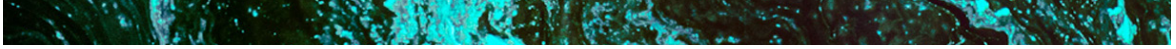


21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

JANUARY 14 - FEBRUARY 4



A LETTER FROM PASTOR JASON



Are you ready to take on the New Year? Looking for a way to push yourself spiritually and start this new year off? Then join us in our 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting Challenge! This challenge will be an incredible opportunity to prioritize your relationship with God and focus attention on what matters most. Whether you have a great prayer life or no prayer life at all, this challenge is a powerful way to start 2024!

Prayer is one of the most important things you can do as a follower of Jesus. Jesus is always the answer, He is our best friend, and He is always ready to talk with us. The more we learn about prayer, and the more often we pray, the easier it becomes. When we find out how to have real conversations with Jesus every day, we can experience the presence of God, which has the power to change our lives in the best way possible. Make prayer a part of your everyday life.

YOU CAN PRAY:

- Before the day begins
- Before you go to school or work
- Before you send that text
- Before you eat dinner
- Before you go to bed
- When something good happens
- When something bad happens

In EVERY situation - PRAY FIRST!

We hope that this prayer guide will help you grow closer to Jesus.

We want to encourage you to do a few things each day/week:

- 1 PRAY**
- 2 READ THE BIBLE**
- 3 FAST**

Fasting is choosing to stop doing an activity to enjoy God's presence. When fasting, we decide not to do certain activities for a period of time. But we replace these activities with time with God, such as praying, reading the Bible, and worshiping Him. Fasting is meant to mirror the practice of Jesus, who fasted 40 days in the desert in preparation for his public ministry.

When we fast and pray, we talk to God and listen to Him. We check our actions and repent of sin. We align ourselves with God's heart by seeking His answers to our questions, praying for His provisions, and asking God for breakthroughs in our lives. Fasting shows our dependence on God. It shows that God is more important than what sustains our physical bodies.

Commit to a time period:

If you are just beginning, fasting for one meal is a good pace to start. You might, for example, eat a light breakfast and dinner, but fast for lunch. Another option is to fast from Saturday evening to Sunday morning, breaking your fast with church on Sunday. Many Christians practice this type of fast year round. Should kids fast? Yes! This is a great thing to teach our children. But, be careful when it comes to fasting from full meals for too long of a period of time. However, people of any age (kids included!) can understand that fasting is about sacrificing something we love/enjoy to focus on God.

While your families fast, here are some ideas for things kids can fast from:

- Screen time on their tablet or phone
- TV, video games, or movies
- Their favorite food, snack, or drink
- Arguing and complaining (All the adults said AMEN!)
- Social media (For preteens/teens)
- A game or toy

Help your kids understand:

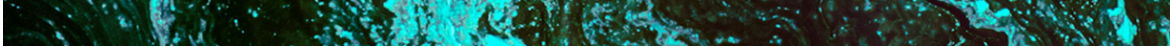
- Fasting is not a punishment! We don't fast because we are in trouble, or because God is "mad at us."
- Fasting isn't for a reward. We don't fast to get a prize, reward, or treat.
- Fasting is meant to help us focus on God and remember that He is the most important thing -He is all we need!
- When we fast, we are meant to fill up the empty time or space with something that helps us focus on God and our relationship with Him. For example, if kids are fasting from screen time, consider taking that 20 minutes to read a Bible story and pray together instead!
- The point of fasting is not just to "give up." It is not about self-discipline, willpower, or control. It is about focusing on God as all we need and intentionally spending more time with Him!

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Jason

-Pastor Jason

DAY 1 / THE LORD'S PRAYER



Matthew 6:9-13, NIV “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

Sometimes our faith can be too personal, meaning that it's not well connected to the wider body of Christ. In this prayer, it's important that God is not just “my Father.” No, He's “our Father!” This beautiful truth within this prayer means that you're connected to millions of other believers across the world today who are praying this very same prayer, although perhaps in a different language. We struggle together, pray together, grow together, and love God together. We are unified in our adoration of our precious Father in heaven.

