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Daily Devotional - Sunday, January 8, 2017 - The Place of Fasting in Prayer

JANUARY 08TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Matthew 6:16-21

Jesus' words about fasting represent His invitation to a deeper experience with God. As we place our physical desires under the Spirit's control, we let go of our grip on the material in order to embrace the spiritual. Reasons for fasting include:

Cleansing from sin. When we let our spiritual guard down, we start thinking as the world does—protecting our rights instead of dying to self, or seeking to accumulate rather than sacrificing. Through these lapses, ungodly attitudes and habits can quietly take up residence in us, and we hardly notice. But God sees. They hinder our fellowship with Him, limit the effectiveness of our service, and erode our joy. Prayer combined with fasting will help us give God our undivided attention as He addresses our areas of sin. We, in turn, will find them grievous and be eager to let them go.

Guidance. God is willing to give us clear direction, but for some things, prayer in conjunction with fasting is more effective. That is how we gain the cleansed mind needed to hear what He is saying and a submitted spirit ready to accept His instructions.

Protection. Through fasting, we gain insight into God's ways and receive help in identifying unhealthy or dangerous situations. As we submit to His authority and confess our need for protection, the Holy Spirit will give us discernment to make wiser decisions and avoid unnecessary pitfalls.

Fasting coupled with prayer can also bring heightened spiritual awareness and more intimate communion with the Lord. Aren't these the deepest desires of our heart?

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