

**PRAY**

**21** DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

**FIRST**

*Hillcrest*

Ministering God's Love To A Hurting World.



# PRAY

21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

# FIRST

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Hillcrest Evangelical Missionary Church

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# WHAT IF WHEN YOU GOT UP EVERY MORNING THE FIRST THING YOU DID WAS PRAY?

Last year at Hillcrest we started a new practice in prayer.

We decided to give God 21 days every Fall where we would focus on prayer.

All of us have regular times and ways that we pray but sometimes our prayer habits need a little bit of a re-boot or a fresh start. That's the purpose of these 21 days of prayer. It's a chance for all of us to get started in a fresh way with God.

As pastors and leaders, we plan to use this 21 day guide to help jump start our prayer lives. And we invite you to join us.

**Beginning on October 1, we want to encourage you to set aside 21 mornings or evenings or afternoons for prayer.**

Find a time that works for you. Find a place that works for you. And make some time to pray.

We want to take 21 days and focus on feeding our hunger for Jesus and His Kingdom.

The study and prayer guide is here to help you along. Feel free to use it as it works for you.

***Will you join with us in taking the time to pray?***

You may also want to both fast and pray. Fasting is an important, but little practised spiritual discipline. Fasting may be a new spiritual discipline for you but we believe that if you step out and practice it, your relationship with Jesus will be deeper and your awareness of His presence and voice will be greater.

Many people struggle with living and experiencing the presence of God. God knows that the busyness of life and the strategies of the enemy will keep us from experiencing Him. It's why He gave us the gift of fasting.

If you are considering fasting this year, please read the information on fasting provided at the back of this prayer guide. Please make sure to check with your doctor before you fast if you have any health issues that may prevent you from fasting. There are alternative types of fasts provided in this prayer guide.

Fasting helps us put God first and teaches us to PRAY FIRST in all areas of our lives. Fasting clears the clutter from our lives that hinder us from experiencing God.

Imagine the blessings God has for you as you develop a greater hunger for Him through fasting.

Join with us beginning October 1 for a 21 day journey of prayer.

Growing with you,

Pastor Steve

On behalf of all your pastors and leaders!

**LET'S GET STARTED**



# PRAY

**21** DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

# FIRST

## SCHEDULE & EVENTS

### **Personal Prayer (Daily October 1-21)**

Create your own space to talk with God between October 1 and 21. Or come to the Prayer Room during daytime hours (8:00am to 5:00pm) or evening hours (6:00pm to 10:00pm).

### **Sunday Evening Prayer (October 7, 14, 21)**

In the Prayer Room – October 7, 14 and 21 starting at 6:00pm.

### **Tuesday Morning Prayer (October 2, 9, 16)**

In the Prayer Room – October 2, 9 and 16 starting at 9:00am.

### **Worship and Praise Night (October 21)**

Worship Night will be the concluding event of the 21 days of prayer. Join with us in the Worship Center October 21 at 7:00pm as we share stories about what God has been doing in our lives.



# PERSONAL PRAYER TARGETS

## PRAY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY AND THOSE UNDER YOUR AUTHORITY.

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4

### MY GOVERNMENT

PRIME MINISTER

NATIONAL LEADERS

PROVINCIAL LEADERS

CITY LEADERS

# MY FAMILY

SPOUSE

CHILDREN

PARENTS

SIBLINGS

EXTENDED FAMILY

# MY CHURCH

LEAD PASTOR

PASTORAL AND CHURCH STAFF

MY LIFE GROUP LEADER

MY SMALL GROUP MEMBERS



# PERSONAL PRAYER TARGETS

## MY LIFE

EMPLOYER

CO-WORKERS

EMPLOYEES

TEACHERS/PROFESSORS

## THOSE I INFLUENCE

CLOSE FRIENDS

# THOSE WHO NEED GOD

## 1. PRAY THAT THE FATHER WOULD DRAW THEM TO JESUS

*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. (John 6:44)*

## 2. BIND THE SPIRIT THAT BLINDS THEIR MINDS

*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4)*

## 3. RELEASE THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION (SONSHIP)

*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry 'Abba Father.' (Romans 8:15)*

## 4. PRAY THAT OTHER BELIEVERS WILL CROSS THEIR PATHS AND ENTER INTO POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM

*Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. (Matthew 9:38).*

## 5. RELEASE THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION ON THEM SO THEY MAY KNOW GOD BETTER

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (Ephesians 1:17)*

# MY NEEDS

PRAYER REQUESTS









# MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT & FASTING GOALS

Decide how long you will fast and what kind of fast or fasts you will do. Some may do the full 21 days while others may fast for a certain amount of days or split up their fast during the 21 days. Whatever you decide make sure you write it down and then stick to it.

For more information on healthy ways to fast, please refer to pages 66-78.

**WHAT KIND OF FASTS ARE YOU GOING TO DO THIS MONTH?** (Write down whatever details will help you.)

**FOOD FAST(S)**

**MEDIA FAST(S)**

**OTHER**





# INTRODUCTION TO 21 DAY DEVOTIONALS

## WHO DO YOU WANT TO BECOME?

For the next 21 days we are going to walk through the book of 1 Peter. There are some great blessings that come to those who read, reflect and live out what the Bible teaches us. Peter wrote this book under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and his letter can reveal to us a number of things that will help us become more like Jesus.

Here are a few highlights of what God has in store for us:

- *So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. (1 Peter 1:6)*
- *So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. (1 Peter 1:13)*
- *Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness. (1 Peter 2:2-3)*
- *But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)*
- *For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21)*
- *Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. (1 Peter 3:8)*

Together, we will meditate on these and many other texts as we invite Jesus to make us more and more like the people he died for us to become. It's a journey. It's a process. But the end goal is worth far more than we can ever imagine.



# DAY 1

*God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.*

**1 Peter 1:2**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:1-2; Psalm 23**

I hear more and more people talking these days about things like: their stress levels, anxiety, depression, family struggles, financial struggles, health issues, and the list could go on and on...

And it's true. For whatever reason we seem to feel like we are under more pressure than ever. Perhaps this pressure comes from the new realities of social media and the pressure we subconsciously put on ourselves to live up to what we see happening in our friends lives. Or, maybe it is the challenge of a different economic environment. The world is changing. Good jobs seem harder to find. Good, life-long careers seem elusive. Or, it could also be the wild ideological / political roller coaster we seem to be riding for the last few years.

Yet in the midst of it all, I want to encourage you to stop, push the pause button and just be still. **Take a deep breath and read the text for today...**

What does it say? The Father knows you! The Father knows you and he chose you long ago! He has made you holy! You have been cleansed with the blood of Jesus Christ!

And then what? A blessing! A word of encouragement. For you.

*May God give you more and more grace and peace.* That's what I need. Maybe that's what you need. More grace. More peace.