Reflect and Pray: Our Father in heaven, please help me better understand today your love for all believers scattered across the earth. You see each one of us, and you are indeed our Father. Give me a heart like yours, and help me to walk in love, unity, and solidarity with my Christian brothers and sisters in each nation. May our voices be strongly united as we praise you, witness about you, and love you with all of our being. Be especially near to those who are suffering today, and may they sense your deep love and compassion for them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

In this verse, Jesus teaches us how to pray by calling God “Our Father.” In what ways is God a father to us?

God being our Father means:

- He's **committed** to us as His children.
- He **knows** who we are and He's chosen to know us intimately.
- He's **consistent**. He'll never change and He'll always be our Father.
- He'll **provide** for our needs and protect us from evil.
- He'll **listen** for us when we call to Him.
- He'll **equip** us to live in this world, and
- He'll **love** us unconditionally, no matter what.
- **Since God is our father, we can pray to him anytime and anywhere.**
 - What is one place where you can talk to God?
 - What is one time each day that you can talk to God?
- How does viewing God as our Father change the way we approach Him in prayer?
- Do you think that God likes it when we pray to Him?

DAY 2 / THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9c "Hallowed be your name."

What does it mean to keep God's name holy? We must understand that his name is associated with his character and his very person. And we know that He is holy, that there is nothing false in him, nothing impure, nothing corrupt. His character is altogether righteous and good. We honor him and his name when we give due respect to such a holy and righteous God. We live in a way that brings glory and honor to him, and we avoid careless actions, attitudes, and words. When we honor him in all of our life, our hearts and consciences remain clean. This is the byproduct of honoring God and his name.

Reflect and Pray: Dear Father, may I keep your name holy today in everything I do, think, and say. I am committed to you in the depths of my heart, and I want to respect you and your ways in every single area of my life. I choose to renounce shameful actions, attitudes, and words—those things that would bring dishonor to you. Keep my mind and thought patterns clean and whole, and may my words and actions be authentically warm and life-giving, reflecting the beauty and holiness of your character. I am yours today, holy God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- "Hallowed" means holy and revered. By saying this, we're recognizing and honoring God's holiness. It's like saying, "You are special, God!" What does it mean for us to treat God's name as holy in our daily lives?
- Can you think of anything or anyone that we treat as special or important? What are some things that we do to honor them?
- How can we "hallow" God's name, or treat God's name as "holy"?
- We don't want to use God's name to hurt other people or in a way that is disrespectful. I'll bet you don't like it when people make fun of your name or say it in a nasty way. God doesn't like it either. What are some ways that people mistreat God's name?
- What can you do to make sure that you're always honoring God and His name?

DAY 3 / THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:10 "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"Your will be done" is one of the most powerful prayers because it means the one praying is giving every part of a situation over to God, the One who does all things well. It means letting go, giving up (in the best sense!), and totally trusting the Father. It is the acknowledgment that his ways are higher and better. Further, as we pray this verse, we set our minds on his kingdom, not our own, on his purposes, not our selfish desires. This is a great way to pray throughout the day. Lord, may your will be done!

Reflect and Pray: Father, may your will be done today in every area of my life. I let go of my limited view of things, knowing that your ways are higher and better and hold eternal significance. Help me let go of people and situations that I'm trying to control. I give them over to you, God, and I ask again, may your will be done. And may your kingdom come into my mind, attitude, workplace, family, and relational challenges. I want to cooperate in the building of your kingdom, not my own. I give myself to you today, God, unreservedly. Your will be done!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Here, we're praying for God's plans and purposes to be fulfilled on earth, just as they are in heaven. It's a way of saying, "God, we want your way, not ours." What do you think the earth would be like if it was the way God wanted it to be?
- What are some things that people might pray for that are not what God wants for their life?
- When have you felt like you know what God wanted? How did you know? What happened?
- When were you unsure about what God wanted? What happened?
- Do you think it's important not just to pray for God's will to be done, but then to obey what you feel like God is asking you to do? Why or why not?

DAY 4 / THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:11 "Give us today our daily bread."

Much of the world still lives hand to mouth, and fresh bread is a staple. They need it every day to have strength, and it brings joy to their heart. In some places, the bread is associated with life itself. Early in the morning, you can smell the bread baking. There's nothing quite like fresh bread, straight out of the wood-fired oven! In the same way, we need God and his strength every single day. When we look to him often for wisdom, provision, and protection, we are much less likely to take his goodness and gifts for granted. And we are also less likely to depend on ourselves.

