

## ***7 Types of Biblical Fasts***

### **I. INTERCESSORY & CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER**

- A. The premise we are working from is that the Holy Spirit is going to raise up Anna's and Mary's both male and female, both old and young.
  - 1. The Anna's represent the warfare intercession the breaking open the purposes of God through prayer and fasting.
  - 2. Mary of Bethany speaks forerunner the Davidic heart that gazes upon the Lord....
  - 3. John the apostle...is in the same dimension of the grace of God laying His head upon the Lord's breast.
    - a. Three different times in scripture he described himself as the one who laid his head upon the Lord's breast.
    - b. It is a very prominent self-description that John describes himself with and it was given by the Holy Spirit in that kind of prominence
    - c. it sets him in the same kind of light as Mary of Bethany.
- B. Contemplative prayer
  - 1. It speaks of two dimensions of prayer: the intercessory prayer of Anna and the contemplative prayer of Mary.
  - 2. Both of them are significantly enriched along side the grace of fasting, I think of David, John, and Mary as the ultimate pictures of contemplative prayer in terms of personality in the scripture.

### **II. GRACE OF FASTING IS A PRIVILEGE**

- A. The grace of fasting significantly increases and enhances our experience.

1. The grace of fasting is a privilege because it allows us to enter into dimensions in God that are beyond the norm of the redeemed community through history.
  2. There is a realm of blessing that God has but He reserves it to the grace that is released in relationship to prayer and fasting.
  3. I want us to throw out the old paradigm of, "Oh that's horrible," and think of it as an awesome privilege...
  4. it is a the ability to enter into a realm in God as human beings in this age with broken weak flesh we can still enter into that dimension of God and it only comes through prayer and fasting.
- B. The fasted lifestyle is far easier way to fast than the occasional fast...
1. fasting every now and then ....every couple of weeks throwing in a day here or there is a far more difficult way to fast than a regular lifestyle of fasting.
  2. I know that through study and I know that through experience....
  3. There is a mind set that changes and even the rhythm of our bodies, emotions and mind set are actually far easier when it become a central part of our lifestyle.
  4. Fasting is easier when we do it more often.....than one here and there.
- C. The one here and there is like working out in the physical.
1. I do not work out as much as I need to and I should but I have stopped and started working out more times than I have stopped and started coffee.
  2. What happens with working out is that you have gone these couple months and you have not done it so the one day you try to do it hard...and it is horrible ...
  3. your body is not connected with it....your cardiovascular system is screaming....you are sore the next day.
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4. It takes a couple of weeks before it gets easy.
  5. It is truly the same way in the spirit.....with fasting.
  6. There is a rhythm and a naturalness of which fasting just in the natural dimension of our body and any of our emotions and the fear realm of being afraid of it changes when we do it regularly.
- D. The 21<sup>st</sup> century lie
1. I want to continue to confront the lie that the 21<sup>st</sup> century believer can fast like the believers of old.
  2. There is an unspoken lie that because of the pace of life and the modernist of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that it is just not the same as it used to be. I believe that is a lie with all of my heart.
  3. I believe that the human spirit and the human body was created to be able to flow in the grace of fasting.....
  4. I believe that at the end of the age there will be more believers fasting significantly more and enjoying it than at any time in history.
  5. I believe there is going to be a restoration of the Holy Spirit of an army of multiplied millions world wide who enter into this reality.
  6. I do not receive the unspoken and spoken lie that says the pace of life and the mind set of the 21<sup>st</sup> century western mind set is not adaptable to fasting....
    - a. I do not receive that but say because of the brokenness and the emptiness of all that we are experiencing .... there is a craving and a longing that might actually equip us more.
  7. There is going to be an Holy Spirit revival that is going to be a global dimension and it is going to go along side the prayer movement and the grace of fasting.
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- a. I really encourage you to ask the Lord to help you challenge this strong hold.....of our thinking ....this mind set that we cower before
  - b. ...."It is too hard, we will be too tired, it is too painful." None of those are really real....actually the fear of it is far more powerful than the doing of it in terms of the negative experience.
- E. Fasting will be joyful at the End of the Age
- 1. Like the anointing of prayer there is a different paradigm...because as Isaiah 56:7 says prayer will be joyful at the end of the age...
  - 2. Zechariah 8:19 says that fasting will be joyful at the end of the age.
  - 3. There have been two things that have been difficult through history that are going to come to a place of enjoyment.

