

Twenty-One Day Fast: Day 9

"I WILL be found by you..." by Rick Slate

Fasting is a discipline that has taken a more prominent role in both Christian and non-Christian circles in the last 30 years. From Intercessors for America's prayer and fasting the first Friday of each month, to Bill Bright's church-wide 40 days of prayer and fasting, to books by authors such as Richard Foster, Elmer Towns and Arthur Wallis, the discipline of fasting has become better understood and thus more widely practiced.

People have also been motivated by the effectiveness of fasting. In 1756 the King of Britain called for a day of prayer and fasting because of a threatened invasion by the French. John Wesley recorded the following words in his Journal on February 6. "The fast day was a glorious day, such as London has scarce seen since the Restoration. Every church in the city was more than full, and a solemn seriousness sat on every face. Surely God hears prayer, and there will yet be a lengthening of our tranquility."

In a footnote Wesley later wrote, "Humility was turned into national rejoicing for the threatened invasion by the French was averted."

History shows us that when people fast with a genuine heart, the Lord in His grace is stirred to action. Scripture testifies likewise:

- Esther, her maids and fellow Jews fast for 3 days and the annihilation of the Jews is averted (Esther 4:1-17).
- Judah is attacked by a "great multitude" from three surrounding nations and Jehoshaphat responds by calling for a national fast. Judah then defeats his enemies without even raising a hand in battle (2 Chron. 20:1-25).
- Ezra "proclaimed a fast" seeking God's protection as he and a large number of Israelites traveled from Babylon to Jerusalem and God "listened to (their) entreaty" (Ezra 8:21-23).

We see in these passages that fasting, at its heart, is an expression of a person's utter dependence on the Lord's intervention:

- Like Esther, our problem is too big, our wisdom too small.
- Like Jehoshaphat, our power is insufficient. "We don't know what to do."
- Like Ezra, our journey is too great, our resources inadequate.

It is this sense of desperation and deep need that drives a person to abandon himself or herself to God for His intervention which often finds expression in the discipline of fasting.

I encourage you to read the above passages in Esther, 2 Chronicles and Ezra on the day(s) you fast and allow the Lord to purify your heart and motives and stir you to believing prayer. Be assured the Lord takes seriously those who seriously seek Him.

“You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you...” (Jer. 29:13,14).

PRAYER POINT: Pray that we would seek God's INTERVENTION during this 21-day season of fasting and prayer.