Reflect and Pray: Jesus, you are the bread of life, and I need your presence in my life today. Help me to look to you often throughout the day. Please give me those things that I will need today—wisdom, grace, strength, joy, and love. My Christian life is not based upon my own ideas and my own strengths; no, I need you in every area of my life every day. You are the One who sustains me, bright-ens my outlook, and gives me energy for the journey. Thank you for providing so many good things.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- This verse reminds us to trust God for our daily needs, not just physical but also spiritual and emotional. It's about dependence on Him. What are some things that we "NEED" every single day?
- Does God promise to give us everything we want?
- What are some of our daily needs that we take for granted? If God gives us these things whether we ask for them or not, why do we have to pray for our daily needs? (We might easily take for granted such things as food, shelter, clothes, water, and family. Praying for these needs reminds us that God is our provider. Prayer helps us remember to depend on God for our needs, both great and small.)
- What is one thing that God provided for you today that you're thankful for?

DAY 5 / THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:12 “and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

We receive forgiveness, and we extend forgiveness. But we don't do so mechanically. We are human beings with emotions navigating the rough waters of real life with God as our helper. To receive forgiveness from the Father brings new life, new hope, and new possibilities. As we graciously receive such forgiveness, we learn to extend it to others. This is what is assumed in this verse—that the forgiven become forgivers. God wants our hearts clean and whole, no matter what has happened to us. He will help us to forgive others, especially when the wounds run very deeply.

Reflect and Pray: God in heaven, please forgive me for my sins, for all my failures and mistakes. I freely admit that I need your love and grace as expressed in your forgiveness. I want to be clean and whole before you, and I wish to live my faith in a way that pleases you. I am committed to forgiving those who have sinned against me, and I ask you, Father, to help me do this well—with honesty and authenticity. This is sometimes very difficult for me, so please be near me and give me the strength to forgive, to let go, and to move on in Jesus' name.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- We all have a debt that we cannot pay on our own. Sin has a high cost and puts us in deep debt. Jesus went through so much to pay our debts and ensure we could be forgiven. That is real love! Why do you think Jesus chose to come to Earth and die for our sins?
- What does Jesus' life and death teach us about forgiveness?
- Why is it important to forgive other people when they hurt us?
- Is there anyone that you are struggling to forgive? Why is it so hard to forgive them?

DAY 6 / THE LORD'S PRAYER



Matthew 6:13a “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

The Bible is very clear that God never tempts anyone, so this means rather that we don't want to give in to temptation, and we need his help to overcome it! We also know that there is much evil in the world, and we wish to stay far off that dark path. We choose to stay close to the Father, who is fully capable of protecting his own, but we cooperate with him by avoiding evil thoughts and pathways. When we do things God's way, allowing him to lead us, we are indeed delivered from the evil one!

Reflect and Pray: Lord Jesus, I want you to lead me today throughout every part of my day. I desperately wish to avoid anything that would damage my soul and cause me to go down dark pathways. Let me be very humble, realizing that no one, including me, is exempt from temptation. I desire to desire you today. Help me, guide me, protect me! I declare that you are my God, and that your ways are my ways. I renounce any and all temptations in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is temptation?
- Have you ever felt tempted? When and how?
- When you feel tempted, what do you do to not give in?
- What helps you resist the temptation?
- How can we actively seek God's help to overcome temptation in our lives?

DAY 7 / THE LORD'S PRAYER



Matthew 6:13b “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

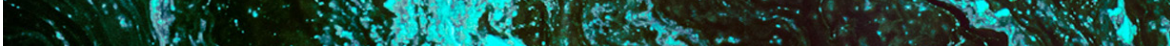
This part of the prayer is an exclamation of praise, which is an appropriate way to address our awesome God. The world is his, true power is his, and all glory is his. When life seems chaotic and even out of control, we remember that God is on his throne, which remains strong and secure forever. When we feel weak and helpless, we remember that our powerful God works on our behalf. When we want to sit around and complain, we remember that we can make a different choice—giving glory to God for who He is and what He’s done.

