

# ***THE PERILS OF THE BRIDEGROOM FAST PT 2***

***FASTING: REWARDS AND PERILS - DANA CANDLER***

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## **I. AN INCREASE OF DEMONIC ACTIVITY—*PERIL # 5***

- A. There is an increase of demonic activity especially with extreme amounts of fasting.
1. When someone gives themselves to intensive, long term, fasted lifestyle, there is an increase of demonic attack. As the Holy Spirit increases His activity, so the Devil increases his. The things that bring power in the Kingdom of God are uniquely targeted by the enemy to undermine those that embrace them.
  2. This does not apply to everyone who fasts, but mostly to those living long-term intensive fasted lifestyles.
  3. These are shark infested waters. It is glorious, but the enemy is lurking at every corner and we must be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. We approach these areas cautiously, with a certain amount of fear and trembling, not wanting to be simplistic or naïve as we enter in.
  4. We want to be extremely careful to keep our commitment to other believers, not retreating into a strange isolation, and we need to continually remain in the Word of God.
- B. The first sphere of demonic activity is focused on unbelievers who receive experiences and false information related to fasting.
- “Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...speaking lies...forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving...1 Tim. 4:3-5***
1. At the End of the Age people will heed deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons and this will lead to some departing from the faith. These spirits lure people into their deceptions. They forbid marriage by forbidding and dishonoring the marriage covenant. They present strange rules of self-denial in regards to food.
  2. In this passage, the arena of *asceticism* is what is linked to false doctrines. There is a godly denial of the flesh (Jesus-prescribed fasted lifestyle) but there is also a *false asceticism*—leading people into confidence in themselves instead of God.
  3. All the major religions of the world (such as Islam) were started by men and women in extreme seasons of prayer and fasting. Many in eastern religions are more committed to fasting than the western church is.

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- C. The second sphere of demonic activity is to unstable believers who receive false ideas from demonic influence. Believers *can* receive these false visitations—they give in to delusional ideas of grandeur that no mature believer would confirm.
1. The caution we must take in intensive fasting is to be particularly committed to community of believers and to the Word of God, focusing on intimacy with Jesus. Typically people get isolated, they don't read the Word and they lose their focus of intimacy—focusing only on their own grandeur.
  2. The Bridegroom fast is marked by the fruit of becoming more humble, more submissive, more tender and more meek, rather than increasing in pride and arrogance and growing more hard in heart toward God.
- D. The third sphere of demonic activity is with mature believers. They are not being deceived, but having demonic encounters, sometimes of torment, sometimes of temptations of grandeur.
1. *St. Anthony of Egypt* – The first monk of the whole monastic movement in Christian history obeyed the Lord to “separate himself” at age 25. He stayed in an abandoned fort for 20 years, eating only bread and water. After the 20 years, at age 45, he returned to society, doing powerful signs and wonders for 60 years, until he died at age 106. During his life, he experienced a few terrifying demonic appearances, threatening him to stop the fasting or they would torment him physically.
  2. *Sadu Sundar Sing* – A man from India who lived in the 1920's - 1930's. He was radically in love with Jesus and was a man of intense fasting and abandonment from all that was worldly. He was revered in the nation because he did tremendous miracles and wonders. One of the graphic stories of his life was when he was visited by a demon when he was about 30 years old. He appeared to Sadu as an angel of light and offered to make him one of the great religions of the world. Sadu spoke the name of Jesus and the demon was exposed. It was because of his prayer and fasting that this demonic attack came to him.
  3. *Paul Cain* also experienced a full-on demonic encounter in the natural. A demonic being came to him and told Paul that if he would lay aside preaching about Jesus and only talk about God, he would give him tremendous honor and promotion.
  4. The Paradox: The Bridegroom fast provokes the demonic attack and yet is the very thing the Holy Spirit uses to help us overcome the attack of the enemy.