# DAY 2

*Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.*

**1 Peter 1:3**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:3-5; Psalm 25:1-7**

The theme of the book of 1 Peter is HOPE. And if anyone has reason to talk about hope, it's Peter. This man truly experienced hope. His story is hope giving, hope inspiring and hope producing. If God could use Peter and if God could change Peter then we all have hope. Because if God could turn Peter's life around and use Peter, then God can certainly turn things around for us and use us.

Do you know Peter's story? He was from the backward places of his own country. He was a nothing, from a nothing country; not formally educated in any way at all. In his teens he became a zealot, an insurgent against Roman rule. A radical. And yet this person is taken by Jesus and made the leader of the twelve disciples.

He's the first to understand and confess that Jesus is Lord and Messiah. He's the only one to try walking on water. He is one of the few at the Transfiguration where Jesus reveals who he truly is. When Jesus was being arrested Peter was so protective of Jesus that he cuts off a guy's ear defending him.

Yet when the going gets tough, Peter turns his back on Jesus and refuses to be known as Jesus' friend. He blows it. He fails. And he shrinks away in despair. He runs away and hides, believing that he is beyond forgiveness.

And yet, after Jesus rose from the dead, he sought Peter out and gave him a second chance and a brand new start. If anyone has a reason to talk about hope, it is Peter.

Do you need a brand new start today? Do you need a reason to hope? Jesus is ready for you today, with arms open wide. He is ready to give you a new start, a new beginning.

**Ask and Journal:**

Jesus, is there any area of darkness in my life that you want to reveal to me? How can I bring hope to the people you have surrounded me with today?

**Personal Prayers:**

Pray for your church and your pastors. Pray for our church goals to reach lost people for Jesus. Pray for anything else that the Lord lays on your heart.

**NOTES:**

# DAY 3

*So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold.*

**1 Peter 1:6-7**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:6-7; Psalm 30**

Peter is writing this in his older age. He is writing to answer a question that Christians throughout all ages wrestle with. How do I deal with suffering as a Christian and still keep my hope bright?

Many new Christians were under attack because they had chosen to follow Jesus. They had been ostracized and mocked and expelled from their families and even their work because they had become Christians. It was a dark night of the soul for this young church and Peter writes a letter of hope.

He is about to remind them (and us) that we have a hope that is brighter than all darkness. A hope that is stronger than all denial or torture and even stronger than death itself. A hope that will outweigh all of our sufferings in this moment.

Peter says that we can be truly glad, we can be truly happy, truly joyful during the toughest times of life because we have an incredible joy that is waiting for us. Yes, we are facing trials. Yes, we are facing tough days. Yes, we are facing unpleasant things in this life. But we endure these trials for only a little while.

Peter says, “Let me remind you of your true home!” We are exiles here. We are resident aliens. We are temporary residents. We belong to another place. This is not our home country. We do not have a passport to this world. We are waiting for a heavenly city that is yet to come. That is your true home! Do not forget it for a moment. These trials will endure for a little while (even though they feel like they are lasting forever in this life).

One day these trials will be over. Hang on. You can make it. You can see this through.

Remember that word “chosen”? We read it in verse 2. This word is so comforting. It means that God stepped in and chose to save you. God, who is a good Father. He chooses to relate to us. He chooses to know us. He actually shows up in your life.

So, Peter says, hold on, there are better days ahead!

### **Ask and Journal:**

How is your faith? Is it being tested? Reach out to God for strength and ask him for a greater measure of faith for today.

### **Personal Prayers:**

Pray for your government leaders: our Prime Minister, our Premier, our Mayor. Pray for civic leaders. Pray that they would come to know Jesus, if they don't already. Pray for wisdom and strength for these men and women.

### **NOTES:**



# DAY 4

*You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.*

**1 Peter 1:8-9**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:8-9; Psalm 62**

Peter knew Jesus. He saw him. He touched him. He walked with him. Peter saw the miracles that Jesus did. He walked with Jesus on the water. He was there as Jesus suffered and died. He experienced Jesus' death and resurrection. He knew that these things were an eternal sign of God's love and God's grace and God's mercy.

And Peter responded to God's love. Peter reached out and accepted Jesus forgiveness. Peter gave up his life for the One whom he had seen and known, the One who loved him.

“But you,” Peter says, “you have loved him even though you have never seen him.” You have put your trust in him even though you do not see him now. For Peter, this is amazing. Even a miracle. The idea that Jesus' followers are growing and reaching out to Jesus by faith, even though they can't see him is nothing short of amazing.

God, in his great mercy, has given you new life!

The love and grace of God is more powerful than your status. It is more powerful than your economic reality. It is stronger than other people's good or bad statements declared over your life. It is stronger than persecution. It is stronger than your past sin. It is stronger than your mistakes.

You can trust and praise God that you are born from above and that your status before God, who is eternal, has changed. You can trust that you are forgiven and that you have hope in his great mercy.

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The reward for trusting him is that one day you will see him face to face. You will meet your Saviour and see the salvation of your soul!

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**Ask and Journal:**

What is your response to the Father's goodness and grace in your life?

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**Personal Prayers:**

Pray for your workplace: your co-workers, your employer, your employees. Pray for anyone you hate or consider an enemy. Pray that God will help you to love them just like He loves them.

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**NOTES:**

# DAY 5

*And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.*

**1 Peter 1:12**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:10-12; Psalm 113**

This Good News...

When we think about the Good News it is really about God's enduring faithfulness to us. God's steadfast love. There is a word in Hebrew that describes the love of God and that is the word *hesed*. It is the word or idea based in marriage. It is a covenantal word. God who is always faithful to his vows. God who is always present has this type of relationship with you.

And how do you know that God is *hesed*? How do you know that God is love?

Has God ever not been faithful? Has God ever broken his wedding vows with you? Even once? In your total helplessness, despite our mutual selfishness, He loved us. Not out of obligation, but out of undeserved love. This love springs from God himself because God is love. God is a faithful, covenantal partner that never leaves you, never cheats on you, never has an affair on you. He never over-reacts. He's never passive-aggressive. Our God is *hesed*. Our God is love. And Jesus has exclusively and fully demonstrated who God is to us.

The Good News is that in his great mercy, God has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. God's work has given me one thing and you one thing. A new hope. A living hope. A hope that actually extends and spreads and seeps into our past. A hope that dominates our future and controls our present.

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Jesus is alive. We are in Jesus, so we are alive! And we have living hope.

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That is the Good News, and it is so powerful and so mysterious that even the angels are looking on with wonder at what God is doing.

**Ask and Journal:**

Stop for a moment and think about God's love for you. How has God been faithful to you in the past? How is God showing His faithfulness to you right now?

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What is your response to the Good News?

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**Personal Prayers:**

Focus today on the character traits that you would like God to grow in you. Take time to pray and give the Lord permission to work in these areas of your life in a deeper way.

**NOTES:**



# DAY 6

*So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control... you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then.*

**1 Peter 1:14**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:13-16; Psalm 99**

We all have old patterns of thinking and old ways of living. Some of those patterns are good and healthy, and we want to hold on to anything that is good.