Reflect and Pray: Our Father in heaven, I declare with all my strength that yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen! You are the one true God, good and powerful and worthy of our praise. Thank you for being strong and secure in a very volatile world. Thank you for lovingly guiding your people through chaotic times and situations. Help me remember just how powerful you are! I want to be fully surrendered to you, Holy Father, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is God the king over?
- What does God have power over?
- What is one thing that you can give God thanks for today?
- Can you say the Lord’s prayer without any help?

DAY 8 / PRAYING SCRIPTURE



Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

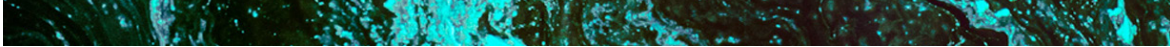
The world is full of anxiety, and it affects each of us in some way. For some people, it's as if it's coursing through their veins. Others deal with sporadic triggers that bring fear or panic. Often people turn to self-destructive coping methods to lessen the anxiety, but these prove fruitless. God has offered us a much better way, one that actually works, that leads to peace. We can turn to God in prayer instead of having a meltdown. We thank him for who He is and what He's done, and then we pour out all of our worries and problems to him. In return, God promises us a peace that passes all understanding.

Reflect and Pray: Lord Jesus, I need the peace that only you can offer. You are the Prince of Peace, and I look to you instead of addictive habits that only bring guilt and shame. I thank you for the gift of life, the gift of salvation, and your presence in my life. God, you give peace to your followers, and it's that peace I need today. Please give rest to my heart and mind, and may I walk in your calm presence today. I surrender all my worries to you, in Jesus' name. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- According to this verse, how many things should we be anxious or worried about?
- When we do begin to feel afraid or worried, what should we do?
- How can we tell God about our requests while also being thankful?
- What does this verse promise God will do if we will bring our fears to Him?
- What is one thing that you've been nervous about recently that you want to bring to God in prayer?

DAY 9 / PRAYING SCRIPTURE



Galatians 5:22-24 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

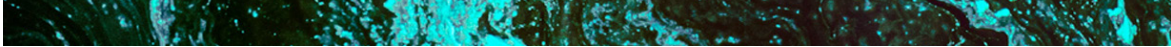
Being a Christian is more about living the right way than about believing “the right things.” Yes, what we believe is important. But if we’re not showing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, then in reality, we’re already not believing the right things. God’s way of doing things is different. It’s upside down. It’s selfless, in the way modeled by our perfect example, Jesus Christ. If we practice the Christian life and seek the Holy Spirit’s leading daily, we will grow and mature and display beautiful qualities. It’s the end result of all who really belong to Jesus.

Reflect and Pray: Lord God, I greatly desire the fruit of the Spirit in my life, and I want to wholly and completely belong to Jesus. I hold nothing back. I surrender my selfish tendencies and desires. I confess my sins and acknowledge my blind spots. I give up my plans for yours, and I choose to follow you daily with intention and regular habits that honor you. May my relationship with you grow into a beautiful example of the with-God life. I allow you full access to my soul, to every crevice of my being, so that I would be yours and yours alone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Today’s Bible reading talks about the fruit of the Spirit. What do you think that means?
- When you read through this list of the fruits of the Spirit, which one do you feel like you struggle with the most?
- When you read through the list of the fruits of the Spirit, which one do you see God already growing in you?
- Do you think that all Christians should be growing in the fruit of the Spirit? Why or why not?
- What can you do if you don’t feel like there is much spiritual fruit growing in your life?

DAY 10 / PRAYING SCRIPTURE



John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

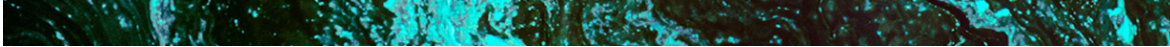
Jesus never commanded us to get our doctrine right, be affiliated with the right political party, be great in ministry, live our best lives, or give all our money away. He did, however, command us to love one another. And He defined that love very clearly—“as I have loved you.” Furthermore, He made it the ultimate sign of discipleship. According to Jesus, people around the world will know that we are his followers if we love one another. As Christians, this is what we strive for—a true Christlike love that defines our lives and relationships.

