her husband) unless she was called for. If she tried to go before the king, she could actually be killed if he was in a bad mood. But she needed to go before the king because her people, the children of Israel, were going to be killed if she didn't.

So what did she do? She posted it on Facebook and picketed outside the castle.

No, she didn't do that.

I know, she got her husband, the king drunk so she could get what she wanted.

Nope that wasn't it. The truth is she said:

† **Esther 4:16** *"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"*

This all sounds good, but you're not sure how to fast. Well I would recommend a really good book on it titled "**God's chosen fast: A spiritual; and practical guide to fasting**" by **Arthur Wallis**. It gives great biblical insight on fasting.

Maybe you are thinking, "Well, I'll pray about it." Really, Jesus says *when you fast* so what is there to pray about. It's some you need to start doing. When? Well, personally I usually do water fasts on weekends, because I have a normal job. A Daniel fast (eating only fruits and Veggies) I have done for several weeks, because I can still work while eating those things.

People talk about fasting from social media for a week or a month, which is good and if you feel lead by the Lord to do that, great. I've fasted for a time from TV myself. But honestly when the bible talks about fasting it's in regards to food.

Another suggestion if you have never fasted before would be to do a liquid fast, say for the weekend. That may sound easy, but try it for a weekend where you do nothing but drink liquids. It's tougher then you may think.

Also for those of you with medical conditions, I would encourage you to consult with your doctor before you fast.

But simply, just start doing what Jesus said we should be doing, which is praying and fasting.

† **Joel 1:14 (KJV)** *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.*