But some of our patterns of thinking and living are really bad for us. Maybe not always in obvious ways. These are the “old ways of living” that Peter is referring to here. Peter is encouraging us to not slip backwards into these old patterns.

**Maybe the way you talk needs to change.** What kind of words do you use? What do you say to your children, to your spouse, to your friends? Do you speak encouraging words? Or, are your words harsh or cutting? Do you speak words of life? Do you speak words of blessing?

**Maybe the way you act or react needs to change.** What does your body language say about you? Do you retreat from tough conversations? Do you keep people at a distance? Are you abrupt and cold with people? Are you quick to anger or are you patient and kind?

**Maybe the way you think needs to change.** Are your thoughts predominantly positive or negative? Do you find your thoughts going to dark places or negative places? If so, I encourage you to talk to someone about these thoughts. Start with the Lord and let out some of the negative thoughts you are having. Talk to him about them.

Peter is convinced that we can find victory in these areas of our lives. What do you think?





# DAY 7

*But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, “You must be holy because I am holy.”*

**1 Peter 1:15-16**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:15-16; Psalm 1**

To say that God is holy means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honour. Things that are considered *holy* in the Old Testament were set aside or set apart from ordinary use and devoted to use in glorifying God.

The idea that Peter is trying to help us with here is the idea that God has called us, God has chosen us. The idea that God initiated our salvation in Jesus. It all started with him.

But it’s not only about our salvation, it’s about where that salvation has brought us. We – those of us who trust in Jesus – have been set apart from the rest of the world. There is something special about us. The idea of being *holy* is the idea that we are *set apart* to glorify God.

Our lives are not intended for ordinary use. They are intended for something special. Our lives can point people to God if we let the Spirit of God work in us and shine through us.

The challenge with this verse is that there is no way that we are holy or that we can be holy in our own strength. In and of ourselves, we are not holy like God is, and we can never be holy like God is.

The only way that you and I can be holy is to get out of the way and let the Spirit of God shine through us. When we surrender ourselves to God, God actually makes us more and more like Him, and that includes being holy.

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It kind of looks like this. 1) You are already holy because God set you apart through Jesus. 2) You are being made holy as you surrender yourself more and more to Jesus. 3) You are being made holy as you separate yourself more and more from sin in your life.

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**Ask and Journal:** Write down one area of your life where you think you could become more holy. (Just one!) Then write down one thing you could do each day this week that would help you to become more holy in that area. Then invite the Holy Spirit to empower you and help you. (And He will!)

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**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your needs. Pray through any and every burden that is on your heart today. Your hopes, your fears, your dreams. Lay them all out before the Lord.

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**NOTES:**

# DAY 8

*For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.*

**1 Peter 1:18-19**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:18-20; Psalm 49**

Peter is talking about being set apart or being *holy*. And he has just challenged us to live holy lives. That is, to set ourselves apart and live a new life in the Spirit.

Why is that so important? Well, because God paid a ransom to save you from your empty life. The empty life you had. The empty life your ancestors had. It wasn't working. It wasn't leading you anywhere good or healthy or worthwhile. It was truly an empty life.

So God paid a ransom to pull you out of that empty life. To save you from that empty life. And the ransom wasn't paid with silver or gold or money. It wasn't paid with earthly stuff that loses its value. No, it was paid with the precious blood of Jesus! It was paid with Jesus' life. He suffered and he died and he endured the Cross so that we could be pulled out of our empty life!

In other words, your holiness has value. The cost of setting you apart, the cost of making you holy, was more than you truly know.

So holiness has value. And Peter is saying, don't devalue the gift of holiness that God has given to you. Don't throw it away! Nurture your holiness. Lean into the Spirit. Lean into the strength that Holy Spirit will give you. God has set you apart (made you holy) through Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is there to help you. And, it's your job to do your part, to keep your life free from sin and keep your heart and your affections tuned in to Jesus. In the real world, you're going to struggle along the way. You're going to make some mistakes. But God has made you holy and that is worth holding on to.

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**Ask and Journal:** So how are you doing? Yesterday you chose one area of your life to lean into. You asked the Lord to show you how you could grow in holiness in that area. How is it going? Whether you were successful or not, ask the Spirit to give you strength to grow today.

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**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your family members. Pray that the Lord would give you grace for the things that frustrate you. Pray that your family would grow in Jesus. Pray for spiritual protection over your family. Pray for those in your family who don't yet trust in Jesus.

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**NOTES:**

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# DAY 9

*Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory. You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.*

**1 Peter 1:21-22**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:21-22; Psalm 103**

So we have this incredible privilege. We have been made holy and Peter urges us to continue to live holy lives. And he brings us back to Jesus again. “It is through Jesus,” he says, “that you have come to trust in God.” Some other translations say, “It is through Jesus that you have confidence in God.” I love that. It brings out so many images that we can grab on to.

**Maybe you were once afraid of God.** Maybe the idea of God as a Father is not a comforting idea for you because you have a very bad history with your earthly father. Maybe something about your earthly father causes an unhealthy fear to rise up within you. Peter says, through Jesus, you can trust in God, you can have confidence in God. That is, you don’t have to fear God in an unhealthy way. Rather, God is trustworthy. You can be confident in God’s love for you. You can be confident that God has forgiven you in Jesus. You can be confident that God will never leave you or forsake you (see 2 Timothy 2:13).

**Maybe you do not trust that God will come through for you.**

There are so many promises that God has made to His people. Perhaps you are holding on to a promise from God. You are praying for something or someone very near and dear to you. You are counting on God to come through. You have nowhere else to turn. If God can’t do it, if God can’t help you, then who can? So, you pray. You call out to God. And you need Him to come through. You need Him to keep His promises to you.

On what basis is God trustworthy? How do you know that you can count on Him? Well, Peter says, because of Jesus you can have confidence in God.

Because God raised Jesus from the dead, you can know that you were cleansed from your sins. God kept that promise – which is a very big promise. Since God kept that promise, we have confidence that He is a promise-keeping God. And, through Jesus, we can hang on to all of God’s promises!

**Ask and Journal:** Is there a promise that you are holding on to? Write it down. Write down the scripture reference connected to that promise. Memorize it. Hold on to it. Continue to bring it to the Lord and trust that He will keep it in his time.

**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your church family. Pray for your pastors and spiritual leaders. Ask the Lord to bless them and give them strength for the ministry tasks that they have today. Pray for your pastor’s family members. Spouse, kids, everyone you can think of. Ask the Lord to protect and guard your church.

**NOTES:**

# DAY 10

*For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. (NLT)*

*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. (NIV)*

**1 Peter 1:23**

## **READ 1 Peter 1:22-25; Psalm 16**

You have been born again. God has given you a new life. You have a future. You have a hope based and founded in Jesus. What an incredible thought! What a beautiful truth!

