



The Sharon Star

The Prize of the High Calling of God

By Albert Hannigan

As we see events unfold around us, we are ever increasingly aware that the ability of the natural man to solve his problems is sadly lacking. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The book of Proverbs contains so much teaching regarding the wisdom of God. "Doth not wisdom cry? And understanding put forth her voice? O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. Receive my instruction and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all things that may be desired are not to be compared unto it" (Proverbs 8:1,5-11). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10).

I am reminded of Isaiah 11:1-4: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel

and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth...."

The wisdom of man falls so far short of being able to solve his problems. His wisdom (or lack thereof) is full of strife and debate, self-seeking, and possessiveness; it is full of confusion and every evil work (James 3:14-16). "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated [or approachable], full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:17-28).

O, praise God for His wonderful wisdom. It brings such peace and rest. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). And that is the kingdom that God has called us unto. He has lifted the burden of sin from off our backs and caused us to rise up in the realm of the Spirit where there is no more condemnation, but a glorious freedom and joy. Hallelujah! What a unity and

love flows in our homes, in the church and the community. We are at peace with God and man.

What a high and holy calling He has called us unto. "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:22-23).

This calling is to life in the Spirit. That is what the Kingdom of God is all about; to live and move and have our being in Him, to be filled with all the fullness of God.

As we grow up in Him, we partake of that Resurrection Life more and more. God is interested in you and I partaking of His Life. He said, "I am come that they might have Life and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). He said to the woman at the well, "If you would have asked of me, I would have given you the Living Water" (John 4:10 paraphrased). Let us ask for that Living Water. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

When we see the darkness and degradation that the world is in today, our hearts go out to men and women everywhere. We know how God is able to change things. He is full of wisdom and righteousness, and He is able to impart joy and peace into the hearts of men. But

God wants to manifest His righteousness through His Body. In Romans 8:22-23, we read that the whole creation groans and travails in pain until now, waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:16, 14).

What a tremendous privilege and responsibility God has given to you and me. How important to walk in the Light as He is in the Light (I John 1:7).

We see the example of Joseph in the Old Testament. He went through severe trials. He was hated of his brothers. Instead of rejoicing with him in the dreams that he had, they were jealous and hated him. He was sold into a far country, falsely accused, and cast into prison. Yet, through it all, he maintained his integrity and faith in God. And in God's time the spirit of God was manifest through him, and he became ruler in the land, next to the king. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, ... the things that God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them ... by his Spirit" (I Corinthians 2:9-10). Just as Joseph was vindicated through the operation of the Gift of God that was in him, even so shall not God manifest Himself through the members of his Body as they function faithfully in their ministries?

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Psalm 24:3-5). To have clean hands is to be doing the works of Christ in our ministry as we are led by His Spirit. "Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity" speaks of humility and meekness. The proud shall not enter into the kingdom of God; "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). God is so great, yet He humbled Himself to take upon Him the form of human flesh as a babe in Bethlehem. We read in Philippians 2:7-11, "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above

every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

"Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9).

When Christ entered into Jerusalem, He rode upon the foal of a donkey—such a humble way for one who was, and is, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the one who was the creator of all things. Indeed, it was fitting that the throng should spread their garments and palm branches on the way, and cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 21:9).

At the Last Supper, He cast a towel about Him and knelt before the disciples and washed their feet. And He said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

He did not live in rich palaces or the richest finery of the day, but when they asked Him where He dwelt, He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20).

In spite of the fact that He walked in humility upon the earth, in Psalms 113:5&6, it says, "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth!" We cannot, with our little minds, comprehend His greatness, for "his greatness is unsearchable" (Psalms 145:3). But we can praise Him and glorify His holy name, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, that He should come to this earth and die for us, setting us free from the powers of darkness, and coming to dwell in these 'earthen' vessels. O Hallelujah!

By contrast, let us read from Isaiah 14:11-19, which speaks of Lucifer, "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and at the noise of the viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the

congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet." Everything with Lucifer was I, I, I. His pride was his undoing, and his disobedience and rebellion has brought sin and heartache to all men everywhere. But, praise God, Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and impart Life to us, even everlasting Life.

