It has been well said that prayer is not preparation for the battle – prayer IS the battle. And of all the things we can do to enhance the power and focus of prayer, fasting is doubtless the most potent.
Michael Fackerell

When you pray things happen; when you don't, they don't!
Glenn Lawrence

Prayer Study #553 Q
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, GA USA

PRAYER AND FASTING

Then came the disciples to Jesus privately 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 you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, 'Move from here to yonder place;' and it shall move, and nothing shall be impossible unto you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."***
Matthew 17:19-21

Before the Lord comes again, there will be another outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Last Days that will prepare the Church of Jesus Christ, especially the Remnant Company or Zion Company, the overcomers in the Church, to bring in the Great Harvest at the end of the age. This overcoming Church within the Church, the 100 fold Christians who do not love their lives to the death,

(Revelation 12:11-*And they overcame him* [the accuser of the brethren] *by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death*), especially soulish death (death to ego, ambition, pride, self-promotion, etc.) will come forth [the Zion Company or overcomers] when God's people, like you and me, move into emergency measures of rending the heart and not the garments, of calling solemn assemblies, declaring fasts, sounding an alarm in Zion, etc. This movement towards the deeper things of God will center on PRAYER which is relational and communicative, *listening* to God as much as talking to Him, and on FASTING, which is a denial of the flesh and fleshly desires in order to walk fully in the Spirit, i.e. breaking the pitcher, (or flesh nature) in the story of Gideon so that the light of the Holy Spirit within us can shine forth through us, giving light to all in the room. *Now* is the time for us to get our light, i.e. the Spirit living in us, out from under the bushel basket of our flesh natures. This flesh nature desires both to satisfy our lusts and to be man pleasers. Now is the time to put these lights on the lamp stands of our witness for Him, so that we, as the Last Day's Zion Company, can give light to all we meet.

PRAYER

Call unto Me, and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, which you know not of.
Jeremiah 33:3

Why does GOD not answer all our prayers the way we think He ought to? Let look to the WORD OF GOD. The

Bible is full of answers to prayer. God answers in three ways: First, the answer is an immediate "Yes!" When Peter was walking to Jesus and began to sink, he called out to the Lord. "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately took hold of Peter's hand (Matthew 14:22-31). Secondly, the answer is sometimes "Wait!" An example of this is the raising of Lazarus from the dead in John 11:1-44. Finally, the answer may be "No!" When GOD answers with a "No!" He always accompanies the answer with both peace (Philippines 4:6-7: *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"*) and grace. (2nd Corinthians 12:7-10: *And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me,* ***"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*** *Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*)

When God does not seem to answer my prayers, is it that God's silence is going to bring into my life a greater revelation of my Heavenly Father than I have ever known?

TYPES OF INTERCESSION (Cindy Jacobs' *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy)*

1. **The Prayer of Agreement**: *Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that*

they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. Matthew 18:19

2. **Praying Through:** Persistence in prayer until we have the assurance from God that His will has been accomplished in the earth realm. We know that we have prayed through when we are no longer reminded repeatedly by the Holy Spirit to pray, when we try to pray about a certain matter and there is no desire to pray, when God begins to lead us to scriptures that tell us victory is won, or when God speaks to us through circumstances, letting us know that the matter has been taken care of in the natural.
3. **Breaking a Yoke:** *By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother, and it shall come to pass, when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck.* Genesis 27:40 Yokes are spiritual oppressions and heavy loads that Satan puts on people in order to hold them in bondage.
4. **Tearing Down Strongholds:** *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.* 2nd Corinthians 10:4 There are territorial strongholds over nations, communities, families, cities, etc. There are ideological strongholds that influence philosophies, culture and society. There are personal strongholds, which influence a person's personal life, such as personal sins, thoughts and feelings and attitudes against God, and behavioral patterns.
5. **Supplications:** Earnest beseeching of God to the point of begging. It is a God-this-must-be-done now

kind of prayer. It is an SOS prayer and often comes in the night.