There is a truth in this verse that is amazing. Peter says (and I am paraphrasing here), “You have been born again with a seed that will last forever.”

In gardening there are seeds from plants that are annuals and there are seeds from plants that are perennials. Annuals have to be replanted every year. But perennials don’t need to be replanted. The seed stays in the ground over winter and, at the right time, it brings out a new plant. That’s the difference that Peter is trying to stress here.

You have been born again, but not with a perishable seed. It’s not the kind of birth that will eventually lead to death. You have been born again with an imperishable seed. It’s the kind of birth that is eternal.

Peter is referring to eternal life here. So how do you live in your temporary situation, if you know that you will live forever? How do you think about your temporary struggles, if you know that you will live forever? What becomes most important to you when the idea of eternal life is thrown into the mix?

Peter answers that question if you put verses 21-22 together with verse 23. Read these verses again. Peter says, “Love each other” because you are born again and you will live forever. So what becomes most important when we realize that we have eternal life?

With eternity in view, our current troubles (finances, house, car, hobbies, etc.) become temporary things. They become less important. And people become the most important aspect of our lives. Your husband. Your wife. Your kids. Your mom or dad. Your close friends. Your neighbours. Peter says, “Love them.”

### **Ask and Journal:**

Think about your attitude toward “the temporary things” in your life. How much focus and attention do you give to them?

Think about your attitude toward the people in your life. How much focus and attention do you give to them?

**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your government leaders. Pray for the people who are most important to you.

### **NOTES:**

# DAY 11

*So get rid of all evil behaviour. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.*

**1 Peter 2:1-3**

## **READ 1 Peter 2:1-3; Psalm 119:1-16**

There is a flow to Peter's reasoning here. He has said, "Hey, love each other because that is what matters!" You've got all of eternity ahead of you. Focus on what matters! Now he says, "You've got all of eternity ahead of you, so get rid of the stuff that is holding you back." Get rid of deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy and unkind speech. You don't need those things where you're going! Set them aside. They are not doing you any good.

Instead, crave the good stuff. Develop an appetite for things that are pure. Let your appetite grow for good, healthy spiritual food. You've had a taste of God's goodness. You've had a taste of God's best. Let yourself hunger for more of what God has for you.

If you've ever eaten too much junk food or unhealthy food in one day, then you can identify with Peter's analogy here. How do you feel after a day of filling yourself with bad food? You feel heavy, tired, sleepy. Your stomach might ache and you might feel the effects for even a day or two. How do you feel after a day of filling up yourself with good food? Lots of veggies and healthy carbs and good protein? Well, you feel great. You have more energy. You are ready to run. You have more energy at the start of the day. You are in a better mood. There are so many benefits!

Peter is saying, "Let yourself crave the good stuff." Teach your spirit to crave God's word. Teach your spirit to crave good and healthy spiritual food. Move away from the junk food of bitterness or jealousy. Take in the good food of forgiveness and love. Move away from the junk food of despair and worry and anxiety. Take in the good food of faith and hope and peace.

Crave the good stuff and you will find that life gets better and better and better. In fact, that is what a “blessed life” is. It’s the outflow of a life where we take in the good spiritual nourishment that God has for us.

### **Ask and Journal:**

So what kind of spiritual junk food do you take in? Worry, despair, anger, fear, envy, jealousy, bitterness. Maybe you can list others.

Make a choice today to take in faith, hope, love, forgiveness, grace, mercy.

**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your workplace. Pray for the people you work with. Pray that you will have an opportunity to talk to them about your faith in Jesus. Pray that the Lord will lead them into friendships with other Christians. Pray that God will show them His love through you!

### **NOTES:**

# DAY 12

*You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.*

**1 Peter 2:4-5**

## **READ 1 Peter 2:4-8; Psalm 18:1-16**

There once was a temple made of stones that stood for hundreds of years. In this temple, the people of Israel worshipped God.

In Old Testament times, people understood the temple as the place where God's Presence dwelt in a special and unique way. It was the place where God was. Although God was present everywhere, God's presence was specifically connected to his temple or his house.

When a temple (or any ancient structure) was built, a foundation stone was laid, also called a cornerstone. That cornerstone was a large stone that anchored the entire structure. It provided a firm foundation for the rest of the building.

Peter uses a series of Old Testament quotations to show that Jesus is the cornerstone of a new house (or temple) that God is building. And even more, all those who believe in Jesus are like 'living stones' that God is using to build this new spiritual house.

The implication of this idea is that since Christians are the new spiritual house and they are living stones out of which it is built, then God's presence no longer resides in a building, but God's presence now resides in his people. This is an image or an idea that we find in many places in the New Testament.

Take some time to think about the implications of this idea. You are a 'living stone' and God's Presence resides within you. You (and other followers of Jesus) are the New House that God is building! It's a beautiful and wonderful idea and yet also difficult to fully understand.

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God's spirit resides in you. You are the temple where God's presence now lives. What does that mean? What does that idea say to you about who you are? What does that tell you about your identity and your value to God?

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**Ask and Journal:**

Journal or speak out your thoughts about this idea that God's spirit now resides in you. What questions does that bring to mind? What certainties does that bring to mind?

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**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your close friends. Pray God's blessing over their life. Pray that God would draw near to them. Pray for any needs that you are aware of in their life. Pray that God will show you ways to encourage them and bless them.

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**NOTES:**

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# DAY 13

*But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*

**1 Peter 2:9**

## **READ 1 Peter 2:9-12; Psalm 139**

Think about what it means to be chosen.

You walk into a sports store and you have money for one hat. So is it Lakers or Celtics? Is it Oilers or Flames or Leafs? You have to make a choice. By making a choice you are saying that one particular team is special. It means more to you than the others.

You walk into a car lot to buy a new car or truck. Out of all the options you can only drive one away. That one becomes special to you. It is the one that you chose.

You spend your 20's looking for a life partner. And if you are fortunate enough to find one, it means that out of all the options that you had available, this is the person that you chose, and this is the person who chose you. Or maybe you didn't choose to marry, and that even speaks to the importance of choice. You had a choice to make and you decided to pass.

You are a chosen people. You are royalty. Peter is blown away by that and he is passing on this encouraging word, this encouraging thought. God chose to save you and me by giving us Jesus. So first of all, God chose to do all of this through Jesus. And that makes Jesus the special one, really. But then we chose to respond to God and follow him and serve him. We chose to call out to him and say "Yes" to the way of salvation that God has provided. And when you said "yes" to God you became a part of a special group of people. You are a chosen people. You are royalty.

So now you can show others the goodness of God and invite them into the story as well!

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There are many profound thoughts here to think about. I hope you know that today and every day, God has his eye on you and his heart tuned toward you because you are one of his very own. You are blessed today. Even if you don't feel it or have tangible evidence of it in the moment, you are blessed today and God is for you and not against you.

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**Ask and Journal:**

What does Jesus mean to you? Have you thought about that lately? What does his sacrifice on the cross mean to you? How does it influence your life day to day? How does Jesus lead you day to day?