Throughout the old and new testament, we read of men and women who walked humbly with their God. Abraham exercised humility when he said to Lot, "You take whatever area you want in which to pasture your cattle, and I will take what you don't take, only let there not be strife between us" (Genesis 13:8-9 paraphrased). But then the Lord said to Abraham in Genesis 13:14-15, "Look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever." Are not you and I the seed of Abraham through Christ? It's all yours, Hallelujah!!

It is good to ponder the humble path that Joseph took. He went through severe trials, yet maintained his integrity. God seems to allow the saints to be tried, knowing that "the trial of your faith [is] much more precious than gold that perisheth" (I Peter 1:7). And in the end, Joseph was vindicated; his brothers bowed before him, and he was instrumental in the salvation of his family, as well as all of Egypt. Is not this an example to us, that God will use his faithful remnant for the lifting of the creation?

David was a good example of humility. Though he slew Goliath, and did mighty exploits through God's power, he always recognized Saul as being God's anointed, and would not hurt him, though he had every opportunity to do so. David succumbed to the lust of the flesh in his

relationship with Bathsheba, but he repented bitterly, as related in Psalm 51. And God accepted him and forgave him.

So too, if we can walk in humility and obedience before the Lord, are we candidates to reign with Him in His Kingdom. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ... Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:3&5).

There are so many scriptures that admonish us to walk humbly before Him. Our main desire to walk close to the Lord in humility and obedience is so that we can impart of His Holy Spirit and Life into us for the purpose that we can impart

of His Life to others. We want to fulfill the same ministry to the world that Christ did when He was here. He healed the broken-hearted, and set the prisoners free; He made the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear; He fed the hungry, and He raised the dead.

Let us say, like the apostle Paul, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may KNOW HIM, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any

means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ... forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:9-11, 13-14).

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will HEAL THEIR LAND" (II Chronicles 7:14).

Beloved, let us press on! God bless you!

"And I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever"

By A. York

(taken from a tape - all scripture references are from the *NKJV* unless otherwise noted)

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord, until next Sunday? Is that good enough? NO! Not until next Sunday, but forever and ever, Amen. He restoreth my soul when I'm weary. Amen. He giveth me strength day by day. He leads me beside the still water. He guards me each step of the way. This is what the Lord does for us. He leads us.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Psalms 23:6). Hallelujah. Believe me, what the Scriptures say is so important. I'd like to turn to the book of Zechariah this morning and just read a few verses to help us in some manner, however the Spirit desires. There are some things in Zechariah that I'm sure were fulfilled in the rebuilding of the temple. But I'm sure there are some things that were to come in the wonderful unfolding of the goodness of God in the bringing of the head of the Body to that place where He is building us a heavenly home, a home that is indestructible, and a home that is in the realm of the Spirit.

This tenure here, this short pilgrimage here, is one that is uncertain at best as far as the natural goes. People can lose their lives; they can lose their fortunes; they can lose so much that they work for because of uncertainty. There never was a time when the earth was filled with so much uncertainty. We do not need to

dwell under the fear of it, because the Lord Himself is preparing for us a homeland that is secure in the realm of the Spirit. When you are young you don't want to go there, because you want to explore all the things around here on the earth. You're so inquisitive about many things. You find yourself caught up in this and that and the other thing. You wonder about that, and you wonder about the other thing, and on and on it goes. But the wonderful heritage of the child of God, who has heard the gospel and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, is that it is an unfolding journey to our homeland. Hallelujah! And that unfolding journey is one where we will have the trial of our faith many times; but He is the One who is delivering us out of it all, out of the trial, and out of the tenure of the short pilgrimage. We have an anchor today, and that anchor is Christ in you.

