

FASTING TO BREAK THE RELIGIOUS STRONGHOLD

Jeff Mootz (2/27/23)

I. THE UPCOMING FAST - PURPOSE AND PRACTICALS

- A. Sunday, March 5th through Sunday service, March 12th. We'll break our fasts together during the small group (bring your own food).
- B. We encourage you to come to the prayer room as often as possible that week and to spend extra time in prayer at home. Fasting is most helpful if you get extra prayer time.
- C. Whether you fast or not, I encourage you to try at least one day of liquid fasting (healthy juices) to get more fasting experience.
- D. **We're also calling a phone/media fast**—for the sake of time, but also to break free from busyness and entertainment that dulls us.
- E. **Purpose** - Asking God for grace to walk out our church's assignment (prayer, family, friendships, discipleship, outreach) and to break off demonic resistance over Encounter Church.

II. SYMPTOMS OF A RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

- A. The Religious spirit wars against us to make us relate to God as a system rather than a person (even if it's one degree). This applies to how we interact with God in our prayer times and how we view our responses towards Him.
 - 1. Resists us spending time in prayer
 - 2. Blinds us from seeing God's light (2 Cor. 4:4)
 - 3. Quenches our desire for God (apathy and lethargy) - ungodly contentment with spiritual dullness (Rev. 2-3)

4. Low vision/no vision for encounter/experience with God
 5. “Losing heart” in intercession - hard to believe God is going to answer prayers (Luke 18) - He’s a system, not a person
 6. Creates confusion around the topics of God’s grace and our wholehearted response (obedience, repentance, prayer, fasting, godly striving).
 7. Slow to acknowledge spiritual weaknesses and dullness—lack humility and repentance because of fear of your reputation (Lk 18:9, 18-23). Wholehearted believers can have a hard time receiving Jesus’ correction because they assume they’re obeying in every area of their lives.
- B. In the Gospels and to the 7 churches of Revelation, Jesus addresses the fruits of religion.
- C. **Repent and Rebuke** - We break free from this demonic influence through a season of repentance, asking the Lord for clarity in prayer/Bible, and rebuking the enemy. This is how we wrestle with demonic principalities (Eph. 6:12).

III. OUR MAIN MINISTRY MESSAGES WAR AGAINST RELIGION

- A. God is beautiful, joyful, extravagant in His affections and enjoyment of our lives
- B. God’s burning desire for us as our Father and Bridegroom (Eph. 1 & 5)
- C. Encounter/experiential intimacy with God (Eph. 1:17-19)
- D. 1st Commandment love and obedience (Matt. 22:37-38)
- E. Ministry to God in prayer, worship, and fasting (Acts 13:1-2)
- F. Fullness of intimacy and fullness of revival

IV. FASTING TO BREAK OFF THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

A. **Daniel 9-10** - Daniel warred in the Spirit through fasting, prayer, biblical clarity, and repentance.

1. Daniel was praying for Israel to be restored to their land to rebuild the 24/7 worship sanctuary.
2. Daniel fasted, prayed, and repented when He knew (from the Bible) that promises were on the horizon.

B. **Daniel 6** - In the same year as Daniel 9, Daniel's prayer life was attacked.

C. **Daniel 10** - 2-3 years after Daniel 9's season of prayer, Daniel is still praying into God's promises over Israel and sees a breakthrough.

1. Some Israelites were sent to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple during this time, though there were immediate challenges.

D. As spiritual mothers and fathers in prayer in this state, there is a reality to where God is calling us to wage war on the principalities that resist the message and lifestyle of 24/7 worship and prayer.

E. We've been waging war in prayer, but we need a fresh signing up for the call, a long-term commitment to the process, and long-term vision for where God is going to bring us and the Church of South Dakota.

F. In Ephesians 6, Paul uses warring phrases like:

1. Wrestle
2. having done all to stand
3. Stand
4. quench fiery darts
5. praying always
6. being watchful to this end
7. with all perseverance