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**Personal Prayers:** Pray for lost people who don't know Jesus. Your friends, your neighbours and family members.

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**NOTES:**

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# DAY 14

*For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honour those who do right.*

**1 Peter 2:13**

## **READ 1 Peter 2:13-17; Psalm 101**

This is a hard verse for followers of Jesus to read.

Peter is saying that it doesn't matter what your politics look like. It doesn't matter if you are left of center, right of center, far-left, far-right or a wing nut off in your own political universe. He says it doesn't matter if you agree with the Premier or disagree with the Prime Minister. It doesn't matter if you love the Mayor or get a little peeved at your city Councillor sometimes. It doesn't matter. There is no option. There is no debate.

For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority – whether they be the king as head of state or the officials he has appointed.

The King, or the PM, or the Premier, or the Mayor, is put there by God and is there for God's own purposes and God's own plans. They serve at God's discretion and – as Christians – as followers of Jesus, whatever our politics, we are called to submit to their authority.

I wonder what it would look like, if all who call on the name of Jesus, were to humbly bow before the Lord each day, and pray for our leaders, and bless our leaders, and encourage our leaders?

What kind of witness would that be to the world around us? What kind of statement would it make?

We can say, “Hey, thank you for serving. Thank you for leading us. I'm praying for you.”

It might not change politics in Canada, but it would honour Jesus.



# DAY 15

*For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.*

**1 Peter 2:21**

## **READ 1 Peter 2:18-21; Psalm 102**

I had a love/hate relationship with my high school basketball coach. He was a great high school teacher. He was a good coach in game situations. But he was a brutal coach in practice. He yelled. He screamed. He swore at us a lot. His training methods were borderline abusive. He probably wouldn't last in the coaching world of today. He was old school before we even knew what old school was supposed to be. His picture was on the school wall year after year. He had coached high school boys basketball forever in my town, and nobody questioned his methods. My brother quit the team after the third practice in grade 10. I survived one season before that coach retired and a new coach came in. And it was brutal. It was painful. It was suffering at one of the highest levels I have ever experienced.

I'd like to tell you that there was a reason that we suffered. I'd like to say that we became better men and better players because of what we suffered. But the truth is that the new coach came in and we became a better team and better men because he respected us and used better coaching methods. He showed us respect and we played hard for him.

Peter does not lay out God's plan for suffering here. He doesn't give us five reasons why we suffer. He doesn't tell us that there is a grand reason behind the tragedies and suffering that we face in this life.

He simply says, do good. And if you suffer for doing good, still do good. Jesus suffered for us. God has called us to do good. And sometimes we will suffer for doing good. Jesus is our example, so follow in his steps. Even if that means you suffer for a season, and never really know why you suffered.

Maybe you are in a season of suffering right now and you just don't know why. Your suffering might be happening at work, or at home, or among your friends.

My question for you is: Are you doing good? Are you growing? Are you being faithful to Jesus? If so, then keep on going. Keep on doing good. Your season of suffering will come to a close. A new season will come.

### **Ask and Journal:**

Write out a "gratitude list." Think of everything you are thankful for. Keep writing or typing until you can't go anymore. There is so much to be thankful for, even in a season of suffering.

**Personal Prayers:** Pray for people you know who are suffering. Ask the Lord to show you a way that you can encourage one person today whom you know is suffering.

### **NOTES:**

# DAY 16

*Once you were like sheep  
who wandered away.  
But now you have turned to your Shepherd,  
the Guardian of your souls.*

**1 Peter 2:25**

## **READ 1 Peter 2:22-25; Psalm 51**

The Bible compares us to sheep sometimes. It's not meant to be a flattering comparison. Sheep are nice. They are good. But they are also stubborn and sometimes downright stupid and will tend to wander away from time to time. Kind of like us. There are times, in spite of our best intentions, that we wander. We get distracted. We lose focus.

We love God. We love Jesus. We've experienced some good things when we walk with Jesus. But then we get distracted. Some seemingly important thing pulls our attention away from Jesus and we wander away. Maybe we wander just a little away. Maybe we wander a long way off. But we all wander from time to time.

Peter says that we are all like sheep who have wandered away. Yet the wandering that Peter is talking about was very costly to Jesus.

The imagery is not just a simple story about a sheep that wandered away and was rescued. It's more like this: a sheep wandered away, ended up in trouble way over its head and the shepherd died while saving it. So, it's not just a cute little analogy.

Jesus paid a high price for us to be brought back, to be made right with God. Peter says (in verse 24) that Jesus personally carried our sins in his body on the cross. And he did this so that we can now be dead to sin and live for what is right. He did this so that by his wounds we could be healed. And that's a big deal.

So where are you at right now? Are you wandering? Or are you "home"?

How do you come back home? Psalm 51:10 is a great place to start. Call out to God and say, “Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me!”

Come home to the Shepherd and Overseer of your soul.

### **Ask and Journal:**

Is there any area of your life where you are wandering a little (or a lot) away from Jesus? If so, take a moment to realign your heart. Get things right. Keep your heart close to home base.

**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your church family. Pray for those who are sick. Pray for those in your small group. Pray for your pastors and leaders.

### **NOTES:**

# DAY 17

*Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.*

**1 Peter 3:3-4**

## **READ 1 Peter 3:1-7; Psalm 37**

This is another hard verse for Christians to read today.

On the one hand, it is fascinating that humans 2000 years ago were basically concerned with the same things that we are today.

Look. Image. Hairstyle. Clothing. Jewelry. You know... stuff! I find it amazing and somewhat hilarious that things haven't changed for us at all. We still get caught up in how we look and how we feel about how we look.

And Peter reminds us that, hey, maybe you don't need that new haircut to feel great. Maybe the way you feel is more deeply connected to stuff that is going in deeper places of your soul. Maybe what you need is a gentle and quiet work of God in your spirit. A work down inside of you that gives you a contentment with yourself that transcends a hairstyle or a new outfit.

I don't think that Peter is telling us to not be concerned with how we look. But I do think that he is seeing people who are using beautiful clothes and expensive jewelry as a crutch, as a band-aid, as a covering for a soul that is deeply flawed.

So he tells us to work on the inner stuff first. To focus on having a beautiful spirit. To focus on love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. To focus on these things of the Spirit. These are the qualities that are precious to God, he says. These are the qualities that actually make you a beautiful person.

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**Ask and Journal:**

Think and write about how you use the “stuff” in your life. Your toys, your clothes, your vehicles. Are they band-aids that you are using to cover up for a deeply dissatisfied soul?

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**Personal Prayers:** Pray about the character qualities that you see in yourself that you would like to change. Focus on one quality. Is there something that you can do today, that represents a change in that quality? Perhaps you can take that negative character quality and do its opposite today in some intentional way.

