**UNIT 1.F.:**

**HEARING GOD’S VOICE**

**FASTING**

**Joel 2:12:**

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.

As believers in Christ, we want to take the next step to become disciples who are consistent in their daily walk. We want our actions to match our words. Fasting is an action, aided by the Holy Spirit, that can help us be better aligned with God’s mission for each of us.

In our daily walk, we often have divided loyalties. Our hearts are frequently swayed to love something in this life more than we love God. It’s difficult to discern when that’s happening. When our priorities are distorted, fasting brings our original mission back into focus and restores that love that originally motivated us.

**James 1:8:**

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

**Revelation 2:4-5:**

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.

Fasting helps us subdue fleshly urges and our pride. It makes those earthly desires subservient to the Spirit. It makes our faith more consistent. It humbles us.

**I John 2:15-17:**

Love not the world, neither the things that are of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all in the world that is of the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world . . . but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

We may have a *desire* in our hearts to serve God, but often we fail in this endeavor because the weakness of our flesh is pulling us back. How do we achieve victory over our own sinful nature? If we have a desire in our hearts, why is it so difficult to do the things we want to do for the Lord? How do we subdue the flesh and unleash God’s power? Fasting is a way to make our actions congruent with our words.

**Galatians 5:1 & 16-17:**

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

In fasting, we are tapping into the source of power: God’s grace. Fasting makes us humble. Humility gives us strength to resist the devil. Fasting cures our double-mindedness and purifies our hearts. Humility unlocks God’s grace (e.g., the desire and power to do God’s will).

**Proverbs 3:34:**

. . . He giveth grace unto the lowly.

**James 4:6-8:**

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw night to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

In the weakness of fasting, being utterly dependent on God’s grace, we begin to trust in his strength and place less importance on our own abilities. In everyday life, God’s power becomes more evident.

**Ether 5:28:**

I give unto men weakness, that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.

God wants us to search the scriptures and increase in knowledge and wisdom. Prayer, study and fasting is a means by which we can receive the spirit of prophecy. God wants his church to teach with power and authority. That power is available if we will diligently seek him. Fasting is one avenue by which we obtain that power from God.

**Alma 12:2-5 (Alma 2 & the sons of Mosiah):**

And what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and **they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth. For they were men of a sound understanding,** and they had **searched the scriptures diligently**, that they might know the word of God. But this is not all: **they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting**, therefore **they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation**, and when they taught, **they taught with power and authority**, even as with the power and authority of God.

This brings us back around to this question: What is a true fast? It is a fast that bears fruit, in order that those who are struggling under the yoke of sin might be set free, that burdens might be lifted, that those hungering for the Spirit might be nourished.

**Isaiah 58:6-8:**

Is not this the fast that I have chosen?

* To loose the bands of wickedness,
* To undo the heavy burdens,
* To let the oppressed go free, and
* That ye break every yoke
* Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry?
* And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?
* When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him?
* And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Promise:

* Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and
* Thine health shall spring forth speedily,
* And thy righteousness shall go before thee,
* The glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.

As servants of Christ, we want to use the tool of fasting as a means to put our priorities in proper order, to subdue the desires of the flesh, to obtain more of God’s grace and eventually lead us to a victory over sin. In doing this, it’s our hope that we will be better able to hear God’s voice guiding us on a daily basis.

**Helaman 4:29:**

But it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi, and many of their brethren, who knew concerning the true points of doctrine, **having many revelations daily**, therefore they did preach unto the people, insomuch that they did put an end to their strife in that same year.