

12-2006

Day 1

Well, this is the first 24 hour period of my fasting and fellowshiping with God before but it's been quite a long time since I've done it, if at all, without any constant intrusion or diversions from people or situations, like fasten on the job, where precious little time is spent with God while agonizing through the seemingly endless days. According to scripture, this is not the kind of fasting God requires of us or respects. This kind of fasting has to do with displaying temporary will-power that can't stand against the forces of evil. Soon after these kinds of fasts, I would continue to manifest the very weaknesses I had attempted to be delivered from in the first place. Finally, I am fasting and fellowshiping with God in a way I had always wanted to. I am subjecting myself to a constant diet of meditation, prayer, and scripture to once and for all rid myself of everything that was holding me bound and hindering my relationship with Jesus Christ. Day 1 went well enough with no noticeable hunger pangs or distresses. However, I find that I will have to allow a small window of time to check my email down at the local college. I try to keep this period of time at a bare minimum – like a couple of hours per day. This time is spent following up on job leads and other important emails. I think it's the prudent thing to do since I no longer have a job, or the finances to pay my rent. I also managed to have to pawn my laptop, which is why I'm penning this journal, and why I use the computers at the local college. Today I wrote down a few scriptures that weighed heavily on my heart and spirit. I prayed earnestly to the Lord for forgiveness and help. I also cried my eyes out with sorrow for being so disobedient, rebellious, and weak. Since these unholy characteristics are what drove me to tears, I figure I'll let them be the purpose and expectation of this time spent with God. It is my supplication to God that after I have endured this period of fasting, fellowshiping, and prayer I will once and for all be delivered from these weaknesses and any others that are holding me bound or hindering my relationship with Jesus Christ. I recalled the scripture of Jacob wrestling with God and was given new revelation concerning its meaning. God put on my heart, and in my spirit that I should hold on to Him and not let go until I have been completely healed and delivered. This revelation, once again, drove tears from my eyes as I boldly stated to God while lying prostrate on the floor, and pounding my fists to display my resolve to stay the course, "I will not let you go until you deliver me!" At that moment I knew I had to be willing to fast and fellowship with God until I was completely and irrefutably healed and delivered. How would I know when I was delivered? I would wait until God told me in no uncertain terms. As scripture states, "my spirit will bear witness ..." Consequently, the length of this fast will be a reflection of my resolve to offer my body to God as a loving sacrifice and as living sacrifice and was an expression of my undying love and devotion to Him.

Granted, some may think me to be very irresponsible regarding my worldly responsibilities, like channeling all my energies into finding a job so I can pay the rent, and I can understand that but I no longer let such worldly thinking dictate my needs from God. Right now I need God much more than a job or a place to live. I refuse to put the cart before the horse any longer. Interestingly enough, it was my job, and the lack of God in my life, that swiftly brought me to my dire situation. This time I'm stepping out on faith, putting it all into God's hands, getting out of His way, and resting and trusting in His ever-loving arms. God can make a way out of no way, and even if He doesn't do it for me at this point, I know He's able. It's a small thing for Him. I have to believe that with all my heart and mind. Up until today, hardly anything was going my way. God was fencing me in, blocking my path, and eliminating all my options. I felt that I had completely run out of escape routes. God has me right where He wants me and I know it's where He wants me. I'm His child and He's put His foot down to my childish, rebellious, and reckless ways. It's God's way of chastising His children, and I need to be chastised, not rewarded with a job for all of my foolishness. How much sense does that make? That's what spiritually immature Christians and worldly parents do for their wayward children in an attempt to maintain peace and friendship. In spite of the fact that we are under Grace, through Christ, that Grace is still subject to God's responsibility as a parent to not "spare the rod and ruin the child." Actually, I invite God's chastisement because I know that if I submit to it, I will be improved by it. Anyway, I went down to the college to check my email and I had a very good job prospect. I followed up on it and will wait and see what happens. Maybe God has already tested my heart to see just how committed I am to follow through with my intentions. At this point in my life, and my walk with Him, I am believing God to make a way out of no way. Because He's able, God expects me to show some humility. This is also the purpose and object of this fast: to humble myself completely in the presence of God, and allow His power to become perfect through my weakness. By the time I closed my eyes for sleep, I had a smile on my face – something that hadn't been there in a long time. I also felt a warmth cover my body and I said, "thank you Lord." At that moment I knew that God had allowed me to enter into His rest. The anxiety of my financial obligations had quickly faded away. I felt that this fast was definitely something that God was totally supportive of, and that everything would be working for my good, according to God's purpose for my life.