6. **Binding and Loosing:** *Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.* Matthew 18:18-19 Negative binding involves tying up the kingdom of darkness so demons cannot have anything to do with a given situation. Positive binding involves binding the Word of God over a given situation. Loosing sets the captive free from the enemy's hands. Binding stops the enemy's attacks. Loosing releases or permits God's will to enter the situation because God has willed that His purposes be carried out by asking in prayer. (We will be covering this in more detail in the next lesson.)
7. **Travail:** *My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.* Galatians 4:19 Travail is given by God and is not something we can make happen. It is often a deep groaning inside which may be audible or which cannot be uttered. Sometimes you are travailing in an area where others have prayed and prayed, but the Lord uses you in travail to birth the answer.

Cindy Jacobs further says that those who really want to be intercessors and deal with heavy intercession that will move the enemy out of an area must be willing to give up the following rights:

1. The right to be offended.
2. The right to our time.
3. The right to do what we want with our possessions.
4. The right to self-pity
5. The right to self-justification
6. The right to be understood.
7. The right to criticize.

For more information on the important topic of intercession, I highly recommend the book *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy* by Cindy Jacobs.

HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

1. **Lack of faith:** *BUT without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*-Hebrews 11:6.
2. **Inharmonious relationship between husband and wife:** *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward-arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel, rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves being submissive to their own*

husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do god and are not afraid with any terror. Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindred-1st Peter 3:1-7.

3. **Unforgiving spirit:** *But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment. And whoever says, "You fool!" shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift*-Matthew 5:22-24.
4. **Sin in the camp:** *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*-Joshua 7:12.
5. **Personal sin:** *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear*-Isaiah 59: 2. *Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him*-John 9:31. *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*-1st John 1:9.

6. **Indifference:** *AND from the days of John the Baptist until the present time, the kingdom of heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force* [as a precious prize-a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion]-Matthew 11:12AMP. (Those who are not willing to have the Kingdom through their own ardent zeal and intense exertion, but are indifferent to the Kingdom will not possess it, and such ones' prayer life will be hindered.)
7. **Despising the Word of God or law:** *One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination*-Proverbs 28:9.
8. **Actions that hurt others and for which you are guilty (i.e. guilt, extortion, deceit, etc.):** *For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness*-Isaiah 59:3.
9. **Iniquities:** *BUT your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear*-Isaiah 59:2.
10. **Stubbornness:** *But they refused to listen and turned a rebellious and stubborn shoulder and made heavy and dull their ears that they might not hear. Yes, they made their hearts as an adamant stone or diamond point, lest they should hear the law and the words, which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore there came great wrath from the Lord of hosts. SO it came to pass that as He cried, and they would not hear [He*

said]. "So they shall cry and I will not answer," says the Lord of hosts-Zechariah 7:11-13 AMP.

11. **Instability:** *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord*-James 1:6-7.
12. **Selfishness or self-indulgence and lust:** *You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures*-James 4:3.
13. **God's timing:** *Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son*-Genesis 18:14. *I chose the appointed time; it is I who judge uprightly*-Psalm 75:2. *For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him*-Ecclesiastes 8:6.
14. **Pride:** *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble*-James 4:6. *These six things the Lord hates-yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren*-Proverbs 6:16.
15. **Not knowing God:** *I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*-Matthew 7:23.
16. **Refusal to wait:** *But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD; I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me*-Micah 7:7.

17. **Neglect of the poor:** *Whosoever stoppeth his ears to the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard*-Proverbs 21:13.
18. **Lack of fasting:** This will be covered later in this teaching.

OTHER IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES CONCERNING PRAYER

2nd Chronicles 16:9: *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro through the whole earth to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.*

2nd Chronicles 7:14-15: *If My people who are called by My name will 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 heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer made in this place.*
Proverbs 15:29: The LORD is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

ROMANS 8:26-27: *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

James 4:2: *You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.*

FASTING

A fast usually involves food, and that is what was most typically fasted in scripture, although the Lord chastises the Israelites for their food fast in Isaiah 58, telling them that that they should fast in a way that shares food with the hungry, brings the poor to their houses, cloths the naked, and sets the captives free. Thus, we recognize that giving up anything that pleases the flesh, include our resources and comforts, can be a fast. This passage in Isaiah 58 is important, and thus I will quote a great portion of this chapter:

1-3 "*Shout! A full-throated shout!*
Hold nothing back—a trumpet-blast shout!
Tell my people what's wrong with their lives,
face my family Jacob with their sins!
They're busy, busy, busy at worship,
and love studying all about me.
To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people—
law-abiding, God-honoring.
They ask me, 'What's the right thing to do?'
and love having me on their side.