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**NOTES:**

# DAY 18

*Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.*

**1 Peter 3:8**

## **READ 1 Peter 3:8-9; Psalm 146**

Sympathy does not come easy for people. It is usually something we learn over time. As we experience difficulties and stresses in life, hopefully we become more sympathetic to the difficulties and stresses that others are experiencing.

But that is not always what happens. Sometimes we get self-focused in a way that blinds us to the circumstances that people we love are facing in their lives. Like you come home from work every day and all you can do is complain (whether in your mind or out loud) about what your spouse is or is not doing for you. Or you get focused on what your kids are doing or not doing that ends up making your day so lousy. You have no sympathy when you are in that frame of mind. Life is all about you and your problems.

In reality, your kids probably have some stresses in their lives that you don't know about. You assume that they are ok, but maybe they are not. Maybe they are facing things that you are unaware of. Why not ask, "how are you doing? Are you stressed about anything today? Is there anything I can pray about for you?"

And then there is your spouse. Well I guarantee that your spouse has stresses in their life as well and you probably don't know about them. And your complaining is only saying to them that you don't understand and you don't care. Why not take some time to ask them how they are doing? What are they stressed about? Find out how you can pray for them?

Sympathy does not always come easy. But it will go a long way to making every part of your life better.



# DAY 19

*Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.*

**1 Peter 3:11-12**

## **READ 1 Peter 3:10-12; Psalm 34**

We all know that character matters in the workplace. What we say and what we do and how we live our lives has a long term effect on our success at work. You can lie for a short time and get away with it. You can be a jerk for a short time and get away with it. You can cause disruptions, or “drama,” in the office on a regular basis for a short time and get away with it. But eventually the economy turns and downsizing comes and guess what? Most often the liars and the jerks and the drama-inducers don’t last. (Unless they are the owner, but that’s another story.) So character counts.

That’s what Peter is saying here. That’s the kind of practical truth he is trying to relay to us. He lists several characteristics of Jesus’ followers that make them great people to work with and for:

First of all, they do good. They are encouragers and hard workers and they will find all kinds of ways to be a blessing in the office or out on the job-site.

Second, they are peacemakers. Jesus’ followers don’t cause the drama - they help reduce the drama. They help make their workplace a better place that people actually want to be at. They treat customers well and they handle complaints with grace, in a way that will lead to the best solution possible for everyone involved.

They also turn away from evil. They keep themselves free of nasty habits that eventually cause problems in the workplace. They don’t drink too much so they don’t show up for work hungover or drunk. They come to work rested and refreshed and prayed-up and ready to contribute and make it a great day for everybody.

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How is your character in the workplace? How is your life being lived out there? Do you do good? Do you help decrease the drama? Do your healthy habits lead to a more successful company and a better place to work? If so, this pleases God and honours him and He will bless you for it.

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**Ask and Journal:**

Think about and write about these questions.

How is your life being lived out in your workplace? Do you do good? Do you help decrease the drama? Do your healthy habits lead to a more successful company and a better place to work?

**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your close friends. Pray that the Lord will bring good Jesus-loving people into your life. Pray that your friends will be strengthened in their faith.

**NOTES:**

# DAY 20

*Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.*

**1 Peter 3:15**

## **READ 1 Peter 3:13-17; Psalm 145**

You can't predict when God will show up in the life of someone that you know. Usually it will be the person that you least expect.

I worked as a foreman for a painting company during my university years. One of the guys in my crew was just an absolute party animal. I am pretty sure that he showed up either drunk or hungover every day (or at least until his paycheck ran out). Once he had a few cups of coffee in him, he was a good painter and a hard worker. I was sure he was as far away from God as anyone could be, and, even though I prayed for him, I didn't ever expect him to be the guy to ask me about Jesus.

But one day he showed up for work drunk and early. He got out the ladder, climbed up on the roof and promptly fell off and broke his arm. We found him by the pool moaning in pain. (And yah, his paint fell in the pool. Not fun.) I took him to the hospital and pretty much spent the day hanging out in the Emergency Room. And that's when he started to ask me about Jesus.

He had grown up in a small Alberta town and had turned his back on the idea of God. "Well," he said, "that's not working out so well for me right now." That began a bunch of conversations that eventually led to him confessing Jesus as Lord on a camping trip later that summer.

Are you ready to share about the hope you have as a believer? Are you ready, today? Because... it might happen. When you least expect it. From the person that you least expect it. Why do you love Jesus? Why is Jesus important to you? Would you be ready to tell them?

I hope it happens to you! Because it is the greatest feeling ever to watch someone trust him. Get ready! It might happen to you today!

**Ask and Journal:**

Take some time to think or write about why you follow Jesus. Get yourself ready to answer for the hope that you have within you!

**Personal Prayers:** Pray for lost people in your life: your friends and neighbours and family who don't know the Lord yet.

**NOTES:**

# DAY 21

*Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.... Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honour next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.*

**1 Peter 3:18, 22**

## **READ 1 Peter 3:18-22; Revelation 5**

This is a great place to finish. The 21 days of prayer are over and wow... Let's end here... with Jesus.

Jesus never sinned. Keep in mind that this statement is being made by a man who knew him well for at least three years of his life (and perhaps more). Peter is also a man who knew Jesus' mother, Mary and his step-brothers, James and Jude. So Peter is speaking with some authority here. Jesus lived a sinless life, a perfect life. And because of that, he was the only one who could sacrifice himself for our sins.

Jesus' death was unjust. Only a sinner deserves to die for their sin, but Jesus suffered and died in our place. He didn't deserve it. But he put himself in our place anyway. He suffered. Meaning that it wasn't pleasant. It wasn't a simple, easy death. It was a brutal and torturous and painful death. It was a death that you and I deserved.

Jesus is in heaven and he is seated next to the Father. His work is done. He is seated with honour and he has been given all authority over every power in heaven and on earth. And what's more – even though we don't deserve it – he has given us authority here on earth. Jesus gave us authority over demonic powers. He gave us authority over our families and over our homes. Jesus gave us authority in prayer. “Whatever you ask for in my name,” he said, “will be given to you.” And that is a powerful statement, to say the least.

And so as you go from these 21 days, remember this. You are chosen. You are loved. You are holy. You are a priest of God. You will suffer sometimes for doing good but you are ultimately blessed with a future and a hope with Jesus in heaven.

So keep on praying. Keep on calling out to Jesus. He is sitting at God's throne listening to your prayers and he and the Father are talking about you. As God, they love you and they are listening.

### **Ask and Journal:**

Think and write about your plans to keep praying. How would you like to continue on after the 21 days? What would you like to see your prayer life look like this year?

**Personal Prayers:** Pray for your needs. Bring before the Lord your hopes and dreams. Your personal goals. Your personal needs. Your personal struggles. Talk to the Lord about them all. Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you.

### **NOTES:**











# WHAT IS FASTING?

***The goal of fasting is to experience God.*** To learn what it means to practically put Him FIRST in our life.

Fasting is to voluntarily abstain from eating/drinking for an extended period of time. “Eating” and “drinking” can represent anything that is holding you back; what you “consume” in terms of social food, intellectual food, spiritual food and emotional food.