Reflect and Pray: Dear Jesus, to love others as you loved your disciples is quite the command! You humbly washed their feet, and then you willingly gave up your life for them . . . and for us. You always spoke the truth while showing unbelievable grace, notably to the brokenhearted. You loved unconditionally, you noticed and cared for the marginalized, and you even forgave your enemies. I greatly desire this kind of Christlike love that isn't based on whims and emotions. Help me to love others deeply today—friends, family, coworkers, and especially those I and so difficult.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the new command that Jesus was giving to his followers?
- Why does Jesus think that it's important for the world to see his followers showing love to other people?
- Do you think that non-Christians think that Christians are always loving?
- What is one practical way that you can show love to someone today?

DAY 11 / PRAYING SCRIPTURE



Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

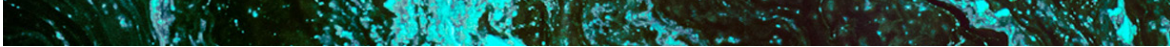
What is the opposite of rest? Strain, stress, restlessness, sleeplessness, insomnia, awakening, disturbance, noise, agitation, clamor. Sound familiar? When we're weary and burdened, it seems impossible to find rest. But we don't need to look to pills and self-help books to find peace and rest. No, Jesus himself is the answer for all who are tired! He wants us to come to him, lay our burdens down, and find new life. He is gentle and humble, and He gives rest to our souls.

Reflect and Pray: Jesus, I confess that I am weary and burdened. I need rest, but not the kind the world gives. I need your rest! Please take my heavy burdens today. I give to you what I was never meant to carry. Thank you for being so loving, humble, and gentle and looking at each of us with deep compassion. I give up and let go, freeing myself of this heaviness, in Jesus' name. I will come to you, Jesus, today and tomorrow and the day after that! I receive your rest, your joy, and the abundant life you offer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What does this verse teach us to do when we are tired?
- What does the verse promise God will do if we come to him when we are tired or have a lot of things on our mind?
- What is a yoke? And, what do you think this verse means by taking Jesus' yoke upon ourselves? (Note: a yoke was a harness used by oxen and other animals to ease the work of hauling a load. A yoke was made of wood, hand-carved to fit the neck and shoulders of the animal to prevent pain or discomfort.)
- How do you think your life would change if you brought all of your burdens to Jesus instead of trying to carry them yourself?

DAY 12 / PRAYING SCRIPTURE



Romans 8:38-39 “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

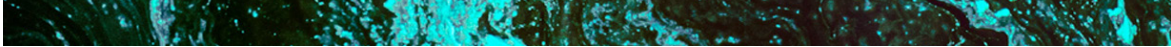
Over 50 years ago, a little farm boy went to a city for a special event with his parents. After the event, this toddler scurried away into the crowd and found himself on an elevator. He ended up on a different floor, separated from his parents. In the ensuing panic, the mother eventually found her little boy in the arms of a kind older gentle-man, waiting patiently for parents to arrive. Do you ever worry that you will find yourself separated from God and his love? Does your past or current life situation cause you fear or doubts about God’s love for you? Remember, the Bible states that nothing will be able to separate you from the love of God.

Reflect and Pray: Gracious Father, I don’t always feel your love. I am so aware of my many mistakes and my faults. Sometimes I wonder, “Do you really love me? Is your love conditional, based on my performance? If I remain imperfect, will you discard me?” I reject all those thoughts today and replace them with the solid truth that nothing—not life experiences, not failures, not fears, and neither the present nor the future—can separate me from your love. I hold onto your truth, to your perfect love, and I am committed to walking in your love today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Have you ever felt like God was really far away?
- Do you think that was true? Or, do you think that God is always with us, even when we can’t feel him?
- What are some of the things listed in this verse that cannot separate us from God?
- Is there anything that could separate us from God’s love?
- What can you do when you don’t feel close to God in order to begin to feel close to Him again?

DAY 13 / PRAYING SCRIPTURE



Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

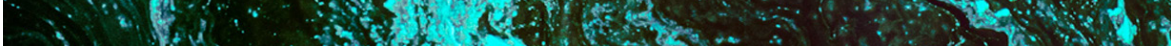
Jesus did not spend a lot of energy complaining about how bad the world had become in his day—and it was pretty bad! The Jews lived under the oppressive Roman government, and the high-standing religious leaders were much more concerned about their own welfare than about the people they were called to serve. What did Jesus do about all that? He healed the sick, gave hope to the hopeless, displayed love and compassion, and lived as the light of the world. Jesus told his followers, “You are the light of the world.” We do not hide, and we do not walk in fear! We boldly and joyfully let our lights shine in the darkness.

