

Dear Friend,

When Jesus was manifested on planet earth in a human body, He completely submitted His will to the will of the heavenly Father.

Joh 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

Jesus is God manifested in the flesh, but we are told He laid down all of His divine privileges while He was manifested as a human on earth. Nobody has ever humbled themselves as much as Jesus did. Before He became a man, He was in the form of God, the second member of the Godhead, seated in heaven with the Father. He lived in opulence beyond our wildest dreams. There was no pain, no sickness, no poverty, and no crime where he lived in heaven. Yet He chose to humble Himself to the will of the Father to leave heaven, become a man, and then humbled Himself even more as a man ... to the obedience of the cross.

Php 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The day Jesus went to the cross at Golgotha was not the first time He humbled Himself to the will of the Father. He kept His flesh on the cross every single day of His life. We know that is true because He was tempted in all points as we are, yet He never sinned one time. He kept His flesh in a position of death to sin every single day.

Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Said another way, Jesus presented His body as a living sacrifice every single day of His life. He allowed only the Father's will to be done through His body. He saw His physical body as being an instrument for the Father's use daily. He said it was the Father "in Him" that was doing the works.

Joh 14:10-11 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

The mystery of the gospel is "Christ in us, our hope of glory." (Col 1:27). Paul admonished us to yield our bodies to Christ the same way He presented His body to the Father.

Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

That is not possible without us first winning the “war of wills.” Whose will are we living for? Our own will? Or the will of Christ who lives in us? Are we living for the glory of Christ? Or are we still living our own lives according to our own will and earthly desires? Are we living our own lives and asking Christ to bless us? Or are we laying down our lives for His sake, and presenting our bodies as living sacrifices for His use? Revival lives in the latter, not the former.

God has been teaching me more about a little used tool we have been given to help us win the “war of wills” between our natural desires and His desires. It is the tool of fasting. Fasting is a tool we can incorporate any time we choose to. Fasting forces us into a war of wills between the desires of our flesh and the desires of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I was raised in a denomination that pretty much believed fasting has passed away with the apostles. They never preached on fasting. Having grown up in that religious culture, it took a long time for the Holy Spirit to convince me that it was the will of my Lord Jesus for me to fast. I will share just a couple of the passages the Holy Spirit used to teach me. There are many more.

In Matthew chapter six, the Lord teaches us about the three “when you’s.” When you give, when you pray, and when you fast. He did not say, if you give, if you pray, and if you fast. The Lord fully expects His disciples to be doing all three on a regular basis. We all know that praying has not passed away. We all know that giving has not passed away. There is no reason to think that fasting has passed away either. Another passage that really let me know for sure it is the will of my Lord Jesus for me to fast is this one:

Mar 2:19-20 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. (20) But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and THEN SHALL THEY FAST IN THOSE DAYS.

I have made those words all capitals in this letter because they almost stood up off of the page like that one day when I was reading my Bible. There it was, in no uncertain terms, that during this dispensation when Jesus is not physically on the earth, HIS DISCIPLES SHALL FAST. From that day forward this truth has been part of me: IT IS THE WILL OF MY LORD JESUS CHIRST THAT I SPEND TIME FASTING. It is never the will of my flesh to fast. Every time I fast I am also winning the “war of wills” between my flesh and my Lord.

I remember actually bowing down on my knees and apologizing to the Lord saying, “I am so sorry Lord. I have called myself a disciple of yours for over twenty five years, yet I have never done any serious fasting. I repent Lord. I will begin in earnest to fast. Teach me how you want me to do it.”

One of the first things I learned is that fasting is very much like the training our soldiers receive in boot camp before they are sent to war. Boot camp is tough and very physically demanding. During boot camp, when shots are fired, they are using blank ammunition. Our soldiers learn warfare in ways that train them, but do not actually kill them. Fasting is training that we can do on purpose, as often as we want, for as long as we want, to train our bodies to yield to the will of Christ in us. It is one way we can be trained how to present our bodies a living sacrifice for His use BEFORE we are in actual spiritual warfare on the front lines.

It seems my flesh will never like fasting, just like new recruits don't like the rigors of boot camp. But once soldiers are in the actual warfare on the front lines, every soldier is grateful for the training he has received that produces victory.

2Ti 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Let us be good soldiers and endure the hardness of fasting so we can present our bodies as living sacrifices so our Lord's will can be accomplished through them.

Your fellow servant for Christ,

Gary