I want to read Philippians 2:13, "for it is God who works in you..." God works in you. Hallelujah! The Scripture says, "...it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." God's pleasure. Now, I haven't time to transfer your name into that scenario, but that is true of us all. And if it is His love and His kindness; if it's His generosity, and if it's His forgiveness, and if it's all that He has done in a redemptive work for you and for me, then we will never come to the end of these wonders of His will and of His doing in us. Now, this

isn't something that is way off in the stars. This is something that is working in everyone here this morning. Glory to God! God is here in you. Hallelujah! Oh what a wonder. What glory! What power! What care God is giving to these poor human mortals. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. God working in you. Oh hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Now, to direct us in His will and in His doing, He gives us some really good instruction. The Scripture says, "Do all things without murmuring and disputing" (Philippians 2:14). I was the oldest in the family, and so I had to help mom in the house until I was seven. But then I graduated to the barn and helped to milk the cows. I had a few other chores with dad, and my other brother had to help mom in the house. But there is always a temptation on the part of the youngster, as I was, to do a little bit of "Well, do I have to?" or "Why?" and all that sort of stuff. I remember it as if it were yesterday. You know, she would ask me to do something in the house when I had figured I had been promoted beyond the level of the house and so I asked, "Why?" There are all of those complications that young people ask, that you just can't answer. Anyway, my mother camp up with this idea. She said, "Albert, if you will quit grumbling, we'll buy you a pair of skates." You know, she persuaded me to quit grumbling. That wasn't the total end of it, but it helped me a lot. She rewarded me for something that she saw was a big

fault with me. But I'm only saying this and bearing my soul to help you see the Scripture is right. Here I was doing the thing the Scripture says that I shouldn't be doing. So it says, do all things without murmuring. You say, "well thanks mom, I'm sure happy you've given me something to do", instead of grumbling. But you know what I'm talking about; and the Scriptures declare that the Apostles knew what the problems would be, what they had been with generations from the beginning. So it's wonderful to have a God that is so thorough in helping us and showing us such great love.

It says in Philippians 2:14-15, "Do all things without murmuring and arguing..." Disputing is the word used, but in the margin I have arguing, "that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." My, this is a tremendous goal. A tremendous goal, Amen! Hallelujah. He's the one that helps us. It's the receiving of His Spirit. The anointing breaks all of those yokes of complaining and rebelling, and all that sort of thing that puts a cloud over the house. But thankfulness and the joy of the Lord put the sunshine of God over the household. Amen!

Back in Zechariah 4:1-6, it says, "Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, 'What do you see?' So I said, 'I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and other at its left.' So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, 'What are these, my lord?' Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, 'Do you not know what these are?' And I said, 'No, my lord.' So he answered and said to me: 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," saith the Lord of hosts." This premise that was illustrated in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire at night over the camp of Israel; this presence of the Holy Spirit, having God so closely manifested in a physical way, was a sign that wasn't over all the other nations of the earth. This sign, this Holy Spirit that you have received from the Father by the holy anointing, by the infilling of the Spirit, that is what sets

you apart, just as Israel was set apart.

"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of Hosts. "Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain!" (Zechariah 4:6-7). Now, a mountain can be a big obstacle. When I was a little fellow, my father and his friend wanted to climb a mountain, and they didn't figure I would have the stamina to make it; so I was left with my mother and I did a little bit of crying. You know, kids want to do things that parents know they can't, but I did a little crying. I remember that to this day. I climbed a mountain in Korea, when I got older. It wasn't as big as that one, and I realized that my crying as a little guy was because I thought I could; but I couldn't. Therefore, my parents were right. But, you know, a lot of times we think we can do something on our own, but who do we need the help of? The Holy Spirit. We need His help, and we need growth in the Spirit to develop so that we might become able to climb the mountain. Here is something; let's read it again, "Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, you shall become a plain!" Are there any great mountains that we have never been able to get around? Well, after a while they disappear by the Spirit; they disappear because God's in charge. Hallelujah! This is a prophecy concerning Jesus: "And he shall bring forth the capstone, with shouts of 'Grace, grace to it'" (Zechariah 4:7). You've got to do some shouting this morning. "Grace, grace to it!" Oh wonderful Jesus, wonderful Lord, wonderful Head of the Body, wonderful Christ, who anoints by the Holy Spirit each member of the body, and brings the body together in its place as He has willed, hallelujah, that you might grow up in Him in all things by the power of His will, bless His name. Shouts of grace, hallelujah!

"Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; ...' Or of this house, referring to the one that was to be restored after the seventy years of being in Babylon. They were crying in that captivity down in Babylon for all those years, and many of them were looking toward Jerusalem that they might be able to come back and be in the land where God blessed them heretofore. Why did God cause them to go to Babylon? Because they were only pretending; they were only going through the motions of worship to God. Their

hearts were a long way from Him, and everywhere I look in the Scriptures, I'm convicted and reminded to bring forth this: that our heart must be in tune with the Great Creator and Redeemer so that we do not fall by the wayside. Many have fallen by the wayside in the walk of the Spirit because their hearts were not right with the Lord. They need the help of the Lord to get their hearts in tune with our Heavenly Father, so they can do the will and fulfill the purpose that God has called them for. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:8-10). My, my, my; just to realize that God sees everything and everywhere in every nation under heaven. His eyes are scanning everything. He is omnipresent. He has the ability to see all things concerning the nations and concerning each individual in those nations on the earth besides that heavenly nation that He's building, that is the new Jerusalem from the heavenlies. Oh, I'm just overwhelmed at times by the ability of God to do the things that He is doing. "He scans to and fro throughout the whole earth," and "Then I answered and said unto him, 'What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?' And I further answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?' Then he answered me and said, 'Do you not know what these are?' And I said, 'No, my lord'" (Zechariah 4:11-13). As the prophet didn't see, so we as mortals do not see what this is, and how important it is. "So he said, 'These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth'" (Zechariah 4:14). My margin reads this way. "These are the sons of fresh oil, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." You need that oil for the light to glow, for it to shine. It's the oil of the Holy Spirit, so these are the sons of fresh oil who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth. Your body, your vessel, the place where you dwell; that's the place for the fresh oil. Hallelujah!

Fasting

By F.T. Paterson

Not Acceptable Fasting: Self-Centred

Isaiah 58:3-5 (NASB): “‘Why have we fasted and You do not see? Why have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?’ Behold, on the day of your fast you find your desire, And drive hard all your workers. Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist. You do not fast like you do today to make your voice heard on high. Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one’s head like a reed And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the LORD?”

Acceptable Fasting: Reaching Out to Others

Isaiah 58:6-7 (NASB): “Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?”

The Result of an Acceptable Fast

Isaiah 58:8-12 (NASB): “Then your light will break out like the dawn, And your recovery will speedily spring forth; And your righteousness will go before you; The glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; You will cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you remove the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom will become like midday. And the LORD will continually guide you, And satisfy your desire in scorched places, And give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.”

Psalms 35:13 (NIV): “Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting.”

Psalms 69:9-11 (NIV): “[F]or zeal for

your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me. When I weep and fast, I must endure scorn; when I put on sackcloth, people make sport of me.”

Psalms 10:17: “‘LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.’”

Psalms 138:6: “Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.”

2 Chronicles 7:14: “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Jeremiah 14:10-13 (NIV): “This is what the LORD says about this people: ‘They greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the LORD does not accept them; he will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins.’ Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not pray for the well-being of this people. Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague.’”

Joel 1:14 (NKJV): “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 2:12-13 (NKJV): “‘Now, therefore,’ says the LORD, ‘Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.’ So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.”

Zechariah 7:5 (TLB): “‘When you return to Bethel, say to all your people and your priests, “During those seventy years of exile when you fasted and mourned in August and October, were you really in earnest about leaving your sins behind and coming back to me? No, not at all!”’”

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. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 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.”

1. Fasting is Not Done to Bribe God

There are some instances where the hand of God was moved because men fasted and prayed. The children of Israel were in grave trouble; they sought the Lord for help. Maybe they were so afraid they couldn’t eat anyway.

2 Chronicles 20:2-4 (TLB): “Word reached Jehoshaphat that ‘a vast army is marching against you from beyond the Dead Sea from Syria. It is already at Hazazon-tamar’ (also called Engedi). Jehoshaphat was badly shaken by this news and determined to beg for help from the Lord; so he announced that all the people of Judah should go without food for a time, in penitence and intercession before God. People from all across the nation came to Jerusalem to plead unitedly with him.”

Jonah 3:4-10 (NIV): “On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: ‘Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.’ The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: ‘By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.’ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.”

God always respects and hears the sincere prayer.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NASB): “[If] My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek

My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land." When we fast, it is to the Lord and not ourselves. Fasting and prayer go together: fasting without prayer will not accomplish much, while prayer itself is good.