Reflect and Pray: Dear Jesus, you are the light of the world, and I want to follow in your steps! Because of your presence in my life, I walk in a grace-filled confidence that doesn't fear the darkness but rather engages it with light and love. Guide me to people and places that desperately need your light, and may I shine with your presence in those moments. Give me eyes to see, ears to hear, and words to speak. I want to shine for you in every area of my life. I withhold nothing from you. I fully submit myself to the light of your truth today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What do you think this verse means when it says that we are the “light of the world?”
- Can you think of ways that you can be a positive influence or “light” in your school or with your friends?
- Why do you think it's important to let your good deeds shine for others to see? How can we do this in a way that is not prideful?
- Who is someone that you know that doesn't know Jesus yet? Is there anything that God might be asking you to do to show them the love of Jesus?

DAY 14 / PRAYING SCRIPTURE



Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Trust is one of those beautiful words that’s easy to say but sometimes very difficult to lean into and fully embrace. It means that we let go of our agendas, our plans, our schedules, and our timelines and let God be God. We acknowledge that his understanding is far greater than our own, that He is always good, and that He is fully capable of working on our behalf. When we fully surrender to God and his ways, then we are living out the truth that He is trustworthy. We don’t need to have things figured out; we just need to submit to him.

Reflect and Pray: My God, there are so many things I do not understand. I confess that far too often I’ve tried to do things my own way, and that has never ended well. I have tried in vain to control things. But today, in Jesus’ name, I let go, and I trust you with everything—the little things, the big things, and the heartbreaking things. I give it all to you, God! I know that you’re good, that you care for me, and that you’re able to do powerful things.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What do these verses mean when they say, “Trust in the Lord with all of your heart?”
- Can you think of a time when you had to trust someone or something completely? How did it feel?
- Why is it important not to just trust our own understanding or wisdom?
- What are some ways that we can teach ourselves to trust God in our daily decisions and actions?
- What is the promise for people who will put their whole trust in God?

DAY 15 / BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS

King David repents. Read Psalm 51:1-11
10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and
renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Although King David was considered a man after God's own heart, he made some big mistakes in his life, including the sin of adultery. When he was confronted with his sin, he owned it and truly repented. He rightly felt deep anguish for his actions, and Psalm 51 is his prayer to God for forgiveness. We too fall short and sometimes in big ways. When that happens, we must turn to God—not away from Him—and confess our sins so we can be clean again and be in right relationship with God and others.

Reflect and Pray: Dear God, I am often reminded of my weaknesses and short-comings. I am deeply sorry for each of my sins. I desire more than a clean feeling again; I really want to follow you with a changed heart and mind. I want my actions to reflect your presence in my life. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and may your Holy Spirit guide me daily. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- In the first few verses in today's passage we see David was pretty upset. He had sinned and was asking God to do something for him. What was he asking God to do?
- When we know we have done something wrong, how does it make us feel?
- What should we do if we are feeling guilty or ashamed of our behavior?
- Do you think that God will always forgive us? Even if our sins are pretty big?
- In verse 10 David asks God to create in him a clean heart. Do you think that as a Christian we should pray this same prayer? Why do you think it's important for us to live with a clean heart?

DAY 16 / BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS

Hannah prays for a child. Read 1 Samuel 1:9-18. 10 In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly.”

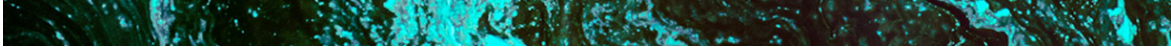
Even good and kind people experience pain and loss in their lives. No one is exempt from life's challenges. The question is not whether we will have heartache in life, for we surely will. Rather, the real question is to whom will we turn in our heartache? In Hannah's case, she desperately longed for a child. She wept before God, and He graciously heard her prayer. If you've experienced grief or loss, God is able to bring new life. He creates, and He re-creates