***"Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." (Isaiah 56:7)***

***"Thus says the LORD of hosts: `The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.'" (Zechariah 8:19)***

- 4. The tabernacle of David, the harp and the bowl....there is a new paradigm of fasting that is called the bridegroom fast where God romances and exhilarates the human heart.
- 5. The rock pile kind of prayer slugging it out by yourself....
- 6. long hours in the rock pile of fasting just trying to fast to avert judgement or something that is too difficult of a paradigm for the millions of the earth to do it consistently.
- 7. The Anna's and the John the Baptist, one here and one there
- 8. God is giving grace for an army to come forth in prayer and fasting

9. Isaiah 56:7, prayer will be filled with joy
  10. Zechariah 8:10 fasting will be filled with joy.
- F. Enjoyment in fasting
1. Put the word enjoyment....put the word resonating....exhilarating...fascinating the human spirit.
  2. This grace of fasting we are going to talk about the bridegroom fast is specifically necessary to equip the forerunner ministry to be a voice and not just an echo.

### **III. 7 BIBLICAL FASTS**

- A. Paradigm of fasting
1. We are going to look at seven types of biblical fasting...the first six is not going to be comprehensive at all but I want you aware of them because I want to change your mind set and know of the different options.
  2. Many people only think of one kind of fasting and they are not even exactly sure what it is.
  3. There are actually a number of different categories and we will look at seven different ones and only to put the seventh one in context....the bridegroom fasting.
  4. That is the real one we are focused on because that is the kind of fasting that I believe will be the most primary in the generation that the Lord returns.
  5. All seven of these are valid in the New Testament and were not invalidated by the New Covenant, they are still used, but they are not the primary...they are now secondary. The first type of fasting in the Old Testament is still a New Testament reality:
- B. To avert individual/national crisis.

1. There are several paradigm that are key in the Old Testament and this is probably the most prominent Old Testament paradigm...
2. .it is focused on stopping a negative crisis from happening. There are individual crisis of a certain nature, there are national crisis that were averted in the Old Testament.

***"So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah." (1 Samuel 7:6)***

3. They were in sin a battle was forming of the enemy against them and the next day was dooms day so they operated in that fast.
4. It was two fold fast of repentance but more than that it was because calamity was coming tomorrow to the nation. It had two different focuses repentance/ calamity.

***"So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them." (Jonah 3: 3-5)***

5. The whole city of Nineveh fasted in the Lord withheld judgment, the crisis that was coming to wipe out the city and the nation.
6. Joel calls the people to a fast to avert a crisis...he is also calling that fast to release revival. Many fasts have several purposes to them.

***"Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the Lord." (Joel 1:14)***

***"Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly;" (Joel 2:15)***

7. To avert a corporate ministry crisis, local churches will fast, certain ministries, trans-local ministries will go into a fast because there is a demise that is crippling the ministry ... a great event is looming on the horizon and the Lord uses that.

**C. Fast to experience the power of God in personal ministry.**

1. This is one that is common to us....it is a fast to experience the power of God in personal ministry....
2. a very important kind of fast much more prominent in the New Testament.
3. The fasting to enhance the anointing of God upon our personal ministry. Jesus said, "This kind i.e. of demonic bondage does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

***"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." ( Matthew 17:21)***

4. I have no question that the Lord was teaching the doctrine that prayer and fasting enhances personal power in ministry.
5. A Holy Spirit breakthrough either in our personal ministry or to break through in ministry for somebody else in terms of their life.
  - a. Like the person in bondage with the demon.
  - b. It opens up the power realm of the Holy Spirit.

