

Matthew 4: Making Spiritual Progress

Matthew 4:1-2 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

Jesus had just received the Holy Spirit upon Him, endowing Him with power from on high. Now the test begins...

To make progress in a spiritual life, we must walk by the Spirit (in His power and under His influence), and this begins as we break down the flesh through discipline and perseverance.

Romans 6:11-13 ¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Fasting and spiritual warfare bring us to the end of our strength where God's power begins, supplied by His Spirit.

Isaiah 54:16 ¹⁶ "Behold, I Myself have created the smith who blows the fire of coals And brings out a weapon for its work; And I have created the destroyer to ruin.

1 Corinthians 5:5 ⁵ I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians 10:4 ⁴ for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

Matthew 17:21 ²¹ But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Isaiah 54:17 ¹⁷ "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their vindication is from Me," declares the Lord.

Matthew 4:3-11 ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." ⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil *took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and *said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On *their* hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸ Again, the devil *took Him to a very high mountain and *showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus *said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" ¹¹ Then the devil *left Him; and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him.

The devil expected Jesus to act according to the weakness of man- to fail because His flesh was weak- but **fasting actually strengthens the Spirit while it weakens the flesh.**

Jesus fought in the full power of the Spirit. In the end, He was victorious- and exhausted physically. Spiritually, He had never been stronger.

Luke 4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness

Luke 4:14-15 ¹⁴ And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. ¹⁵ And He *began* teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.

Luke 4:18-19 ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, ¹⁹To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”

Matthew 4:12,17 ¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus did not begin to preach until His Father had positioned Him and the Holy Spirit’s preparation was done in Him.

Matthew 4:23-25 ²³ Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. ²⁴ The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. ²⁵ Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and *the* Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and *from* beyond the Jordan.

Jesus walked in a new spiritual power by submitting to the Spirit. He began to win victories against Satan Himself.

When was the last time you fasted for spiritual breakthrough? We can fight and win this battle just like Jesus did!