Reflect and Pray: Dear Jesus, I carry much anguish, just like Hannah did. The pain is too much to bear at times. When the hopelessness sets in, my heart seems heavy and dry. I long for your help in my situation. I need you, and I believe that you really are able to make all things new, to create life where there seems to be none. I commit this concern fully to your care, and I leave the results to you. My heart is now free, and I will continue to trust you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- In the beginning of this passage we see that Hannah is really sad. Do you know why she was so sad?
- It says that Hannah was praying and her lips were moving, but there was no sound coming out. Have you ever cried so hard that you couldn't even say any words?
- What did the priest think was wrong with Hannah when that happened?
- Do you think that God is ok if we pray with that kind of emotion?
- The priest says something really encouraging to her. What did the priest say to Hannah?
- When Hannah left the temple, how did she feel? When we bring our problems to God, we can know that He will hear us! How should that make us feel?

DAY 17 / BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS



God goes before the Israelites. Read Exodus 14:1-28. “13 Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

Have you ever been enslaved by a habit or painful life situation? Maybe you felt as if that thing would follow you forever, always lording over you and eventually destroying you. That’s what the Israelites experienced in this story. The Egyptians had enslaved them over 400 years, and now on their flight out of Egypt, their oppressors were chasing them to enslave them again. The Israelites panicked and expected to die. That’s when Moses told them to be calm and trust in God, and He rescued them in a very dramatic way. God is ready and willing to set you free today from whatever is holding you in bondage. Put your hope and trust in him!

Reflect and Pray: Almighty God, I have been in bondage far too long, and I’m so tired of being a slave. I want to be free for good! I want to leave the chains, darkness, and haunting memories behind me. By choosing to be still in you, I am actually walking toward you with my gaze on you and nothing else. I will follow your lead, and whatever you ask me to do to live in freedom, I will do with all my heart! I will partner with you, God, and I allow myself to be held accountable by mature Christians who love me and want what’s best for me. I choose freedom today!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why were the Israelites leaving Egypt? (Note: to escape slavery and reach the Promised Land)
- How do you think the Israelites felt when they saw Pharaoh’s army coming after them?
- What did Moses tell the people to do in verses 13 and 14? Why do you think this is the advice that Moses gave them?
- How did God help the Israelites escape?
- Has God ever helped you through a difficult situation? How can remembering that situation help you when you face another scary or difficult situation?
- How can we learn to trust in God even when it seems like we’re in an impossible situation?

DAY 18 / BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS

Hezekiah cries out for help against an overwhelming enemy. Read Isaiah 37:1-7.

“1 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord.”

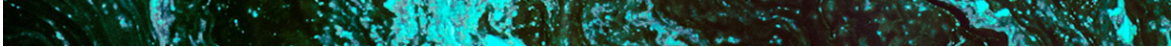
King Hezekiah felt trapped in a dire situation. Humanly speaking, there was little hope, because the powerful Assyrian army planned to crush Judah, just as they had done to other nations. Hezekiah did the only thing to be done—he humbled himself and went into the temple of the Lord, pleading for God to rescue them. There was no human strategy to be employed, for the hour was far too late. God replied, “Do not be afraid!” And He promised to rescue the people of Judah. Do you feel overwhelmed by an urgent situation, one that seems to have no solution? God is good and powerful, and He can intervene!

Reflect and Pray: O God, you know the pressing situation I’m dealing with. You know how fearful I am when I think about it. There are no easy answers to this problem, and I desperately need you to help me. I’m not relying on my own wisdom or strength; I’m totally turning to you. Please give me strength and peace amidst this storm. I’m holding on to you. I have no one else to turn to! I accept that you are God and that you are the only answer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the main story in Isaiah 37?
- Why did King Hezekiah send a message to the prophet Isaiah?
- What did Isaiah tell King Hezekiah in response to his message?
- How did Hezekiah pray to God and what was his request?
- What happened as a result of King Hezekiah’s prayer?
- What can we learn from these verses about prayer and faith in God?

DAY 19 / BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS



Jesus goes to Gethsemane. Read Luke 22:39-46.
“44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.”

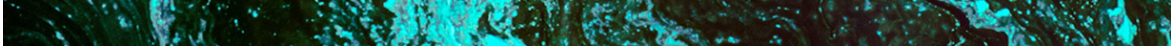
Sometimes we clearly understand that God is asking us to do something—to surrender, to give, to serve, to forgive, to follow, to be quiet—but we need strength and resilience to obey completely. Even Jesus, our perfect example, prayed for strength in doing the Father’s will. We too need divine strength to follow God wholeheartedly, and we can pray for this strength daily.