**D. Contemporary & historical examples**

1. I am going to give you a few examples of contemporary as well as historical examples.
2. One of the contemporary examples is Mehesh Chavda.
  - a. He went on two 40-day water fasts a year for ten years.

- b. Ten years he went on 20 forty day water fasts.
  - c. The Lord opened up a realm of the operation of the gift of miracles and the ability in the grace of God to break curses even in cities
  - d. the Lord has used him to raise the dead a couple of time, to open blind eyes, the realm of the miraculous, the stunning creative miracles is related to the realm of prayer and fasting. It is a power realm.
  - e. The Lord granted him authority over demons in a manifest way....we all have authority over demons by the name of Jesus but the manifestation of the power of it significantly increased when he was operating in that fasting realm.
3. Typically in my study through history is that anointing is enhances when we are in that season of fasting....five or ten years pass and that season seems to wane. Historical figures when they were in that realm of intense fasting the power realm broke out in greater intensity.
4. Anther figure I want to talk about is this woman in her 80's that Don Steadman talks about from India....affectionately called Amma.
- a. She has gone on a 40 day water fast every year since 1956, she has raised the dead a number of times, the number of supernatural power realms things. Tremendous miracles, paralytic, blind eyes opening etc.
5. Another example is the healing revival from 1947 to 1958....we have a book in the Book Store called, "All Things Are Possible."
- a. It was written from a secular point of view...a man is reviewing and analyzing a healing revival that broke out in America with about 15 or 20 key personalities and mentions fasting a number of times.
6. There was an army of healing evangelist and Paul Cain had a 12,000 seat tent and he saw blind eyes open, the lame walk, there was a power realm and Paul was significantly and often in long water fasts.
- a. A lot of these guys were... Wm. Branum, Oral Roberts, in these years when they had great power in their ministries.
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- b. Creative miracles were happening, large tent meetings of 5, 10, 15 thousand.
  - c. Paul Cain did the meetings in (?) Germany where 30,000 a night came and tremendous signs and wonders broke out when he was in his late twenties.
7. The stories, I have done a lot of research on with *AA Allen, Raymond T. Richie, T.L. Osoborn, Oral Roberts* was moving in tremendous power in those days. The list goes on and on and I have studied some of their lives and it is amazing the power realm and they all attributed it to long regular seasons of fasting.
8. The power realm does not break open with occasional fasting...it is more the extended regular fast.
- a. Charles Finney, in the 1830's, 40's , and 50's, one of the great revivalist in America's history.
  - b. He did not have signs and wonders operation in the healing dimensions but he had tremendous anointing on his preaching.
  - c. In 1857 the great New York city revival, 60,000 new converts a week for 8 weeks....500,000 conversions in 8 weeks through preaching with the power of conviction of it *Whitfield, Edwards, David Brainard, John Wesley* operated in this realm of conviction of preaching. It is a power realm related to preaching.
9. *Charles Finney* said when the supernatural energizing of prayer left him he knew his preaching was as weak as other men
- a. so when the prayer anointing left him he knew the preaching anointing would leave him in a week of two.
  - b. So when he lost the spirit of prayer...He is talking about a sense of authority and inspiration, not a type of prayer or a particular manifestation of prayer.