Fasting helps you identify the things that distract you from growing in your relationship with God.

Are you relying on things that have nothing to do with God to get you through your day? You may not even realize you have an addiction. For example, if you “have to have” coffee every day, and you are not willing to give it up, you are addicted. Maybe your fast needs to just be about coffee. Ask God and He will show you.

***Everyone doing a physical fast should consult a physician first.*** If you have medical issues, consider fasting from TV, media or social media.

The point is that there is something God wants you to separate yourself from for three weeks so that you can see Him more clearly. Don’t cheat yourself by removing yourself from the fast entirely.

There are other benefits to fasting (breaking addictions, losing weight, etc.), however if you make those benefits the reason for fasting you will not experience God in the way he intended. A fast is not for YOUR needs or desires but to see that your life is all about Jesus. A fast gets your eyes off your needs and on to your greatest need – the presence of God.

Here are some examples of fasting in the Bible:

- Special revelation (Exodus 34:27-28)
- In times of war (Judges 20:26)
- Courage and wisdom (Esther 4:3,16)
- In times of grief (Nehemiah 1:4, 2 Samuel 1:12; 31:13)
- Spiritual recuperation (1 Kings 19:1-9)
- Mourning (Daniel 10:1-3)
- Repentance (Jonah 3:5, Daniel 6:18)
- Ministry preparation (Matthew 4:2)
- Spiritual power (Mark 9:29)
- Ministry commissioning (Acts 14:23)
- Set aside self for holiness (1 Corinthians 7:5)
- Spiritual discipline (2 Corinthians 11:27)



# PREPARING FOR FASTING

## 1. Prepare your heart.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14 we read, *“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”*

The challenge for us is to open our hearts to Jesus and be willing to do what He says.

Take time to confess and repent of your sin. Ask Jesus what he wants you to change in your life. What direction does he want you to walk? How much time does he want you to pray and read his Word? Tell God that you want to be fully surrendered and submitted to him and his ways.

## 2. Check your motives.

Ephesians 3:1 says, *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”*

God’s heart is to assign spiritual blessings to his children. The problem is many of his children never discover those blessings.

Fasting prepares you to hear and receive what God has for you. Maybe God wants to bless you with the spiritual blessing of wisdom, a fresh anointing in your life, powerful and effective prayers, a teaching gift or words of discernment and encouragement. His blessings are endless.

Fasting helps us eliminate the things in our life that steal our focus on God and helps us see things about ourselves and God that we never knew.

### 3. Prepare your body.

There are a lot of different fasts that you can choose to take part in (they are mentioned later in this section).

When you choose to fast food be prepared for changes physically. You may initially feel sick or tired – don't give up. Press through those initial stages. Remember, this is not a game to see if you can eat less. Rather, it is all about experiencing God in a powerful and fresh way in your life.

As you continue to fast, you will realize that you don't experience hunger pains as often as you thought you would.

Without a preoccupation with food, you will be surprised at your ability to be sustained for a number of days without eating food and how you will take advantage of your time to seek Jesus more diligently.

### 4. Order your schedule.

As you begin your fast, decide when and where you are going to take time to meet with God. As someone once said, "People who don't make appointments with God end up being disappointed with God."

The question you are going to have to answer and settle is "When you fast, will you seek God, listen to him and give him the time he deserves?"

If you are fasting meals use those times to spend praying, reading God's Word and journaling. Don't let yourself become distracted – be intentional about spending scheduled time with God – if you do you can expect to hear him clearly.



# FASTING SUGGESTIONS

- Explain to your family in advance what you are doing.
- Request privacy from those who find out what you are doing.
- Ask them not to discuss it with you until your fast is over.
- Never complain or brag about your fast, and avoid talking about it.
- Find an accountability partner for prayer and encouragement.
- If possible, stay away from negative people.
- Spend as much time as possible alone in solitude and prayer.
- Acknowledge that your flesh cannot be trained, but must be crucified.
- Journal as you pray and meet with the Lord. Write down the miracles God does in your life!



# TYPES OF FASTS

## Complete Fast

- Drinking only liquids, typically water and/or light juices.
- Broth or soup may be included as options.

## Selective Fast

- Removing certain elements from your diet.
- The Daniel Fast: abstaining from meat, sweets, or bread; drink water and juice, and eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.

## Partial Fast (a.k.a. The Jewish Fast)

- Abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon.
- Fast during specific times of the day, e.g. 6AM-3PM, or from sunup to sundown.

## Soul Fast

- Common for: anyone new to fasting food; those with health issues that prevent them from fasting food; those wanting to refocus specific areas of life that are out of balance.
- Suggestions: abstain from engaging in social media, shopping, watching television, etc.



# DEALING WITH DOUBTS

Fasting is counter-intuitive to what your body has come to expect. Your mind and your memory will initially try to convince you that what you are doing is not normal.

Your body has been trained to eat at certain times every day and to feed the urges that you have always paid attention to.

Your mind and your memory will do everything it can to bring you back into line with what has always been normal.

This is what it means when Paul wrote in Galatians 5:24 that “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

Your “flesh” will encourage you and even beg you to give up and feed it.

It is at that point that you will be faced with a decision: Do you give up or keep moving forward?

When you feel as though you want to give up, you must ask yourself a few questions.

- Is the pain you are experiencing worth the prize you are pursuing?
- Is the prize you are pursuing worth the pain you are enduring?
- If you do give up, where and to what will you go back to?

In John 6:66 the disciples were asked by Jesus if they wanted to go back to their old lifestyle. Peter said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of life.”



# DEALING WITH PEOPLE

Should you tell people that you are fasting?

Since fasting is a discipline of self-denial and consecration to the Lord, constant discussion about it will be a distraction.

Jesus said this about fasting in Matthew 6:16-18,

*“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*

Those are the words worth heeding in order to experience the maximum benefits that come from fasting. Keep it between you and God as best as you can.

If your fast lasts only one to seven days, you may not have to say anything at all.

As time goes by and you begin to lose a considerable amount of weight, it will become more difficult to avoid questions about your appearance. Do your best to avoid looking dehydrated and keep yourself well-groomed.

Eventually there will be those who find out that you are fasting, but you can turn this situation into an edifying one. There is a balance between drawing attention to yourself and giving glory to God. You have to decide when and how to discuss it, because your testimony can be used to encourage others to fast.



