

Finding and Following God's Plan for Your Life

Class 4 - Fasting and Praying

Review

Class 1

His plan for your life is not based on your behavior. His plan was established before you were born. It's a good plan.

Class 2

We must submit to his plan by laying aside our own. God can use a person that offers themselves to him.

Class 3

There is a training and equipping season. School of ministry is a ministry training school. What you are gaining here will equip you to fulfill God's plan for your life. Preparation time is never wasted time.

Mark 9:17-18 NKJV "Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

1. Many people whether they say it or not believe that only a pastor, or special minister can do certain things such as praying for the sick or casting out demons.

Mark 9:19 NKJV "He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me."

1. Jesus was not pleased with his disciples. He had a very strong response to their lack of faith.

Mark 9:25-28 NKJV "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "**Why could we not cast it out?**"

1. This a legitimate question and one that Jesus answered in the following verse.

Mark 9:29 NKJV "So He said to them, "This **kind** can come out by nothing but **prayer and fasting.**"

1. Many people have interpreted this as saying that in order to minister like Jesus you must pray and fast enough. But that isn't the context in which this was spoken.
2. We can get the full picture of what Jesus was saying in Matthew's account.

Matthew 17:19-21 NKJV "Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "**Why could we not cast it out?**" So Jesus said to them, "**Because of your unbelief;** for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this **kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.**"

1. The answer to the disciples question is rooted in their unbelief. Their unbelief is what caused Jesus to get upset.
2. The "kind" that is referred to was the disciples unbelief. It's the subject of what was being talked about. The demon wasn't the problem, it was the unbelief.
3. Praying and fasting will get rid of your unbelief.

Unbelief is one of the biggest reasons why people do not find and follow God's plan for their life. You may know something, or feel God is leading you in a certain direction, but you dismiss it. You say that's probably just me. You're just not sure.

Prayer and fasting are a normal part of a Christian's life.

Matthew 6:5-6 NKJV "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

1. WHEN you pray. Not if you pray.
2. Prayer is personal fellowship with God. Don't do it to make yourselves look good.

Matthew 6:16-18 NKJV "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

1. People often fast to get attention from others but Jesus addressed this issue specifically and said that nobody should even be aware of it.

II Corinthians 4:18 NKJV "while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Benefits of Prayer and Fasting

1. *Removes doubt and unbelief, strengthens your faith*
2. *Puts your flesh under so you can clearly hear the voice of God*
3. *Provides direction and clarity when you don't know what to do*
4. *Strengthens your relationship with the Lord*
5. *Naturally speaking it's good to fast for your physical body*

Guidance on prayer

1. *Talk to God like you would talk to anyone else.*
2. *Don't do all of the talking, take time to listen more than you talk.*
3. *Set the atmosphere, get away from distractions so you can focus and listen. (Quiet time)*

You can hear the voice of God and know what He is saying!

John 10:2-4 NKJV "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."

This is a great thing to confess: I hear His voice, He leads me, and I follow Him.

John 10:14 NKJV "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own."

You can hear the voice of God according to Jesus. Do not rely on "fleeces" as Gideon did because Gideon lived under the old covenant and did not have the Holy Spirit living inside of him as we do. (Judges 6:36-40)