- c. I am talking about the awareness of divine authority on his Spirit when He prayed. He said when he lost that he would go into the woods and spend a couple of days in prayer and fasting until the Spirit of prayer would return and then I knew my preaching would have authority on it.
  - d. I love this sentence, "When I lost the Spirit of prayer I was as weak as other men in the pulpit."
  - e. Think of Clark Kent and superman. He was like the rest of us and then when the Spirit of prayer came back on his of which he would enter into that anointing by seasons of fasting.
  - f. He watched it happen and could discern the different seasons and patterns of it over the many early years of ministry.
10. Another man God used profoundly in fasting and miracles is John G. Lake in the early 1900's some of the most inspiring....this man moved in the power of God second to no man in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
11. Andrew Murray a great teacher from South Africa, the Dutch Reform church, written 30 -40 books on prayer and the deeper life
- a. he said that John G. Lake an insurance man from Chicago....whom God got hold of in prayer and fasting....released a power dimension upon him and he went to South Africa.
  - b. He was there for about 5 years, birthed about 1,000 churches, a couple of hundred new converts, many people raised from the dead.
  - c. *Andrew Murray* who was clearly the main Father figure in South Africa at that time a real historic man of the deeper life of God said John G. Lake moved in the power of God like the apostles.
  - d. Stunned him! His denomination did not emphasis divine healing but in the wake of *John G. Lakes* miracle ministry....he began to teach on healing and operated in it. He said he had never seen any man like Him.

- e. I poured over his writings in the early 80's ....he put prayer and fasting together and it opened up a realm in the power of God. I encourage you to read some of these lives to give you a vision where the power realm can be.
12. Last but not least is *Bernard of Clairvoux* in the 1100's, the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a monk in France, started a little monastery and named it Clarivoux, the valley of light, is what it means.
- a. It started with ten men in his early 20's. He entered into the realm of prayer and fasting.
  - b. He was the most powerful man in the earth, a little monk in a little monastery, in South France.
  - c. The most powerful man in the whole earth in his time.
  - d. How can that be? There were four powerful men, militarily, or politically in the world at that time. The king of France, the king of Germany, the king of Italy, and the Pope.
  - e. The Pope was his disciple because he refused the invitation to be Pope so he put his main disciple in at Rome, and the three great kings of Europe were afraid of him and would do nothing without his permission and blessing.
  - f. The little monk from Clarivoux had more power in the earth...would not leave his monastery to become Pope or a court prophet for any king.
  - g. I have a personal enjoyment of His life because the focus of his life was the Song of Solomon.
  - h. The most powerful man preached to crowds of 10-15,000 people in the 12<sup>th</sup> century with no microphones and multitudes of laymen blind were healed.

- i. It was common for 20-30 paralytics to rise in one meeting. They said at his word all of Europe would march at his word...or would cease to march at war with one another at his word.
  - j. When the king of France wanted to go to war against the king of Germany...Bernard wrote a letter and stopped the war.
  - k. He had the anointing to see the secrets of men's hearts and saw what they did in their private lives. He had an anointing of Revelation but an anointing of power in miracles and in preaching.
  - l. This young 20 year old Catholic boy who became a monk and gave himself to prayer and fasting....one of the most powerful men in world history in my opinion.
  - m. I do not know how many men could influence ecclesiastical, the church world, the military world, and the political world and the economic world the way that this little monk did..
13. The experience in the power of God is what I am talking about and you are not going to enter into the power realm by an occasional once a week fast.
14. There are certain dynamics that take place but it is pretty extravagant fasting....when the power realm opens up with just regular fasts here and there but there are power realms that open up with these long extended fastings.
- E. Fast for Corporate revival.
- 1. John 4:35-38 is a very interesting passage where Jesus is talking about the harvest being plentiful.
    - a. He is talking to the twelve and He is sending them to reap the plentiful harvest in verse 35. "I am sending you to reap that which you have not labored in. Others have labored and you have entered into their labor." Others had labored for the harvest that was going to break out in the book of Acts.