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## **II. THE LOSS OF EFFECTIVENESS IN THE SHORT TERM—*PERIL # 6***

- A. There is an inability to accomplish or to produce as much fruit in the short term.
1. Ministry effectiveness, business effectiveness, and success in the realm of man are lessened in the short term, lacking immediate results.
  2. When a person fasts consistently, they can't work as focused because of being blurry in their minds and thought-processes. They can't work as long because of physical limitations, and they can't work as well because they've lost their resolve to accomplish things. Follow-through is so much harder.
  3. Our resolve in God is strengthened, but our resolve in the natural is weakened. We lose our ability and drive to create new opportunities, whether it be in ministry or business.
- B. Strategic Time Delays - God ordains strategic time delays related to these arenas of weakness in order to produce humility with spiritual depth. Two types of delay:
1. *The Delay of Voluntary Weakness (Fasted Lifestyle)* – We can't produce near as much fruit in the here and now. What we could have done in three years, we won't see for ten. The fasted lifestyle delays the measure of our effectiveness.
  2. *The Delay of Involuntary Weakness (Trials)* – When God allows circumstances to slow down our spiritual progression. Like David running in the wilderness from Saul, or Joseph in the dungeon for thirteen years, He wants to produce humility in us and give us the protection of knowing our weakness.
  3. We face a tremendous paradox related to short term ministry effectiveness. For the first several years, our effectiveness is minimal. But in the long term, our effectiveness is significantly greater. The slower method of weakness and fasting will take longer, but in the long run, a divine economy is loosed, and we produce far more.
  4. The western mind measures productivity so different than God does. At the day of our glory—the judgment seat—it will not matter how many gifts we had, or how much money or glory. The only thing that will matter will be *the movement of the heart toward God in voluntary love.*
  5. This is the delay of the forerunner—waiting before God in prayer and fasting that they might have a voice, yet for some time experiencing little fruit.

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- C. Saints of History who seemed Non-Effective on the Earth yet were Powerful in Eternity
  - 1. Anna – The true greatness and effectiveness of her life could not be seen. She is famous in history but was not in her own day.
  - 2. John the Baptist – Eighteen years of a fasted lifestyle for eighteen months of a ministry in the wilderness. God called him the greatest man born of a woman. His wisdom would be vindicated in due time.
  - 3. Mary of Bethany – The disciples, those closest to Jesus, thought that her extravagance unto Jesus was a waste. Yet Mary will have an unbelievable crown in eternity for what was considered foolish on the earth.

## **III. RELATIONAL DISRUPTIONS/SOCIAL PRESSURES—*PERIL # 7***

- A. The down side of the fasted lifestyle: To be a person of one thing in the midst of a society that is not a society of one thing is trouble.
  - 1. It will disrupt your status quo and your social life. This society does not have any tolerance for a person of one thing.
  - 2. John the Baptist, the greatest man ever born of a woman, was called demonized by the multitudes.
  - 3. People want you happy with what makes *them* happy. When you're happy with something else, it causes them to feel rejected and judged. They come up with theories of why you are "off."
  - 4. David's friends and brothers considered him strange and weird because of his zeal. Their own reproaches against God fell to David. The elders and leaders spoke against him and the drunkards sung mocking songs against him as a religious fanatic.  
  
***"Because for your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered y face. I have become a stranger to my brothers and an alien to my mother's children..." Ps. 69: 7***
- B. Fasting makes us fearless in our spirits and this causes problems relationally. Fearless, anointed, lovesick worshippers do not care about being promoted or demoted, about running in the rat race or playing the typical relational games. This confidence causes much disturbance. Those who enter into this Bridegroom fast become so free in their spirits that they are annoying to those still steeped in all the selfish ways of life.

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## **IV. SEVEN ENEMIES OF FASTED LIFESTYLE**

- A. *Elitism* – Feeling superior to others because of a supposed greater measure of self-denial. This is a raging monster that is restrained with great difficulty.
- B. *Legalism* – The emphasis is on our labors and attainments, crushing us when we fall short of the standards and propping us up in pride when we succeed. It is a mis-stewarding of the sacred embrace by working for it verses receiving it freely.
- C. *Exhibition* - There is an ever present tendency to draw attention to self via manifestations. People are desperate to appear especially close to Jesus and they will allow many types of manifestations to give this impression. Most people are comfortable with leaving false impressions about their spiritually and ministry. They desperately want others to believe more than what is actually true.
- D. *Isolationism* - Pressing in without regard for others and not walking in bridal partnership. In other words—anti-servanthood, anti-social, anti-community, anti-compassion.
  - 1. Some of the monastic movements in history focused on being free from defilement as their main goal and end in itself. Thus, they saw involvement with others as being exposed to potential defilement.
  - 2. The fasted lifestyle serves both the first and second commandment. We come into contact with God's fire of love and that drives us into the Great Commission with abandonment.
- E. *Religious mysticism* in our ideas and doctrines (beyond boundaries of the Logos). This unbiblical mysticism is when we seek attention verses being jealous for Jesus' supremacy. It causes confusion to the new ones and can make others feel lesser. It can become a trap in which people start to measure their level of anointing by their measuring up to the mystical language and ideas. The appearance of mystery by giving fleshly hints yet withholding the details with motives of self-promotion.
- F. *Poverty spirit* – Historically, groups that value and pursue deep spirituality at times include an over emphasis on destitution as a proclamation of their deep spirituality.
- G. *Irresponsible lives* in the name of seeking Jesus – Using spirituality as an excuse for laziness and irresponsibility.

