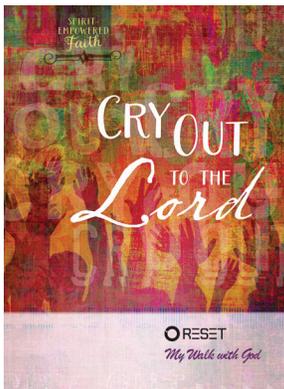


Transformation Through Prayer and Fasting

This article by **Jeremy Story** is from *Cry Out to the Lord*.



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Our humility before the Lord is the beginning of great things that He is about to do in our lives. It is then our submission to His agenda and His power that paves the way for the Spirit's transformation, causing us to be more and more like Christ. We'll know true inner transformation has begun in our own lives and in our communities when one unified voice resonates with His love.

Recently I returned from the New York City area after living there for six years. During my time there, I was reminded again how God lays out clear principles in the Bible to see any family, campus, city, or nation transformed.

New York and New England are known for being the toughest ground for ministry among U.S. college students. However, during my time in New York City, we saw God do miraculous things. Thousands of students across the Northeast were mobilized into prayer and action. Together with other leaders, a city-wide prayer gathering was established, involving students from more than fifty campuses. God united campus ministers in prayer and in plans for action across the city. This unified effort provided an environment where many college-focused churches and ministries were able to do things they had only dreamed of before.

Please don't misunderstand, there is still much more to do in New York City. The Bible promises us that this side of heaven there will always be more ways we need to see God's transformation. Would you like to know how to take transformation steps in your sphere of influence? Read on.

THE EPHESIAN ELEMENTS

Transforming a campus, business, or city may be a big topic, but the Bible does break it down into key elements. The Oxford Online Dictionary defines an "element" as: "A part or aspect of something abstract, especially one that is essential or characteristic." Paul's letter to the Ephesian church provides a clear outline of these essential elements.





- M10. Living submissively within His body, the church, as instruction and encouragement, reproof, and correction are graciously received by faithful disciples

Element 1: God's Ultimate Will Is to See Everything Submitted to Jesus

The Bible actually tells us this clearly! Ephesians 1:9–10 (NIV) states, “He [God] made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.”

God is certainly moving now (as He has been since the first day of earthly history) to do one primary thing: unite everything under the authority of Jesus. He created you, specifically to be a part of this plan. This means that every time you submit and obey God, even when the prevailing culture isn't, you are moving with the overall, forceful flow of history rather than against it. Don't shrink back because you have a hard time believing God's stated goal. Don't recoil because you think it's impossible for Jesus to reign in the lives of those around you. Let God's voice speak louder than the culture of your neighborhood, business, or city.

PRAY and Experience Scripture

God has now revealed to us His mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 1:9–10).

Pause now and pray a prayer to the Lord, asking Him to continue to reveal the things in your life that need to be placed under His authority. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal these things to your heart, in order to fulfill His good pleasure and purpose in your life.

Lord, what parts of my life need to be more pleasing to You? I want You to reveal any thought, action, attitude, or behavior that needs to be placed under Your authority. I submit to You, Lord. Forgive me for not allowing You to be Lord over every part of my life. I submit to You now and confess that Jesus is Lord.

After the Lord has spoken about the areas you need to submit to Him, consider including a regular day of fasting and prayer as a part of your submission to His plan.

Element 2: The Power of Jesus in You Has Authority to Overcome Anything

By God's grace, not our virtue, Jesus' authority reigns in and through us now. Ephesians 1:21–23 (NIV) reminds us, “...He [God] raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under



His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way."

Don't accept that the things which are contrary to God's desires are unchangeable. God has placed us into His family, the body of Christ. God has placed "all rule and authority, power and dominion...under His feet," and because we are the body that authority is under our feet as well. Let us not be people who embrace the reality of God but deny His everyday power in and through our lives. God wants you to live in purity and exercise His authority in prayer. He wants to dispel the darkness that brings bondage to our lives and the people around us.

Jesus and the early Christ-followers didn't beg God to act. They prayed with confidence that God would act. They knew God's authority could be directly appropriated through their prayers and resulting faith-filled actions. Ephesians 3:10 even tells us that the wisdom of God is revealed to beings in the heavenly realms through our actions here on earth!



- L6. Consistent practice of self-denial, fasting, and solitude rest

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LEARN to Encounter Jesus

Imagine the scene described in Ephesians. Christ is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly realms. Imagine yourself kneeling before the One who has all things placed under His feet; He has been appointed the head over everything in the world. Picture the King on His throne, and as you sit at His feet, He begins to remind you of where you are. You have the ability to talk and relate to the One who has the power to do anything He wants, the One who has the ability to change everything with just one word.

Picture the face of Jesus as He says to you, "Dear one, I am both the God of all comfort and the Lord God Almighty. I am the God of grace, and I'm the Lord of all. It may seem difficult to imagine, but I can't wait for you to call upon Me and trust Me. Your faith actually brings Me pleasure. In fact, without faith, it's impossible to please Me."

Spend a few moments meditating on this fact. In what area of your life do you need to trust Him more? In what new way can you depend upon Him and, by faith, wait for Him to act on your behalf?

Lord, in what area of my life do You want me to trust You more? Because You are the God of all grace, I know You care about me deeply. Thank You for Your fatherly care for me. And because You are the God of all power and dominion, the One who is seated at the Father's right hand, I trust You to work Your plans and purposes in my life.

After the Lord has spoken to you, consider including a regular day of fasting and prayer to sensitize your heart and empower your faith in what only God can do.