2. The two primary others would have been John the Baptist, Anna, and of course the Lord Himself.
  - a. Those were the three primary laborers in the New Testament that we can identify.
  - b. There was a group that did the work and paved the way for the breaking through of revival in Israel.
  - c. The twelve were going to enter into work that was already finished. It was not just the finished work of the cross because we have had the finished work of the cross for 2, 000 years and that does not guarantee revival today.
3. On the basis of the finished work of the cross, prayer and fasting, in the will of God it opens up these power surges that we call revival of which multitudes get saved in short periods of time.
4. I want you to connect to the idea that there is a labor for the harvest to be reaped and it is not always reaped by the one who labors and goes before.
5. John the Baptist was martyred in his early 30's, Jesus was going to be killed very soon and Anna had already died and there were others as well.
6. There was a man named Philo from North Africa a very well known mystic.
  - a. Philo from Alexandria who lived at the same time as Jesus did and John the Baptist but was in North Africa.
  - b. A man deeply devout with the Old Testament and he raised up a community of men and women who were committed to prayer and fasting like unto Anna.
  - c. They were laboring in north Egypt....they never enter into the story line that is focused on the nation of Israel but they were hundreds of people if not thousands .....

7. Jesus says, "Yes you have entered into the labors of others." There is a labor for revival and Anna carried that night and day in the temple.

***"and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." (Luke 2:37)***

- a. Philo in Northern Egypt and Alexander.
- b. John the Baptist in Matthew 11:18
- c. Jesus said he came neither eating nor drinking....he came in a fasted lifestyle laboring in prayer for the nation of Israel.

8. Another example of revival fasting is Paul the apostle in Galatians 4:19 that he travailed until there was a majority, a breaking through of the spirit in the lives in the churches of the region of Galatia.

- a. He would labor for them, that there would be a break through of the Spirit in their churches.

***"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you," (Galatians 4:19)***

9. 2 Corinthians 6:5, Paul says he commends himself as a minister of God through fastings

10. 2 Corinthians 11:27, he says in fastings often. He says how he endured sleeplessness and hunger and as a separate category of suffering from hungry he adds, "fasting often."

***"in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness--" (2 Corinthians 11:27)***

- a. The hunger he talked about was an involuntary hunger because of His lifestyle of traveling through the countryside and there were times when they just did not have food .....it was involuntary.
- b. He said, "I know hungry ..... he had hunger in prison. Apart from the involuntary hungry that was imposed by my lifestyle....I was in fasting often. He was a man committed to labor through fasting. Fasting was a part of the labor through revival.

11. David had such zeal.

- a. Psalm 69:7-10 is a great passage and Jesus quotes it about His own life but is quoting something David wrote about himself.
- b. David was talking about David and Jesus must have said, "I like that ... it is about Me too! David talked about zeal for God's house consumed me!
- c. He was in fasting regularly and in Psalm 69 he became a by word amongst his friends and family.....they wagged their heads at him and wrote him off as a fanatic because of zeal for God's house.
- d. He became like an alien ....a by word to his friends and family. They mocked at him, rejected and laughed at him as a fanatic.
- e. David was a man of fasting and he bore reproach because of his fasting too. His fasting was for the House of God....for revival....for the breaking through of God's purpose for the nation of Israel.

12. The scripture in Joel 1 and 2 was to avert crisis but it was also for a Holy Spirit breakthrough.

***"Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD." (Joel 1:14)***

***"Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly;" (Joel 2:15)***

13. Political fasts
  - a. Men like Ghandi and men like those men in Ireland in the 1970's who went on a hunger strike to protest governmental policies and a number of them died....some 6 or 7 of them went up into the 60 and 70 days and they died.
  - b. Fasting in the natural like Gandhi, in the 40's, this lawyer from Africa went back home to His home land in India and they used fasting in the natural as a form of protest
  - c. they said, "things are not like they ought to be and my natural appetites are lost because of my appetite that things would be as they should be!"
  - d. These were political fasts....they are natural kin to the revival fast.
  - e. They were saying, "My appetite for life and business as usual is gone because my appetite for things to be right is eating me up.
  - f. I cannot live business as usual because there is injustice in the land," is what the men in Ireland, Gandhi and a host of followers this and this is what Anna lived like in the Spirit.
  - g. The church was barren using language of our day. Men and women have been raised up with a primary hunger, a superior hunger for righteousness in the church.
  - h. The say, "How can I live business as usual...food does not have the same taste...entertainment does not feel the same because I know that the church is barren ....multitudes are going to hell...the church is powerless, we cannot see people delivered in the church, and evangelism, the womb of the church is shut.
  - i. The Lord lays this on people and they loose their normal appetites in the context of their whole lifestyle.