But they also complain,
'Why do we fast and you don't look our way?
Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even
notice?'
3-5 *"Well, here's why:*
"The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit.
You drive your employees much too hard.
You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight.
You fast, but you swing a mean fist.
The kind of fasting you do
won't get your prayers off the ground.
Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after:
a day to show off humility?
To put on a pious long face
and parade around solemnly in black?
Do you call that fasting,
a fast day that I, God, would like?
6-9 *"This is the kind of fast day I'm after:*
to break the chains of injustice,
get rid of exploitation in the workplace,
free the oppressed,
cancel debts.
What I'm interested in seeing you do is:
sharing your food with the hungry,
inviting the homeless poor into your homes,
putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad,
being available to your own families.

Do this and the lights will turn on,
and your lives will turn around at once.
Your righteousness will pave your way.
The God of glory will secure your passage.
Then when you pray, God will answer.
You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'

Jesus spoke of fasting in the Gospels, giving us the pattern we should follow:

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 (Matthew 6:16-18).

We know that there are some who have great difficulty fasting food because of medical issues. They should feel no condemnation for not fasting food. We recommend that they fast a special activity, such as watching television, or a favorite dish. There are many types of food fasts, however, so that everyone can fast something. Even those with medical problems can do something like a Daniel fast. Daniel fasted meat and wine. (Daniel 1:8: *Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with*

the portion of the king's delicacies nor with wine which he drank.)

Fasting humbles you, chastens the soul, crucifies the flesh, shows obedience and gives evidence that we want the Lord above all else, aids in overcoming temptation, helps to attain power over demons, develops faith, crucifies unbelief, and aids in prayer. A study of the following scriptures would be very helpful for those who want to know more about fasting:

Psalm 35:11-13: *Fierce witnesses rise up: They ask me things that I did not know. They rewarded me evil for good, to the sorrow of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; and my prayer would return to my own heart.* (These people to whom he once had shown compassion now show none to him. He put on sackcloth, a sign of mourning, and his prayer went unanswered.) The Message Bible puts it this way: [1]

[3-14] When they were sick, I dressed in black;
instead of eating, I prayed.
My prayers were like lead in my gut,
like I'd lost my best friend, my brother.
I paced, distraught as a motherless child,
hunched and heavyhearted.

2nd Samuel 12:15-23: *Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill. David therefore pleaded with*

God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. So the elders of the house arose and went to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!" When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. Then the servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, "Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

1st Corinthians 7:5: *Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*
The Message Bible translates this passage:

Marriage is a decision to serve the other, whether in bed or out. Abstaining from sex is permissible for a period of time if you both agree to it, and if it's for the purposes of prayer and fasting—but only for such times. Then come back together again. Satan has an ingenious way of tempting us when we least expect it. I'm not, understand, commanding these periods of abstinence—only providing my best counsel if you should choose them.

People should fast when **under great stress** (as David did in the above passage: 2nd Samuel 12:16-23) **under judgment** (1st Kings 21:27: *Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. 1st Kings 21:29: See how Ahab has humbled himself* [by fasting] *before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house*); **in need** (Ezra 8:21-23-*Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him." So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer")*; **in danger** (Esther 4:13-17: *And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do you think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all*

the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who know whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: "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!" So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him); **when worried** (Daniel 6:18: *Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no musicians were brought to him. And his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel, The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel said to the king, "O king live forever!"*; **in trouble**-Acts 27:33: *And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored them all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food and eaten nothing"*(concerning the sailors on the ship in the storm); **in spiritual conflict**-Matthew 4:1-11: This is the passage when Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, After He-Jesus-had fasted forty days and forty nights; and **when desperate**-Acts 9: This passage tells of Paul, after he was converted and blinded. He fasted for three days, until Ananias, sent by the Lord, laid hands on him, and his

blindness was instantly cured, and he was baptized and broke the fast.