# SAMPLE MENUS

## SAMPLE MENU 1 FRUITS, VEGETABLES, JUICES & WATER

- Breakfast: Fruit smoothie with protein powder
- Mid-morning Snack: Fresh fruit or fresh vegetables
- Lunch: Raw vegetable salad with light dressing and vegetable broth soup
- Mid-afternoon Snack: Fresh fruit or fresh vegetables
- Dinner: Fresh salad with light dressing and steamed grilled vegetables

## SAMPLE MENU 2 LIQUIDS ONLY

- Breakfast: Fruit smoothie with protein
- Mid-morning Snack: Herbal tea or vegetable broth soup
- Lunch: Raw juiced vegetables
- Mid-afternoon Snack: Fresh fruit juice or fruit smoothie with protein
- Dinner: Vegetable juice or vegetable broth soup

## SAMPLE MENU 3 MODIFIED DANIEL FAST

- Breakfast: 1 - 2 servings whole grains with fresh fruit juice
- Mid-morning Snack: Fresh fruit or fresh chopped vegetables
- Lunch: 1 - 2 servings whole grains; fresh salad with legumes and light dressing
- Mid-afternoon Snack: Fresh fruit juice or fruit smoothie with protein
- Dinner: 1 - 2 whole grains; fresh salad with legumes and light dressing



# THE DANIEL FAST

The concept of a Daniel fast comes from Daniel 1:8-14 where it says,

“But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. But he responded, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded.” Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: “Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water,” Daniel said. “At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king’s food. Then make your decision in light of what you see.” The attendant agreed to Daniel’s suggestion and tested them for ten days.

Because Daniel and his three friends were servants of a pagan king (King Nebuchadnezzar) who ruled Babylon, they were expected to follow the rules of the palace. They were to learn the beliefs, customs, laws and practices of the Babylonians which included their eating habits. Being Jewish, much of the dietary menus of the Babylonians were not in agreement with the Mosaic Law and thus labelled “unclean” to them. As a result Daniel asked if they could be excused from eating the meat that was most likely sacrificed to Babylonian false gods and idols.

They were granted permission to do this and in the end were seen as more healthy and fit than the others who ate the Babylonian food. Thus, the Daniel fast is simply a fast that consists of eating only fruits and vegetables and abstaining from meat. It is one example of how to deny yourself in order to grow closer to God. It is not a fast that is commanded in Scripture but rather an example of a fast that can be practised in your life.

## Foods To Include

**All fruits.** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are not limited to: apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon.



# THE DANIEL FAST

**All vegetables.** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are not limited to: artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers (an option if you are not allergic to soy).

**All whole grains.** Including, but not limited to: whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes, and popcorn.

**All nuts and seeds,** including, but not limited to: sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also, nut butters, e.g. peanut butter and almond butter. All legumes. These can be canned or dried. Legumes include but are not limited to: dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, blackeyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

**All quality oils.** Including, but not limited to: olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

**Beverages:** Spring water, distilled water, or other pure waters. Other: Tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs, and spices.

## Foods To Avoid

- All meat and animal products. Including, but not limited to: beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and fish.
- All dairy products. Including, but not limited to: milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.
- All sweeteners. Including, but not limited to: sugar, raw sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, and cane juice.
- All leavened bread, Including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.
- All refined and processed food products. Including, but not limited to: artificial flavourings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.
- All deep fried foods. Including, but not limited to: potato chips, french fries, corn chips.
- All solid fats. Including shortening, margarine, lard, and foods high in fat.
- Beverages. Including, but not limited to: coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.



# AFTER YOU FAST

Ending your fast properly is just as important as beginning your fast properly. Just as you prepared yourself to begin a fast, you must prepare yourself to stop or break your fast. Here are a few questions you can ask yourself as you end your fast:

- What are the key lessons I learned?
- What new habits or disciplines do I want to keep?
- What new dietary rules will I follow?
- What foods will I begin eating or not eat anymore?
- What dreams and visions have I seen pertaining to my personal walk with the Lord or my ministry?

## DECIDE TO MAKE FASTING A PART OF YOUR LIFE

Before you end your fast make a decision to practice this discipline on a regular basis. This is vital if you are going to apply and live out the lessons learned during your fast. 1 Corinthians 11:24-28 says that Paul “fasted often.” But why? You must view fasting as a new way of life, not just a vacation from the old way. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, “The old is gone and the new has come.” Fasting regularly will help you maintain a level of discipline and spirituality that is necessary to hold the ground that has been taken from Satan.

Regular fasts will keep the flesh in submission and serve as a reminder as to who is in charge of your life. Choose a regular fasting schedule to follow. There are those who have chosen to fast one twenty-four hour period per week. Others fast sun up to sun down, one day per week. Pray and design a format that you feel God wants for you, a system that you can be faithful to and consistent with.



# AFTER YOU FAST

## Physically

Controlling your eating habits when you end your fast will be important. Once you begin to eat again, if you are not careful, you will feel uncomfortable. Your stomach will feel bloated and full. Introduce solid food slowly. There is a very good chance you will experience stomachaches and diarrhea from the shock on the digestive system.

## Emotionally

Satan will be working to take back the ground he has surrendered over to the Lord and he will use your emotional vulnerability to accomplish his goals. It could be an intense time of discouragement leading to depression. Remember to be mindful of this and to eat wisely once you break your fast.

In 1 Kings 18-19, Elijah is challenged by the 450 prophets of Baal who all followed Jezebel in a most vile and immoral religion. God confronts and defeats them through one man, Elijah. But after this great spiritual victory, Elijah finds himself running for his life from one woman: Jezebel. She has threatened his life and he feels all alone. He becomes incredibly discouraged and asks God to end his life. Elijah experiences a supernatural and spiritual high, followed by an emotional low. You very well could experience this same type of roller coaster ride. Be aware of this and hold firm to the victory you have in Jesus.



## RECOMMENDED READING

Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God - Tim Keller

Fasting - Jentezen Franklin

Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough - Elmer L Towns

Praying the Bible - Donald Whitney



## RECOMMENDED TEACHING ON PRAYER

Pastor Steve taught a series on prayer in February-March 2017 entitled "SCRIPTURE-PRAYER." You can listen or download this series on Vimeo or use the following links.

<http://hillcrestchurch.net/media/scripture-prayer-the-authority-of-the-bible/>

<http://hillcrestchurch.net/media/scripture-prayer-the-importance-of-the-bible/>

<http://hillcrestchurch.net/media/scripture-prayer-studying-the-bible/>

<http://hillcrestchurch.net/media/scripture-prayer-learning-how-to-pray/>

<http://hillcrestchurch.net/media/scripture-prayer-praying-gods-provision/>

<http://hillcrestchurch.net/media/scripture-prayer-praying-gods-kingdom/>

<http://hillcrestchurch.net/media/scripture-prayer-prayer-that-makes-a-difference/>

# BLESS YOU!

We say together in faith:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,  
who was, and is, and is to come.

We believe in God the Father, who created all  
things:  
for by his will they were created and have their  
being.

We believe in God the Son, who was slain:  
for with his blood, he purchased us for God,  
from every tribe and language, from every people  
and nation.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:  
the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'

Even so come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

(Revelation 4:8, 11; 5:9; 22:17, 20)

***The Lord bless you and keep you;***

***the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be  
gracious to you;***

***the Lord lift up his face toward you and give you  
peace.***

**(Numbers 6:24-26)**