

FASTING & PRAYING FOR WISDOM

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Acts 9:1-12

LENT- Lets Eliminate Negative Thinking

If you need wisdom today, you need to fast. Some of us entered this Lenten season needing a word from the Lord. You are unclear about where your life is going. You are living with unanswered questions trying to figure out your next step. You need clarity. The decisions you are now faced with are not easy. They may be life-changing decisions. If only you could peep into your future, you could figure it out. We may not know the future but we know who holds the future. Now that we have a relationship with Jesus Christ, we have a guide to help us through the twists of life. **Psalm 37:23, Isaiah 46:9-10** God knows everything there is to know about us. You don't want to make a major or minor decision without getting direction from God. He will give you the right direction every time if you first consult Him.

Wrong decisions can be disastrous. We often operate in how we perceive things although our perception is usually wrong. We may perceive certain things but we cannot know until we get the facts. Giving in to our fears can cause us to make bad decisions. Impulse and trying to live up to others' expectations can also lead us to make bad decisions. Some of us have bumped our heads far too many times. God loves you and wants what is best for you. **Isaiah 48:17-18** If the truth were to be told, some of us do not need to make another decision. We just need to be still because we just keep messing up. Let God work it out.

God doesn't drop the answer out of the blue. God speaks primarily through His Word. His Word contains God's principles and precepts. Precepts are the clear directives from God. What is not so clear about not being "unequally yoked" to an unbeliever? It is not a good idea to date someone who is not saved. Being their friend is ok. Introducing them to Jesus is ok. Dating them is not wise. Why give your heart to someone who hasn't given theirs to God? You try to do the right thing and they lead you down the wrong path. Your emotions overwhelm you and you can no longer think for yourself. God also gives us principles as guidelines to decisions we need to make. He directs us to common sense. He directs us through possibilities and opens doors to opportunities. Sometimes He shuts doors in your face. **Romans 8:28** When God shuts one door, He opens another. He works in mysterious ways. Thank God for slammed doors and hurt feelings. Thank Him for helping you to survive those difficult times. Sometimes God in His grace will stop you from making a bad decision. He will shut the door or put up a roadblock to save you from misery. You wondered why it did not work out. God saved you. He would not let you go.

You cannot live the status quo and be a Christian. When you meet God, you cannot be the same. In the text, Paul needed a radical change of mind so he fasted and prayed for wisdom. Fasting gives you insight and wisdom. It helps you to focus on the things of God.

1. ***Whatever you are dealing with you have to honestly face the issue and define the problem.*** Gather all the facts and make a list of possible solutions. **Acts 9:4**
2. ***Listen to the voice of God.*** We need to meditate on the Word of God. He wants to give us direction. However, He needs for us to be still first. Isaiah 50:4
3. ***You have to be willing to ask yourself some questions and allow God to ask you some questions.*** Fasting is the time to see ourselves the way God sees us. It allows us to see ourselves for who we really are. **Genesis 3:9, Genesis 4:6** God wants you to face your feelings. He wants to know if you want direction. Do you want God's will for your life? Do you want to change? All of us are called to be responsibly accountable to someone. If you don't have anything to hide then you don't have any problems answering questions. If you were real like you say are you can give an account.
4. ***We need to read the Scriptures that pertain to our needs and situations.*** Read **Psalm 139:14**. God is the source of all wisdom and understanding. We need to stop just trusting ourselves. We need to trust God. Some of us feel we are always right. You justify your wrong decisions. Paul knew that though he had many facts, he was wrong. When he went to Jesus, he was set straight. That's why you have to read the Word everyday. You need to deal with the hard truth that you don't have it all together.
5. ***Cease all self-effort and yield to God.*** Give up trying. If you could have worked it out it would have been worked out by now. You gathered the facts but now it is time to be still. Fasting is submitting your spirit, mind, and body to God. Fasting is sacrifice. You don't want God to knock you off your "high horse." Come down on your on. It will be so much better for you. You would rather climb down than to be knocked down. Some of us want everything worked out quickly. You want to stick everything in the microwave. You don't want to sit and wait on anything. You need to learn how to wait. **Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31** God needs some time with you. You didn't get into that situation overnight. Some of us need to just slow cook. The Holy Spirit is there to teach you and remind you what God has already said to you. God always keeps His promise. He who began a good work in you... Fasting is surrendering everything to God.
6. ***Obey what you hear from God.*** Do exactly what He says. We come into church and take notes. Do you practice what is preached? You have to put the Word into practice. Do what God tells you to do. Then wait until God gives you further instruction. You have been asking Mom, Dad, Pastor, Grandparents, best friends, and strangers on the street. However, they didn't hear what God has told you to do. You wait until God speaks again. Paul fasted and believed God for direction.
7. ***Sometimes God will send a godly individual to enlighten and encourage you.*** You have a need that must be addressed, so you need to fast and pray. Ask God to speak your heart. He may not give you a map. Some of us jump ship before we can get to where we are going and that's why we drown. If you are really ready for God to speak to you, fast and pray.

Peace

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