PRAYER & FASTING: WEAPONS OF MASS INSTRUCTION

Part IV

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The Hebrew word for fasting  "Tsuwm" (tsoom) – "To cover the mouth."

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The Greek word for fasting is "Nesteuo" – (Nace-tyoo-o) "To abstain from food."

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TOTAL FAST - Water and/or other forms of liquids only.

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LIMITED FAST - Specific meals, sunrise to sunset; abstaining from certain foods; etc.

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Fasting as an act of submission to the Lordship of Christ

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Galatians 5:24-25

*And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit*.

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Fasting to draw closer to God and for freedom and deliverance

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Isaiah 58:1-7

*1 Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins.*

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*2 Yet they seek me daily and delight (not a God-honoring delight) to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God.*

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*3 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers.*

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*4 Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.*

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*5 Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD?*

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*6 "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?*

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*7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?" (ESV)*

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Fasting for healing/deliverance for ourselves and others

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Isaiah 58:8-14

*8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing (restoring to soundness and wholeness; to be perfected) shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.*

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*9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke (representing bondage) from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,*

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*10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.*

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*11 And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*

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*12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.*

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*13 "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;*

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*14 then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (ESV)*

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Fasting for brokenness and repentance

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Joel 2:12-17

*12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;*

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*13 and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.*

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*14 Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God?*

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*15 Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly;*

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*16 gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber.*

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*17 Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (ESV)*

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Fasting in preparation for spiritual warfare

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Matthew 4:1-4

*1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

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*2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.*

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*3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."*

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*4 But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (ESV)*

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Fasting for faith and power (and discernment!)

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Matthew 17:14-21

*14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,*

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*15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

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*16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.*

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*17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.*

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*18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. –*

*19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?*

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*20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

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*21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." (KJV)*

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Fasting for guidance in spiritual decisions

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Acts 14:19-23

*19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.*

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*20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.*

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*21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,*

*--*

*22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*

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*23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed." (ESV)*

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Fasting as an act of humility, protection and guidance in seasons of uncertainty

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Ezra 8:21-23

*21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods.*

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*22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him."*

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*23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty."*

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Fasting and praying in preparation for a new ministry assignment

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Acts 13:1-3

*1 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

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*2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting (corporate fasting), the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

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*3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off."*

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"The purpose of fasting isn't primarily to get something from God; it's to bring us into alignment with Him and His purposes and to enhance our ability to hear His voice."

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"Fasting is a tangible manifestation that our hunger to feed our spirit is greater than our physical cravings."

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Fasting in the midst of fear or uncertainty

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II Chronicles 20:1-13

*1 After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle.*

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*2 Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar" (that is, Engedi).*

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*3 Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.*

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*4 And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.*

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*5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,*

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*6 and said, "O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.*

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*7 Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?*

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*8 And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying,*

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*9 'If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you-for your name is in this house-and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.'*

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*10 And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy-*

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*11 behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit.*

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*12 O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."*

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*13 Meanwhile all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.*

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14 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.

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15 And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.

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16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel.

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17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you."

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18 Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.

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19 And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

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20 And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed."

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21 And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the LORD and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever."

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22 And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.

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23 For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another.

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24 When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped.

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25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much.

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26 On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the LORD. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Beracah to this day.

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27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies." (ESV)