

# When Not If

Steve Berger January 10, 2016

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## Prayer and Fasting for the Church...

*...nation, and world is being emphasized more now than at any time in the last 30 years.*

- a) Franklin Graham— plans to visit every US capital city between now and the election, calling for sacred assemblies to pray
- b) “Cry Out to the Lord” meeting Pastor Steve attended; one third of all protestant churches represented; how to get people of God praying

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## Dr. Rutland :21 Seconds to Change Your World — The Lord’s Prayer...

- **Matthew 6:9-13**

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, for ever.  
Amen.

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## Fasting is a “when” for followers of Jesus, not an “if”!

### Jesus is our example

- **Matthew 4:1-2**  
Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.
- If Jesus needed to fast, how much more do I?

### Heart motive is everything

- **Matthew 6:16-18**  
“Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”
- don't be a hypocrite, fasting to be seen by men, sad, disfigured face; has its own reward
- **Luke 18:11-12**  
The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'
- his arrogance fueled his fasting, his fasting fueled his arrogance; his prayers NOT heard

- **Isaiah 58:1-5**

"Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast. Shout aloud! Don't be timid. Tell my people Israel of their sins! Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about Me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask Me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near Me. 'We have fasted before You!' they say. 'Why aren't You impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and You don't even notice it!' "I will tell you why!" I respond. "It's because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with Me. You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the LORD?"

- playing, pretending, going through the motions, NO HEART-CHANGE, NO LIFE-CHANGE, NO HEART-HUNGER, that's NOT fasting... "God I need You... what change do You want in me? God Your church needs You, God this nation needs You, God this world needs You. I'm drawing near to pray, fast, repent, stand in the gap, intercede..."

**Heart motive makes or breaks our fast,  
heart motive causes us to be heard or unheard in heaven!**

***So — Jesus is our example, Heart motive is everything and...***

**Our reward is guaranteed**

- **Matthew 6:18** — your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly
- **Matthew 4** — Victory over temptation — living a fasted lifestyle brings victory!
- **Matthew 17:14-21** — Power over the enemy — this kind only goes out by prayer and fasting
- **Acts 10:30-33** — Angelic visitation — Cornelius praying and fasting, angel, directs
- **Acts 13:2** — Holy Spirit reveals God's will — prayer, fasting, speaking, revealing
- **Ezra 8:21-23** — Receives strategic guidance and protection — prayer, fasting, safe
- **Daniel 1:12-17** — Received knowledge, skill, wisdom, understanding in dreams and visions; **Daniel 10** — prayer and fasting 21 days, vision, angel, encouragement, "you're heard in heaven, I've come because of your words"

***Final reward of prayer and fasting that needs to be adopted today...***

- **Nehemiah 1:3-11**

And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire." So it was, when I heard these words that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said: "I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.' Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." For I was the king's cupbearer.

***So important...from the comfort and ease of Babylon's Palace and the King's presence, Nehemiah's heart breaks for hurting people... so must ours, God break our hearts... weeping, prayer and fasting... became favor, provision, protection, prosperity... REWARD!***

## **OH WHAT MIGHT GOD DO IF WE GIVE OURSELVES TO PRAYER AND FASTING?**

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### **CHALLENGE — Individually and Corporately**

**FAST and Pray for the next 21 days**

*(through January 31)*

***The TYPE of FAST is optional — the Sacrifice and Focus is not!***

FAST for the next 21 days, whatever and however you feel compelled, go for it with sacrifice and focus.

Daily suggestions will be on the church web site, and an early morning video will be on Pastor Steve's and Grace Chapel's FaceBook pages.

**Let's Press in, Raise the bar, Be hungry for God, Anticipate His reward!**

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### **Discussion Questions**

1. What is the difference between fasting for physical gain and fasting for spiritual reasons?
2. Define "heart-motive."
3. What kind of rewards can you expect to receive openly from the Father?
4. In Matthew 17:14-21; what kind of enemy would need to be overcome by prayer AND fasting?
5. Jesus fasted 40 days, knowing He was going into combat with the enemy. Is there any supernatural conflict in your life you need to fight by fasting?
6. What are different ways that someone can fast?