Day 2

I awoke this morning with some slight hunger pangs. I also felt a little weak but paid it no attention because I knew the real weakening of my body would come 2 or 3 days later. Just like the meteorologists had predicted, it was starting to rain, and would rain throughout the whole day. Periodically, it would pour down raining, rain cats and dogs, as the southern expression goes. I quickly got up from where I had been sleeping and got right into my scheduled and structured routine. I started the day with praise and worship, then to my morning prayer, and on to my morning scripture reading. I have an NIV "One Year Bible" for most of

my routine bible reading. Unfortunately, I don't have any bible study material but I don't think it particularly necessary during my fast. I'm on my 10th reading of this "one Year Bible" and really think I get a lot more out of reading it on a regular basis than I would doing a personal bible study. I have found that most bible study programs lack the structure, cohesiveness, and comprehensiveness to portray the bible in its entirety. I have found that most bible study programs deal mostly with the New Testament (NT) while handily leaving the Old Testament (OT) virtually unexplored. I personally feel that the two are inseparable and bring much greater clarity and perspective to the Word of God. For instance, the NT is thought to protect the Christian through the Grace we receive from God as a result of Christ dying on Calvary. I think this narrow perspective gives Christians a false sense of security regarding sin. And actually does nothing to show God's hatred of sin. The OT, on the other hand, puts this matter into much greater perspective by illustrating through scripture precisely how much God hates sin, and those who commit it. I don't think that God changed His feelings towards sin simply because He extended us Grace. I think He still detests it, and would definitely prefer that we didn't do it. Therein lays the problem. Most Christians who put a premium on these NT-based bible study programs don't seem to make the connection between the OT and the NT, as far as how God feels about sin, and sinners. I think God always has, and always will have a problem with sin and sinners regardless of the Grace He extends to believers. Maybe, if most folks knew how much He hated it during the OT period, they would easily see how much He still hates it today. I recall the scripture that a lot of preachers are constantly using to make point about the unchanging word of God, "I the Lord do not change." Mal 3:6. I find it interesting that these same preachers seem to think that because of the Grace God liberally extends to us, through no merit of our own but simply through the faith we have in His son, Jesus Christ, which all of a sudden God has mellowed out regarding sin. Quite frankly, I think this is the kind of short-sightedness Satan uses to his advantage. If Satan can sell believers on the idea that because of Grace they no longer have to be concerned with the consequences of sin, or whether or not it leaves a stench in the nostrils of God. You might even say that the believer's effective response to God regarding sin is to say, "Get over it Big Guy! Remember, you were the one who extended us Grace in the first place. What do you expect?" Can you imagine the side-spitting laughter Satan and his minions must enjoy when we believers ourselves aid and abet the very forces that God gave His only begotten son to death on the cross because He hated sin so much. How did things get so twisted? When I read completely through my One Year Bible, I get a comprehensive and thorough reflection of the numerous dynamics involved concerning why Jesus died on the cross, and what his death should mean to us. Actually, the two subjects are inextricably connected and cannot be separated without corrupting the balance of the two considered together. I think that if you emphasized either one over the other you invariably tip the balance in favor of a skewed biblical text that does more to cloud the issue of sin, and even more to dismiss its connection to Satan. To think that God is OK with sin is to think that God is OK with Satan. Now that's a lie straight from the pit of Hell.

Later this evening I tuned to the "Praise the Lord" telethon on television. I don't recall the name of the preacher but the sermon was entitled "The year of the number 6." He was actually gleaning scripture for every instance of the number 6 and relating it to God's special recognition and favor of the number for handing out double portions of blessings, whether for healing, deliverance, financial or anything else needed. At first I thought this was a shameless ploy on behalf of the preacher just to get the listeners to make contributions in various multiples of sixes, (i.e. \$66.00, \$600.00, \$6,000.00) I don't particularly like it when preachers or theologians play the "numbers" game but for some reason I was intrigued, and somewhat persuaded to incorporate the number 6 into my fasting regime. I started to try to get a word from God about the validity of the preacher's revelation and about the possibility of this number working for me as a set number of days for my fast. I had intended on trying to fast longer than 6 days but the more I thought about it, the more acceptable it became. Then I prayed about it. The Lord put on my heart and mind that I should read my bible 6 times a day, pray at least 6 times a day, and continue the fast for 6 days. I felt a sense of relief knowing that I would only be fasting as long as 6 days but then reality set in - I had never fasted in this way, this long before! I had never fasted on just water any longer than 5 days and that was almost 15 years ago. I had recently fasted on mostly water, some tea, about 2 months ago for 4 days. This time I would be doing the fasting but also the cycling too. Could I keep it up for 6 days? I was about to find out.