Watching: Jesus did this in the garden (Matthew 26:36-46). Fasting is a time when we fight spiritual battles. While we are fasting, it is not often a glorious experience; the glory comes after the battle is won. In the heat of the battle, there is not much time to rejoice.

2. Fasting is Not a Tradition or Religious Exercise

It doesn't earn points with God, nor do good works. "We are all infected and impure with sin. When we put on our prized robes of righteousness, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves we fade, wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away" (Isaiah 64:6 *TLB*).

3. If We Appear to Fast, We Have our Reward.

4. Fasting is Not to Make God Hear Us

Or to make our voice heard on high. It is more to prepare our hearts to hear from God. We enter into God's presence as an act of worship, humbly. It is not to receive from God, but to receive God.

5. Fasting is Not to Commend Ourselves to God

Our only access is through Jesus (John 10:9, 14:6, Acts 4:12).

Are we commanded to fast?

Leviticus 16:29-31: "And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever." The Children of Israel were commanded to fast, but there is no such reference in the New Testament. Jesus said, "When you fast" (Matthew 6:16).

Matthew 9:14-15: "Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."

Three aspects of Christian service:

1. Almsgiving

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:3-4).

2. Prayer

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:5-7).

3. Fasting

"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:16-18).

Maybe the reason that there is no clear command to fast is so that it would not become a religious duty.

What is Fasting?

To abstain from food as in a religious observance (Oxford Dictionary).

What Fasting is Not...

1. Starving – When we fast, we get hungry; this does not mean that we are starving. In short fasts, hunger is mostly the habitual pangs we feel because our systems are used to eating. The cause of hunger pangs vary with different people: boredom, eating habits, etc. When one is starving, the body needs food: it has depleted its stored fat and is beginning to use stored protein. Depending on one's health, this could happen from 3 days to 4 months.

2. Thirsting – Our need for water is more acute than for food, and we need water much sooner; this could be a few hours to a few days. Going without water is not recommended.

3. Dieting, Cutting Down, or Restricting Food for Health or Personal Reasons – Although there are partial fasts in the Bible, they are not for personal reasons, but spiritual.

Daniel 1:8: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself

with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

Daniel 10:2-3: "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

2 Samuel 12:15-17: "And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them."

Mechanics of Fasting

There is a need to drink water when fasting, because of the build-up of wastes and toxins in the body. As the body begins to burn stored fat, it releases wastes called ketones. There are a form of acetone or acid and the end result of fat metabolism. These are harmful unless they are flushed from the system. It is good to drink lots of water when fasting. In fasts longer than one day, we should drink room temperature water. Water also keeps the digestive system active, and irrigates the cells.

There are instances of fasts without food or water in the scripture: Jonah 3:5 and Esther 4:16 – These seem to be natural fasts, possibly not longer than 3 days. In the case of Nineveh, it does not say how long, maybe only a day.

There are also fasts that appear to be supernatural: Moses – Exodus 24:18, Deuteronomy 9:9-18; Elijah – 1 Kings 19:8

Fasting was common in the early church, and has been practiced down through the ages from the early church.

In 1947, God led the brethren to fast: this was the start of the Move of the Spirit.

Dangers of Abuse:

1. Anorexia Nervosa – This is getting into the rut of not eating. Keep fasting in a spiritual context to avoid this.

2. Asceticism – It is easy to get the idea that because we are seeking God that this will commend us to God, or that by punishing ourselves we will be more acceptable to God.

3. Penance – This is the incorrect idea that by fasting we can atone for our sins.

Natural Benefits of Fasting:

There are some natural benefits of fasting, although the purpose is spiritual.

1. Cleanses the body of wastes and toxins that make us sluggish.

2. Tunes up the digestive system.
3. Can cure ulcers.
4. Gives a new stomach lining.
5. Cures indigestion.
6. Clears the skin.
7. Makes it easier to concentrate.
8. Makes the mind sharper.

These are natural benefits, but the greatest benefit is spiritual.

Spiritual Benefits of Fasting Found in Isaiah 58:

1. Loose the bands of wickedness.
2. Let the oppressed go free.
3. Break every yoke.
4. Deal thy bread to the hungry.
5. Minister to the poor.
6. Clothe the naked.
7. Our light will break forth.
8. Our health will spring forth.
9. Righteousness will go before us.
10. Glory of the Lord will go behind us.
11. When you call, the Lord will answer.

