\*WHEN YOU FAST...\*

Fast is when you give up food or pleasure for a period of time in order to focus on God.

Jesus said:

\*"The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast."\*

Luke 5:35.

Jesus made the above sentence while replying the disciples of John who asked Him why His disciples were not fasting.

This is a time of the year when most churches declare fast for their members.

Many people who ordinarily do not fast somewhat feel the obligation to fast at this time.

Although, the bible does not specifically state that fasting is a necessity, but it can be deduced from the experiences of some bible characters and that of our Lord Jesus Christ, that fasting is beneficial to us.

The phrase;

 \*"When you fast";\* was used by Jesus as recorded in the book of Matthew Chapter 6. Before then Jesus had talked about \*"when you give and when you pray";\* inferring that we are expected to do all.

 \*It goes to show that, fasting is as important as praying and giving.\*

However, fasting alone does not bring out the desired result; \*it must be carried out with prayer.\*

Jesus said:

 \*"But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."\*

Matthew 17:21.

Our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us that fasting is between us and God and should be treated as such. \*Matthew 6:16-18\*

Your attitude is very important \*when you fast.\*

God said:

 \*"What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me".\*

Isaish 58:4.

Although, some people have argued about the health risks and benefits of fasting, It is important that those who are new to fasting, should take things easy at the inception and not deny themselves of water for long hours.

Jesus Christ fasted for forty days and forty nights before He began His earthly ministry and He was able to withstand the temptation of the devil.

It does suggests that \*fasting subjects the flesh while it strengthens us spiritually.\*

According to the bible, these are some of the benefits that can be derived \*when you fast;\*

✅God speaks and revelations are received.

 \*"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”\*

Acts 13:2.

✅God's favour is released when you fast.

Esther declared fast among the Jews in order to be favoured when she was to appear before the King:

 \*"Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die."\*

Esther 4:16.

God granted her favour and she got all she wanted for the Jews.

✅When you fast, God protects you: Ezra fasted for protection and God answered;

 \*"So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer".\*

Ezra 8:23.

✅Fasting attract God's mercy: The king of Nineveh declared fast for the people and God showed them mercy.

 \*Jonah 3:7-10\*

 \*Prayer:\* Father, as I fast and pray in this season, do not allow my fast to be an hunger strike or weight shedding task, but rather one that will bring result in every area of my life in Jesus name. 🙏🏼

 \*JESUS REIGNS\*

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15/01/2019, 10:25 - OLANIYI COLE: \*IGNITE YOUR GIFT!\*

Apostle Paul wrote:

\*"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you.."\* 2 Tim 1:6

During the new year celebration, my wife suggested that we should eat something different from the conventional meal of jollof rice and fried chicken.

To this end, she proposed we do barbecue with fish and chicken on one side and local rice with assorted goat meat and stew to compliment.😜

In all honesty, the thought of that combination did not require much convincing talk from her, I just obliged with the excitement to try something different from the usual.

Meanwhile, In the course of enjoying my time, watching a football match she called me and said

 \*Sweetie: "It's time to do the barbecue and you will have to help me in doing it".\*

Soon after, I poured the charcoal in the barbecue grill

and applied few drops of kerosene on them to start the fire for it to start burning, I did that twice; but it

will burn for a while and the fire will go down later, until the kerosene finished and yet the charcoal was not ignited.

Suddenly, I remembered the shutdown after the June 12, 1993 Election, when everywhere was closed down in the South West Nigeria and all we were left with was to buy charcoal to cook.

Just as I did for my mother back then, I began to fan the charcoal and within few minutes, I had \*ignited the charcoal into flame!\* and the whole thing

turned red hot and the barbecue began.

My effort in igniting the charcoal in order to have a wonderful meal with family and friends is similar to what many of us are expected to do for the gift of God in our lives.

Apostle Peter said;

\*"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of Spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another".\*

1 Peter 4:10

While doing the barbecue, I was amazed at the rate at which the flame extended to all the charcoal and the result it produced on the meal itself.

In reality, many gifts of God in us are just dormant without being put to proper use, while some that are being used have not been fully optimized to fulfil their full potentials.

\*Romans 11:29\*

It reminds me of the song of Evangelist Obey;

\*Ma se pa talenti re mole arakunrin, Oluwa yio bere lowo re oun to fi se.\*

Meaning: Don't allow your talent to be dormant, for God will ask you about what you did with it.

The bible says:

\*"For the creation waits with eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed"\*

Romans 8:19

Apparently, personal efforts are required to \*ignite the gifts of God in you;\*

Study the word of God very well with prayer (they fuel the flame) and step out to an avenue where you can start making use of the gift and the Holy Spirit will do the rest.

 \*"If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously...".\*

Romans 12:7&8.

Rise up Brothers and Sisters, the time is now that we make the difference by impacting the world for Jesus.

 \*Those gifts are only relevant on earth, they will not be useful in heaven.\*

Word of caution: do not allow monetary rewards to be your main motivation;

 \*"... Freely you have received; freely give".\*

Matthew 10:8.

\*Prayer\*: Father, help me to harness your gifts in me to affect lives for you in Jesus name.🙏🏼

 \*JESUS CARES\*

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