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## **V. THE DIFFICULTIES OF A FASTING COMMUNITY**

- A. There are dangers in a fasting community in as much as there are dangers in individual fasting. Though it is actually safer to go together, we encounter corporate difficulties. Still, we must learn how to go together.
1. *Comparison* - Perhaps the greatest danger in a fasting community is our proneness toward comparison. We are in the process of transformation, and we each experience different graces and different difficulties at different stages along the way. Amidst all these differences, we continually set ourselves up against the next person, measuring our spiritual life by another's. The rules: "Don't ask, Don't tell."
  2. *The Name without Reality* – We have the danger of taking on the name of "the ones who fast" without actually doing it ourselves. When it is just God and me, raw heart and no witnesses, it's pretty apparent even to myself how I am giving myself in fasting. Yet when I'm surrounded by others who are doing it, it's easier to assume I am also, even when I'm not.
  3. *Dangers of the Uninformed* – We have to be careful to continue teach those new to our community about the reasons and Biblical foundations for fasting. They have to know about both the benefits and the perils in order to give themselves to this lifestyle in an educated way.
  4. *Necessity of Volunteering* – Sometimes because of the "peer pressure" of all going together, we might engage in fasting with resentment and bitterness about it in our hearts. We feel like we have to, so we do, but we don't have any desire and we are nurturing a growing bitterness to those that we feel are promoting it. This is dangerous. The Bridegroom fast is all about *desire*, thus when we are doing it for other motivations, specifically false ones, we should stop. The motto is: "Don't fast until you can't stand not to!"
  5. *A Sure Stigma* - As a community, we will suffer a great stigma for this dimension of fasting. There is nothing more powerful than a group of people in unity of abandonment to God—praying and fasting together. It's a potent and powerful reality. Inevitable persecution will arise. Because of the judgment people feel by this, we will be called elite and harmful to the Body of Christ. Our job is to live in such a way before God, that we might at every cost avoid these accusations from being true—not thinking of our community more highly than we ought, but continually remembering our weakness and giving ourselves to gratitude rather than pride and elitism.

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- B. Fasting creates a crisis of community in that we're made to commune with one another yet we have to commune around the true Center of communion—Jesus Himself.

***“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the holy of Spirit.” Rom. 14:17***

1. The crisis is that our culture centers community on things we are seeking to “detach” from—food, entertainment, materialism, etc.
2. The only way we can truly come together is around the beauty of the Lord, the celebration of who He is. This aligns the way we relate to each other.

- C. The Delay of Detachment in Community

***“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 Jn. 1:7***

1. We are after the fullness of God and this requires fasting, both individually and corporately—to open wide our capacities to receive from God. As the individual hearts are expanded, they come together as one, creating one great expanse, an open embrace awaiting God's coming.
2. Our community is based upon the God-Man—the anchor and reference point of all communion. We only love one another in as much as we love Him and we only experience true unity in as much as we are unified with Him.
3. Community requires that we come around the Subject of Jesus' beauty. Yet corporate unity around this one Obsession requires individual unity of heart. And this is the process of transformation we are in. As our hearts come into unity around this One Love, catching all the little foxes and removing the hindrances, we also progressively come into oneness around Jesus. This process of transformation requires the continual laying down of our lives to further the wholeheartedness of others.

- D. We are redefining our lifestyles from the spirit of the world to the Spirit of God. Our hindrances corporately are reflective of our hindrances personally.

1. We have a mandate from God to proclaim to the earth the message of a beautiful, delightful God and to declare and model the necessary means of fasting as our way into His beauty and love. We must be jealous over each one's life in God, getting out of the way (as friends of the Bridegroom) so that others can soar. Each one's unique way affects the rest. Oh that God would grace us with the ability to grow in this, both personally and then corporately, that we might serve the Church of Jesus in the earth by the experiential testimony and message of true freedom and pure lovesickness for God!