Natural Problems:

1. Weakness – It will pass.
2. Cold – Wear a sweater.
3. Hunger – Pray and concentrate on the Lord.
4. Nausea – Drink water flavoured with lemon or honey.
5. Headaches – Prepare for the fast
6. Dizziness – Move and get out of bed slowly; bend over slowly.
7. Fainting – Get exercise and take brisk walks; do not be inactive.

If these problems persist, check with a physician, keeping in mind that many physicians do not encourage fasting.

If you are on medication, it is not a good idea to go on a complete fast. You can miss a meal or two, or cut down for a time, except when the medication needs to be taken with food. In that case, take enough to satisfy the requirements of the medication.

Spiritual Problems:

1. The enemy will try to cause you to be discouraged.
2. It will seem hard to pray and wait on God.
3. There will not be much glory evident during the fast.

Preparation for a Fast:

Set a time to start and finish.

On the Fourth Day before a fast, prepare by not drinking tea and coffee, and by not eating meat or fried foods. On the Third Day, eat mostly green vegetables, cooked and raw. On the Second Day, eat uncooked foods, such as vegetables, dried fruit, nuts and milk. On the Final Day before beginning, eat fresh fruit, tomatoes included. To begin the fast: For a fast of

one day, leave off drinking tea and coffee the day before the fast.

During the Fast:

Drink lots of water. For a fast longer than one day, the water should be tepid to luke-warm.

Salt-water flush – For a long fast, a salt-water flush can be taken to cleanse the system in the first one or two days in the fast. It should not be attempted later on. The salt water is an option which is not a necessity for fasting. To one quart of hot water, add two level teaspoons of salt, and drink.

Tea and coffee should not be taken during the fast as they are stimulants and can cause headaches without food. Also, without food to balance their toxicity, they are harmful to the body. Don't be surprised if you have a headache during the fast. This is the result of toxins being expelled from the body.

Medication – Check with your doctor.

Breaking the Fast:

One Day Fast – Eat soups and juices for the next day after the fast, and ease into a full diet. It is necessary that good sense be used in breaking the fast. It can be quite uncomfortable and serious side effects can occur by eating more than you should in breaking the fast. No harm can come from fasting, but it can be harmful not to break the fast properly, adjusting the stomach to a full diet gradually.

After a Short Fast of 3-6 Days – On the First Day, eat three or four meals of fresh citrus fruit, or as much as feels comfortable. On the Second Day, eat light soup or a milk diet in moderation, vegetables, dried fruit, nuts and milk. On Succeeding Days, gradually work into a regular diet as many days as you have fasted.

After a Fast of 5-8 Days – On the First Two Days, eat three or four meals of fresh fruit or tomatoes should be first. A

vegetable meal can be eaten the evening of the second day. Moderate amounts of green salads, vegetable soups or milk can be eaten for the next few days.

After a Fast of 8-14 Days – On the First Day, the first two meals should be of fresh fruit juice in 6 oz servings and a third meal, a choice of fresh fruit. On the Second Day, eat three or four meals of fresh fruit. On the Third Day, eat a half-pint of any type of milk at each serving, light soups or finely chewed green salads. On the Fourth Day eat vegetable meals that are green and leafy, milk or soup, follow a vegetable diet for as many days as you fasted. Gradually increase the quantity in succeeding days.

After a Fast of Two to Three Weeks – On the First Day, eat three meals of fruit juice in 4-6 oz servings diluted with equal parts water. On the Second Day, eat three or four meals of fruit juice slightly less diluted in larger quantities. On the Third Day, eat three or four meals of fresh fruit. On the Fourth Day, fresh fruit, milk, diet or light soups, or light green salad could be eaten. Light vegetable meals, fruit salad, soup or milk are good for Day Five. On the Sixth Day, eat vegetables or cereal meals. With the Succeeding Meals, eat the same as above, with quantities gradually increased. Stay with a vegetable diet for as many days as you fasted, then slowly go into your regular eating.

