

## **The Benefits of Prayer and Fasting**

By Charles Stanley

When God calls us to prayer and fasting, He always does so for our benefit. The Scriptures point out at least seven benefits to prayer and fasting.

1. *Our attitudes, feelings, and thoughts get sifted, pruned and purified so that God might entrust us with a greater ministry.* By fasting and praying, we become more disciplined toward the things of the Father. We give Him opportunity to cut away from us those things that will slow us down, do us in, or keep us from His plans and purposes.
2. *We are able to discern more clearly the will of God for our lives.* Fasting clears our spiritual eyes and ears so we can accurately discern what God desires to reveal to us.
3. *We are confronted with our sins and shortcomings so we might confess them to God, receive forgiveness for them, and walk in greater righteousness.* Many times we break stubborn, sinful habits when we fast and pray. Fasting and prayer cleanse us and purify us from the errors that have kept us entangled in sin and folly.
4. *We experience a release of supernatural power.* Genuine fasting and prayer result in spiritual growth, including a renewed outpouring of supernatural power. Certain problems and situations cannot be resolved apart from fasting and prayer.
5. *We can influence national issues and concerns through our prayers.* As we fast and pray for our nation, God will move. He will pour out His Spirit, in His ways and in His timing. We can count on it.
6. *We can help build up God's people.* Prayer is the generator of the church. It gives power to its ministers. It propels outreach to the lost. It creates a climate in which evangelistic efforts succeed.
7. *Our minds are sharpened.* When we fast and pray, we begin to understand the Scriptures as never before. We become sensitive to God's timing and direction, with an increased awareness and ability to discern. We become keenly aware of what God desires to do and accomplish not only in our lives, but also in the lives of those around us.