j. That does not mean they never get hungry again but their appetite for the breakthrough of God is superior and stronger and it is a protest fast.....a fast for revival.

k. "I cannot take the way things are...I hunger and thirst for righteousness." Hunger and thirsting for righteousness is literally related to fasting though it speaks figuratively of intense desire.

***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6)***

14. Beloved some of you are beginning to experience a desire...you cannot stand business as usual where people are not saved, the lame do not walk, the blind do not see, and the angels do not show up. I have heard of Gods' works from days of old and I am not going to accept it just because the majority accepted it....there is a new desire being awakened in you. That is what happened to Anna...she was this tenacious faster for revival. Isaiah 58 fast.

**F.** To express sorrow or mourning.

1. David talks several times Psalm 38 he does not actually use the word fasting but he describes the fasting related to sin.
2. Psalm 69:10 was a zeal for God and mourning over his own personal short comings.
3. Two different things were happening in this psalm...there were short comings, his own sorrow over sin but there was zeal for the break through of God.
4. Ahab did this...a wicked king He actually came under the conviction of sin and fasted because of his own sin...
  - a. it did not last but bought him some time for a moment and God gave him a window of grace because he fasted over his personal sin.
  - b. He did not fast to earn forgiveness...the fasting over personal sins causes us to intensify our prayer in a seriousness over our sin. 1 Kings 21

5. A lot of times we sin and cannot find Godly sorrow. Fasting intensifies our prayer and awareness of the gravity of sin in our lives. 2 Corinthians 7:10

***"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." (2 Corinthians 7:10)***

G. Corporate sin over a nation or city.

1. 1 Samuel 7:6; Nehemiah 9; was sorrow of sin over a city a nation.
2. This is very important kind of fast either personal or corporate.

H. A fasting over personal loss...the death of a loved one.

1. David did it three different times at least.
    - a. He fasted over Jonathan when he died in 2 Samuel 1:12.
    - b. Abner was murdered 2 Samuel 3:35, was to be a political ally with David and join his team but was murdered by one of David's men and David went into grieving and fasting.
    - c. David's illegitimate son from the immoral relationship with Bathsheba 2 Samuel 12:16-23, he fasted 7 days.
    - d. The prophets said the baby would die but David said, "Maybe yes --- maybe no! I know God He might not die!"
  2. It is this sorrow that destroys the normal appetites...
  3. it is grieving over the lost and is the same logic because the sorrow over sin is negative but the bridegroom fast is not sorrow but Longing that takes over our appetites...
  4. we want to enter into the embrace of the bridegroom even more than our physical appetites. It has a greater hold on us.
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I. The desire for God.

1. Sorrow over sin is negative...the desire for more of God is positive but it is the same idea.....an intense desire...stronger...I do not mean it alleviates physical appetites entirely but has a precedent over them.

J. Preparation for a Divine assignment.

1. Nehemiah 1:4, they were going on a very perilous journey and they all fasted.
2. God commanded them to return from Babylon to go back to Israel and they said, "There are bandits and evil men all over the country side," of this 700 mile walk and they had a lot of gold. They fasted!

***"So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven." (Nehemiah 1:4)***

3. Ezra 8:21, was the same thing they said, "Lord we need to go the way to go...we need to have your protection and direction.

***"Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions." (Ezra 8:21)***

4. Paul and Barnabas in the city of Antioch were fasting and praying because of a new missions endeavor for divine assignment in Act 13:1-2.

***"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ( Act 13:1-2.)***

5. Act 14:23 before the elders were to launch into this new mandate before the Lord they all came before the Lord in prayer and fasting.

