

## ~ 21 Days of God Encounters ~

One of the most powerful things you can do to impact your year is to make a decision to draw near to God.

Your growth in your spiritual journey is up to you. If you want to grow fast, or you want to grow slow, it is up to you. If you want to grow in your relationship with the Lord, then you must decide to do the hard thing or the challenging thing that becomes easy with the help of the Holy Spirit. If you want to accelerate your relationship with God you must be willing to do what other people don't want to do.

Every year at TLC we begin the year with 21 days of prayer and fasting. We know that is the best way to start the year....seeking God. Every year, we have so many testimonies come out of our corporate fast. We get excited when it is time to pray and fast together!

Fasting for '2025' begins on January 6th and goes through January 27th. This is something we do corporately as a body. Corporate fasts are very biblical. There are many times throughout the Bible where the Lord called for a corporate fast from the people.

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that dramatically accelerates your spiritual growth. Fasting is one of the fastest ways to grow and draw closer to God. Fasting can change your life, your ministry and your spiritual journey with God.

Let's look at what Jesus had to say about fasting in..... *Matthew 6:16-18* *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.* *17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> 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.*

Jesus said “when” you fast. He didn’t say, “if” you fast. Fasting is a command, not an option. If you are a disciple of the Lord, It is to be a part of your spiritual journey.

Fasting is simply denying your flesh and feeding your spirit. And when we deny our flesh, our spirit becomes stronger; it becomes alive and more sensitive to hear the voice of God and experience God. Fasting is a command of the Lord, not to cause us to suffer, but to help us draw nearer to Him.

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that you grow in as you practice it. Just like you grow in your ability to pray. When you begin a habit of daily prayer and daily encounters with God, you may pray for 15 minutes, but as you grow in the habit of praying your prayers become longer, you are able to focus better in prayer, and you learn to be led by the Holy Spirit.

So it is with fasting. As you fast, you grow in the discipline of fasting. Maybe this is your first time to fast and you may fast one meal a day. But as you practice this spiritual habit you grow in it so that the next time you fast you can go three days without food or only do a liquid fast, etc.

The second thing we learn from this scripture is that fasting should be done with the motivation to encounter God, In fact, Jesus says keep it personal between you and your Father God. You don’t fast for anyone else. You fast for the Lord. It is between you and God alone. Don’t be boastful or let others know you are fasting so as to appear to be righteous.

It’s about seeking God in that secret place. That hiding place where only you and He go. And when you enter into that secret place,.... *your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.(vs. 18)*

Look at the next 21 days as an opportunity of 21 encounters with the Lord! Oh wow, can you imagine what wonderful things He has planned to share with you? What new revelation He will whisper to your heart? What deeper places you will go in your intimacy with Him?

Blessings on your fasting journey! I'm praying for you as I journey too!

*Pastor Rhonda*