

## ***Fasting***

### ***Part 5***

The Scriptures in the bible speak more about the purposes of fasting. In reading and meditating on them then we can apply that in our lives.

The following Scripture speaks about the fasting of Ezra when He led God's people back to the Promised Land.

***“<sup>21</sup> There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. <sup>22</sup> I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, “The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him.” <sup>23</sup> So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.” (Ezra 8:21-23)***

Ezra when he led the people of God from exile to the Promised Land, he faced great challenge, the long journey with bandits and dangers along. Consequently, he would ask the king of Persia for soldiers and horsemen or he would rely on God for the task. At the division of the two roads, Ezra remembered who God is and he remembered what he had told the king of Persia before about God, ***‘The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to Him, but his great anger against all who forsake Him.’*** If Ezra would ask help and put hope on the Persian king, he would have insulted God. Hence, Ezra and the people of God with him went and knock the door of the Lord by prayer and fasting.

***“So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and He answered our prayer.”*** Fasting is an act of humbling before the Lord. In fasting we get rid of relying on food and material things for strength. Instead, we depend on the Holy Spirit of God to sustain us. To kneel in front of God is an act of sincerity asking favour or petition from Him. We must come boldly at the feet of Jesus, at his Cross, and ask Him our needs. Pray without ceasing; knock only His door and don't go to other doors; wait for Him to open for us. We ought to show boldness, integrity and consistency in these acts while we sit along with our Lord. Every session of prayer will achieve victory. God will remove threats from our lives; He will remove fears from our hearts and minds.

Dangers and bandits will be around us but through prayers and fasting God will surely spare us. The enemy may be near us but through prayer and fasting they could not touch us. Our burden will be lifted up? And we will reach our destiny safely. Then we will testify as Ezra testified, ***“<sup>31</sup> On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way. <sup>32</sup> So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.” (Ezra 8:31,32)***

Therefore we learn from this Scripture about prayer and fasting the following:-

***1-Prayer and fasting will direct us to put our hope on God and not on kings:*** Sometimes we put our hope on our boss, our colleagues, our spouse, our leaders, our national heroes,

wealthy people, other social and public figures, the governors, rulers or kings. We ask help and rely on them. As we trust on those figures, ultimately they become our idols or gods that we will serve or pay back. In this way we ignite God's anger, as well as we will not be able to receive any good things from the above figures.

***2- Prayer and fasting will direct us to put our hope on God and not on soldiers and horsemen:*** Soldiers and horsemen, those represents human power and authority. We may put our hope on human achievements, degrees, establishments, money, treasures, etc. and we may think it will be a benefit for us while facing the enemies. God does not want us to rely on material things or to any power other than Him. But rather, He wants us to be strong and to rely on the Holy Spirit to face the life's troubles and challenges.

Now as you read the message, you might be facing certain troubles and perils in your life same as Ezra and the people of God were facing ahead of them. It might be also ahead of you a long journey and you have to achieve and reach your goals successfully. Therefore what you need to do is to follow the pattern that the word of the Lord had given you in the above Scripture:-

*1- Remember the great things that the Lord had done to you before, and what He had done to His people, take these things as encouragement for you to rely once more on God and trust Him that He can do it this time for you.*

*2- As Ezra brought the people back to the Promised Land, know then in your heart that the only true journey is the journey of repentance and the journey of bringing the people back to God and to His real good plan for them.*

*3- Never be tempted to put your trust on people or on human figure.*

*4- Never be tempted to put your trust on material things as a source for your strength and success.*

*5- Be ashamed as Ezra was ashamed. He did not go to the strong and powerful people who can give him provision and assurance. He had already trusted the gracious hand of God upon Him and upon His people.*

*6- Pray and fast to God, trust Him that He can grant you success to the journey that you are moving on; the journey toward eternal life till Jesus would come and take us to heaven. Trust God that He can sustain you and those who are with you while you are on earth. What are your needs that God cannot give you? Absolutely none. Every need God can satisfy. But one thing put in your mind that God would give you your needs and not what you want.*

*7- Fully trusting God and His word. Continuously read and meditate and obey the word of God. Ezra was reminded to obey God and fully trust Him through His word.*

*8- Take the lead and be the first to redirect the people to rely fully on God. Encourage those who are around you to throw away all the idols that they are having including the human figures and material things. Direct them to the true living God and direct them to His word and His promises.*

*9- Be assured and praise God from now on that you have the victory from Him.*

***My dear and Beloved:*** You had just received a timely message. Trust Him that He can direct you and help you as you agree to pray.

***My Prayer:*** Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your timely message to me. Lord I will put my trust on you knowing that in my journey in this life you will provide for me and will protect me till you come to take me to heaven. Lord keeps reminding me of your word for in them there is life. This all I ask and pray in Jesus name, Amen.