Biblical Types of Fasting

The following was copied from a bulletin from Central Baptist Church in Warner Robins, Georgia, and gives the Biblical kinds of fast:

1. **Disciple's Fast**-Isaiah 58:6-*"to loose the chains of injustice"*-The purpose of this fast is to seek for God to free us and others from addictions to sin. The background would be when Jesus cast a demon out of a young man after his disciples' failure to do so.
2. **Ezra Fast**-Isaiah 58:6- "*to untie the cords of the yoke"*-This is a fast to solve problems, inviting the Holy Spirit's aid in lifting loads and overcoming barriers that keep us and others from walking with the Lord. The background here is when Ezra was seeking protection for his people in rebuilding Jerusalem.
3. **Samuel Fast**-Isaiah 58:6-*"to set the oppressed free"*-This is a fast for revival and soul winning so that people can be brought out of the darkness into God's marvelous light. The background here is that Samuel led God's people in a fast to celebrate the return of the Ark from Philistine captivity and deliverance from the sin that allowed it.
4. **Elijah Fast**-Isaiah 58:6-*"to break every yoke"*-This is for the purpose of conquering mental and emotional problems that would control our lives and

return that control to the Lord. The background here is Elijah's going without food while fleeing from Queen Jezebel and how God provide. This fast helps us be free from the bands of wickedness.

5. **Widow's Fast**-Isaiah 58:7-*"to deal thy bread to the hungry"*-This is for the purpose of meeting the humanitarian needs of others. The background is how God worked a miracle through the widow of Zarephath to feed Elijah, the widow and her son. 1st Kings 17:16 says, *"The jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry."*
6. **Pauline Fast-**Isaiah 58:8-*"Then your light will break forth like the dawn"*-This is for the purpose of bringing light and perspective for crucial decisions. The background is Saul being blinded by light on the Damascus Road. After three days, Ananias came to visit and God restored Paul's eyesight. Acts 9:9 says, *"And he was three days without sight and neither ate nor drank."*
7. **Daniel Fast-**Isaiah 58:8-*"and your healing will quickly appear"*-This is for the purpose of a healthier life or for healing. The background is Daniel and his three friends who refused the rich pagan foods of meat and wine for things healthier. Here is an example of a fast with food, i.e. only meats and wine, that is an option for diabetics, pregnant women, and those with health needs. Daniel 1:8 says, *"Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies nor with wine which he drank."*

8. **John the Baptist Fast-**Isaiah 58:8-*"then your righteousness will go before you."* This is for the purpose of strengthening our testimonies and influence for Jesus. As a Nazarite, John fasted from wine or strong drink. This was an adopted lifestyle meant to influence others.
9. **Esther Fast-**Isaiah 58:8 concludes-*"and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard"*-The purpose here is that the glory of the Lord will protect us from the evil one. The background here is Queen Esther's risking her life to save her people from death and destruction by appealing to the King of Persia. She, her cousin Mordecai, and all the Jews fasted and asked for God's protection.

DO YOU FEEL LED TO FAST?

I would suggest one of the following "programs," but encourage you to seek the Lord and His specific "program" for you:

1. One meal a day for 21 days
2. A total fast (only water) 1 day a week for 3 weeks
3. A three day total fast each week with only fruit juices
4. A "pleasant bread" fast for those who cannot physically or choose not to fast whole meals. For example, if you really want sweets, you could fast sweets.

I also suggest that you pray specifically and fast for the following:

1. **For your church or ministry group:**
   a. New spiritual vibrancy
   b. Spiritual transparency with God and holiness of walk

c. New desire for the Word
d. New desire to pray
e. The manifestation of His presence in the meetings
f. Unity
g. Against a Jezebel Spirit, Leviathan, and Python

2. **Against the demonic prince over this area to be wrestled to the ground** (This should be done in concert with other believers and not as a lone ranger.)

3. **For those "sent out ones" or missionaries, who are heavy on your heart and for whom you have a responsibility to pray.**

4. **For all in your fellowship to be on the Highway of Holiness**

5. **For the manifestation of the joy of the Lord in His people**

6. **For all to be baptized in the Holy Spirit**

7. **For those persecuted believers in other parts of the world**

8. **For your lost loved ones**

9. **For more intimacy with Jesus and a fresh revelation of the perfect love that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have specifically for you**

10. **For the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be stirred up in you**