After a Fast of Three Weeks to Forty Days – Use the same method as for breaking the three week fast, except smaller quantities should be eaten and a much longer time allowed before taking up regular eating. If unable to get fresh fruit, canned fruit will do.

All meals should be spaced 4 1/2 hours apart. Tomato, ripe melons, and berries may be classed the same as fruit, if agreeable. The longer you use vegetables after the fast, the better.

DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Feast North Battleford	April 8-11, 2004
Illinois Gathering (King's House)	April 30 - May 2, 2004
Camp North Battleford	July 4-11, 2004
North Carolina Summer Camp	July 25 - August 1, 2004
Caribbean Camp, Trinidad	August 1 - 7, 2004
Pinelaw Summer Family Camp	August 9-15, 2004
Young People's - Hidden Acres, ON	Sept. 3-6, 2004
Young People's - Park Valley, SK	Sept. 3-6, 2004
Family Camp - Winkler, MB	Sept. 3-6, 2004
Minden Meetings	Sept. 24, 25, 26, 2004
Pinelaw Fall Family Camp	Nov. 11-14, 2004

ILLINOIS GATHERING

April 30, May 1 & 2, 2004

King's House Retreat Center, Henry, IL

King's House, site of the gathering, is located in the town of Henry, IL, from I 80 go south on 180 which runs into S 29. Follow S 29 to E 18 in Henry, from E 18 turn north on RT26 and watch for the Global Mission signs. From I 74 take 116 east to Rt. 26 in East Peoria. Go north on Rt.26 to Henry IL and watch for Global Mission signs.

We will begin on Friday evening and end on Sunday after lunch. Room price includes room with private bath, linens, meals and meeting rooms. We will collect from individuals at the retreat.

Charges for Room & Board:

Age 0-3 No Charge
Age 4-12 \$25
Age 13 - Adult \$90

Send reservations by April 20, to:

Randall G. Snoko
128 Tanglewood Lane,
East Peoria, IL 61611
Phone (309) 694-7048
email: rgsnoko@juno.com

PINELOW SUMMER CAMP

North of Spokane

August 9-15, 2004

From Spokane, North on Hwy 395 toward Coleville, past Loon Lake 3.1 miles or 5 km, turn east on Deer Lake North Road 1.7 miles or 2-3/4 km to Pinelow Park.

Adults: \$85, Children 3-11: \$45,
Family Rates with children
up to 18 - \$285.
(Rates - US Funds)

Send reservations to:

NOTE: Daryl Martz is taking
reservations for Pinelow Camps.

Ph. (604) 858-9009

Fax: (604) 795-5365

email: martz@shelbrook.com
(NO PETS)

Campground registration starts at
4:00 pm, August 9, 2004

Please be advised that our CARIBBEAN CAMP

will be held in Trinidad
El Dorado Youth Training Center

DATE: Aug. 1 - 7, 2004

CONTACT PERSON:

Crafton Lewis
Holder's Terrance, Stanislaus St.
Success Village, Laventille
Trinidad, West Indies
Ph. 868-623-1141
Fax: 868-623-1684
email: craflew@hotmail.com

Pinelow Fall Camp Family Camp November 11-14, 2004

Contact: Daryl Martz
Fax (604) 795-5365
e-mail: martz@shelbrook.com

RESERVATION FORM FOR CAMP 2004

Cut out and mail

Please fill in ALL information and cut out and mail to the following address: ROOM RESERVATIONS, Sharon Children's Homes and Schools, Box 878, North Battleford, Sask., S9A 2Z3. Mail as soon as possible. If you are unable to attend, please cancel your reservation, otherwise we will have to charge you for the room held open for you. **YOU MUST RESERVE** your room, we cannot hold accommodation without you supplying us with the information outlined in the blank application. You will NOT receive written confirmation from us UNLESS we cannot supply your requirements. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated and helpful. THANK YOU.

Name _____

Address _____

Adults: Male _____ Female _____

Children: Male _____ Female _____

Age _____ Age _____

Date of Arrival _____

Date of Departure _____

CALLED HOME

Virginia Nash

September 5, 2003

Vancouver, BC

...

Aileen Learmonth

December 26, 2003

Calgary, AB

Sharon Children's Homes and Schools
Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3

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