

## **Cautions in Fasting – Session 10**

I have said to you in past sessions that fasting is a tool and a weapon to see spiritual goals accomplished. But since some sincere Christians have sometimes taken fasting to an extreme, I feel constrained now, at the end of our study, to qualify what I have said over the past 9 sessions by giving you certain cautions. This last study will be like an appendix to our study on fasting. There are a couple of general rules and principles, which I want to give to you, which should govern your fasting.

**1<sup>st</sup> General Rule** - Fasting should be undertaken according to the wisdom from God's word. Because fasting is usually done in secret, and unto God, in order to see certain spiritual goals attained, there may be tendency to overdo fasting in order to see the goal accomplish the goal that we are seeking come to pass.

Isaiah 55: 6-11    James 1: 5 and 6    Job 38: 31-36

As Christians we must understand that the wisdom for all of the spiritual things that we do comes from God. It comes to us from the guidelines of His Word, and not necessarily from our own desires to see things take place. We may want to see certain spiritual goals take place which are legitimate desires in our heart. And certainly it is not wrong to pray and hope to see answers to our prayers. But we must understand that our goals may not be God's goals. The things for which we are praying and fasting may not be God's goals as to the timing of how they should come about, or whether they should come to pass at all. We must seek to understand whether our spiritual goals are in accord with His written word, and then when we fast and pray we will be submitted our desires and goals to His sovereign will. Let us remember God's sovereignty when we fast.    1 Corinthians 7: 16

**2<sup>nd</sup> General Rule** - Fasting should be undertaken in moderation unless there are some very compelling reasons for longer fasts.

Both Jesus and Moses fasted for 40 days. But just because they fasted for such a long period of time, does not mean that you can, or should fast, for long periods of time.

Esther 4: 16 – You will recall that Esther and her people were in a very dangerous situation where Haman had issued an edict, by the king's permission, to exterminate her people. And yet, she only asked her maids and all her people to fast for her for 3 days. Even though the situation was so extreme, she only has them fast 3 days. This ought to be a guideline to all of us in our fasting to see God show us mercy. Fast for just a few days, not for an indefinite period of time. Otherwise we will do ourselves more harm than good physically, and we can hardly expect to glorify God by purposely debilitating our physical strength.

1 Corinthians 10: 31 – “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, (or whether you fast) or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Philippians 4: 4-7 – “Rejoice in the Lord always.” “Again I will say, rejoice!” “Let your gentleness (NASB – “moderation”) be known to all men.” “The Lord is at hand.” “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 .”

1 Corinthians 9: 24 – “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?” “Run in such a way that you may obtain it.” (You cannot run the race if you are killing yourself through fasting) “And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things.” (Temperance in a virtue related to self-denial and self-control. Fasting is a practice which requires both. To engage in it requires self-denial. To set a specific time, not too long, requires self-control) “Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.” “Therefore I run thus not with uncertainty.” “Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.” “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

Fasting helps with bringing the body into subjection. But run with the certainty that your fast shall end at a reasonable length of time, and then rejoice that God will give you the answer He deems best in answer to your prayers coupled with fasting.