6. The preparation to receive specific supernatural direction/wisdom and revelation.
  - a. More than just protection and preparation for a new endeavor we want to break into the realm of understanding of what is going on before us right now.
  - b. Daniel fasted for 21 days to have a breakthrough of divine information. Daniel 10:2-3
  
7. Acts 13:1-2; Acts 14:23; could also be assigned to getting divine information about that journey. We can fast and receive divine information in very powerful ways.

K. The bridegroom fast.

1. Matthew 9:14-15, is the pinnacle of fasting.....the new paradigm of fasting that Jesus introduced.
2. Fasting in the grace of God...the highest experience of fasting....Jesus introduced it.
3. He put it in relationship to Friends of the Bridegroom in verse 15....the disciples of John the Baptist, he was the first friend of the Bridegroom. That is a title used two times in the scripture on two different occasions.
  - a. First John the Baptist called himself a friend of the Bridegroom in John 3:29 and then some months later Jesus called his twelve disciples friends of the Bridegroom.
  - b. Both times Friends of the Bridegroom is related to this fasting grace. John's disciples asked Jesus why His guys did not fast because they did as John's disciples and he taught us to fast but Your disciples do not and Jesus by a question introduces a whole new paradigm of fasting.

- c. "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

*"Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." (Matthew 9:14-15)*

- 4. He is relating the mourning to a bridegroom not a national disaster, not the judgment coming upon the nation but the mourning of the losses of the embraces of the bridegroom that they have grown accustomed to.
- 5. They were so accustomed to the presence of Jesus he loved them
  - a. he liked them
  - b. they enjoyed him
  - c. they felt close to God
  - d. they were in the realm of the power of God all the time
  - e. they were so accustomed to His power and wisdom and his enjoyment with their them.....they just took it for granted.
- 6. Jesus says, "When I am gone...the very remembrances of my former embraces, the nearness I had with them will cause them to long, to languish in their heart to enter into that through the Holy Spirit that they had with me in the flesh."
- 7. They were only going to have that intimacy through the Spirit....He said, "They will mourn." Instead of mourn put the word lovesick or the wound of love.

8. Jesus could have said, "They will be wounded by desire...and through the Holy Spirit they will recover the same intimacy they had with me in the flesh." It is an entirely different kind of fasting and not related to the other dimensions.
9. The purpose of this fast is to increase our spiritual capacities to freely receive or experience more of Jesus in our hearts.
10. This kind of fasting increases our spiritual capacity to freely receive.....this was not an earning thing but to freely receive and experience more of Jesus in our hearts.
11. This fasting enlarges our capacity and we could receive more, this fasting has a catalytic dimension ...it accelerates we receive it faster.
12. This type of fasting also increases our depth and penetrates us deeper and lasts longer.
  - a. We want more of Jesus, a larger quantity, and we want it to touch us deeper and last longer and we want it to come faster.
  - b. Fasting accelerates this grace in our life and we will look at this next week.
13. There is a 3-fold focus to this fasting...
  - a. it enhances intimacy with God
  - b. it enhances the revelation of God's beauty
  - c. it opens up the realm of God's mystery...of God's secrets.
14. The deep regions of God's heart He will give them under the banner or face of the bridegroom God ....he will give them to the heart that desires...to the lovesick heart...to the one that cannot live without them.....He will give this anointing.

15. We will talk about 7 distinct rewards ..... Jesus says, "I will reward you openly." I have 7 distinct rewards and you could have any number of them of which our heart enters into this lovesickness...this mourning ....He says, "I cannot live without it, " and the Lord says, "In that case I will give it to you."
  
16. It is not to avert natural disaster...it is not even to bring revival...it is not a mourning over sin...it is longing for the embraces of the bridegroom of which the Lord awakens desire for just a little bit and that awakened desire thrusts us forth into a world of increased desire for God.
  
17. A little bit of revelation makes us insatiably hungry for more.
  
18. The rich get richer in the Spirit if they follow their desires.