Day 3

I awoke this morning still with no discomforting hunger pangs. I don't know if the fact that I was drinking at least 128 fluid ounces of water each day was the key but I was certainly delighted. Even yesterday I felt no discomforting hunger pangs. Well, today, at least this morning, has not been rainy but it has been plenty cloudy. I decided to ride my bike down to the college to use the computers and check my emails for possible job leads. I had some older leads I needed to follow up on but I also had a lead that was left for me on yesterday, when I was shut in because of the rain. I replied to the email with interest and with an updated copy of my resume. I then contacted the recruiter and spoke to her about the position. She said she had just finished looking at the resume I had sent her and stated that the position required more desktop experience than what I had listed on my resume. I indicated to her that one of the places of employment in my resume was actually an IT position involving desktop support. She then countered that the position was only for 2 months and only paid \$15.00 an hour, a combination of factors she knew I would find unattractive. Before I could say anything else she blurted out that she would be considering me for other opportunities in the future. At hearing this, I could feel the rage rapidly building up in me because I knew she was giving me the brush-off. I recalled that the contract was advertised to be for at least 6 months, and required 3 years experience, which I had. I wanted to give her a piece of my mind but she was

already about to hang up on me so I tried to hang up first without making any comments. Then I uttered to myself, "that bit...!" I immediately asked the Lord to forgive me for feeling that way and then rode my bike toward home and decided that maybe I should put the job search thing on hold because the last thing I needed at this point in my fast was to be stressing out about something like that. After all, this is supposed to be quality time spent with God, and believing that God will take care of my needs in spite of the way things appear. I must step out on faith, and not give Satan any opportunities to disrupt this time spent entering into God's rest. This decision weighed heavily on my heart, mind, and spirit so I took it to be the will of God. After all, I am to walk by faith and not by sight because scripture says that, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." By faith, I feel it's time to walk into my season of change and deliverance. It's my time, it's my season.

Day 4

I awoke this morning with some discomforting hunger pangs but after I drank some water they seemed to go away. I also felt a slight weakness in my body accompanied by nausea but the water helped me to get past this weakness. The sky was clear and blue for a change and I looked forward to getting outdoors as soon as possible if only just to ride my bike down to the college for exercise. I thought that today I would really be having a problem with greater physical weakness in my body but I was quite surprised at how my body responded to the demanding bike ride that eventually would take me well beyond the college. I stopped by the college to check on any important emails, though not to follow-up on any job leads, and also to check my banking statements online. I found that I had some charges against my check card that I was totally unaware of so I decided to ride the additional distance down to my bank. Round-trip was about 3.5 miles but there were several small hills I had to climb, at least peddled up. This was no small feat considering I hadn't eaten a thing in almost 4 days. It's interesting how much energy I have at this point compared to the energy I would have when I would fast the ways I mentioned on Day 1. I truly think that it is power that I'm being given from God to continue. The thing I notice more is that I am actually finding the idea of eating food somewhat unappealing. This is truly remarkable! It may also be because of God's power or because I'm restricting myself to only watching commercial-free Christian broadcast stations that don't air food commercials. At least I haven't seen any yet. They do, however, include 1 or 2 food preparation programs that immediately prompt me to change to another channel. I've also noticed that cooked foods do very little to my resolve when I smell their aroma. I simply try to stay focused on the Lord because I know I am not, and cannot do this in my own strength. I decided to include the scripture Isaiah 40:29-31 into my daily scripture reading to shore up my resolve.

Day 5

I awoke this morning without the slightest feeling of hunger pangs. Also, I didn't feel as weak as I thought I would after expending so much energy on yesterday. God is good, and I know He's strengthening my body and my mind to continue. What a wonderful God we serve!

Whew! Man, am I tired! I decided to bike down to the local college as usual and then got the crazy idea to ride over to a section of town I was familiar with just for kicks. The trip over there from the college was about 3 miles with very gently hills spaced far apart. By the time I got halfway, I felt my energy rapidly draining and decided I would swallow my pride and just walk with my bike up any on-coming hills. By the time I headed back home it seemed all my energy was spent, and I started to even pedal with some distress on relatively low grade surfaces. Pedaling up any hill was definitely out of the question. I have never felt so beat in all my life, even considering all the hard work I've done. I cannot begin to imagine the calories I must have burned during this 8 mile roundtrip trek. That's right, 8 miles pedaling on nothing but fat reserves. I was completely astonished that I had the stamina and strength to make it back home without having to catch the bus. I started praising God for strengthening me and then collapsed on my couch after entering my apartment. I don't think I will ever do anything that extreme again. I feel blessed to be alive.

Day 6

I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus. I was very weak but not weak enough that it was going to prevent me from going to church. I pedaled down the street to church about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away. I felt as though I had reached a milestone as I slumped into the cushioned chair on one of the outer rows of the sanctuary. I was waiting on a word from God regarding the length of my fast. I needed to know if 6 days was going to be long enough to deliver me from everything that was holding me bound, and hindering my relationship with the Lord. As I waited for the worship to begin, I recalled a scripture I had read that morning that said, "For thou has set me free ..." I thought to myself, "That's it, it's over!" By the time the service started, I was more than ready to praise and worship the Lord. Because of the excellent preaching, I got my praise on with all my heart and mind. After the service, I knew, without a doubt, that I had indeed been set free. Set free from everything that had held me bound for so long. I felt like I was experiencing life for the first time, that I was seeing my true self emerge from the wrappings of the dead man's clothes that had encased me for so long. They had finally been shed, once and for all.