Reflect and Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, I submit myself completely to your will for every area of my life. I want to hear you, obey you, and follow you without reservation. I am committed to doing the things you want, in your way, and in your timing. Please give me the strength to obey you daily, no matter what my life circumstances are or how my emotions are affecting me. I need your help, your strength, and I humbly ask for it in Jesus’ name..

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What were the disciples and Jesus doing at the Mount of Olives?
- What did Jesus tell the disciples to pray about?
- In this story we see that Jesus was praying “in anguish.” What does that mean? Why do you think Jesus was hurting so much?
- Why was Jesus frustrated with his disciples?
- Do you think it’s important for us to pray? If so, why?

DAY 20 / BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS



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DAY 20 / BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS

King David is exhausted. Read Psalm 6.

“6 I am worn out from my groaning. All night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears.”

“9 The Lord has heard my cry for mercy.”

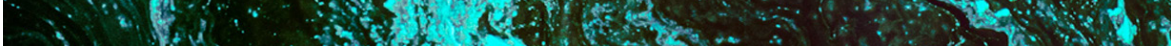
We don't know the exact situation driving King David to exhaustion, but he's acutely aware of his sins and failures. Yes, those kinds of things will drain us of energy and cause a downward spiral. In those times, we go to God, and He hears us. We hold nothing back! We tell God exactly how we feel, and if there's any sin in our heart, we confess it. The result is clear: He hears our cries for mercy. He responds and restores. And He energizes us with new life!

Reflect and Pray: Gracious Heavenly Father, I am tired, worn out, in need of new life. I ask that you come near to me in my exhaustion. Right now I confess any specific sins in my life. I renounce them and turn to you. I believe that Jesus came to bring real life in the midst of real problems and that his ways are better and wiser than my own. I submit myself totally to your purposes, God. Please give me soul rest, deep rest, as I battle exhaustion. I need your mercy, love, and grace today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How does David feel at the beginning of this chapter?
- What does David ask God for?
- Why does David turn to God for help?
- Do you think that God will ever discipline you? If so, why would he do that?
- Have you ever felt like David? When and why?
- Do you think that God is ever annoyed when we're emotional?
- How do you think God feels about our emotions?

DAY 21 / BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS



Nehemiah intercedes for his people. Read Nehemiah 1.
“6 Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you.7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.”

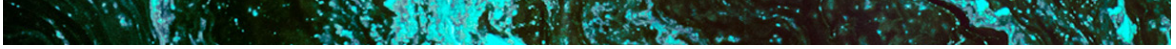
When we see sin rampaging freely across our nation, our hearts should be broken. But this is not about partisan politics and blaming certain groups. It is rather about taking responsibility as a child of God to humble oneself in prayer and cry out for the sins that have seeped into the fabric of our own lives, communities, and ultimately, our nation. Like Nehemiah, we can mourn and pray before the God of heaven, asking for forgiveness and renewal. And when we do this together as brothers and sisters in Christ, the effect is very powerful.

Reflect and Pray: God of heaven, the sins of our nation have piled up and caused a moral rot across the breadth of our land. Please forgive us for our many sins and for choosing to walk in darkness rather than pursue you and your ways. Please have mercy, God! Please turn our hearts and minds back to you as a nation. Breathe upon us again, and send your Holy Spirit. Hear our cries of lament and our desire to walk in your ways. We humbly ask for your renewed presence among us, O God, in Jesus’ name. We need you more than ever before!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- When Nehemiah is praying, he remembers what God had said in the past. Why is it important that we remember God’s words to us and what He’s done in the past?
- In this portion of scripture we see Nehemiah confessing not just his sins, but the sins of the people in his nation. Do you think that we should do that? Why or why not?
- Most of us aren’t probably going to be asking God for a military victory today, but what are some other things that are important that we pray about?
- What is one thing that you think about a lot right now that you would really like to pray about today?
- How can we pray for our nation today?

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR KIDS DURING THE FAST:



ACTIVITY 1: GIVE UP/ FILL UP FASTING ACTIVITY

SUPPLIES: Give Up/ Fill Up slips, 2 paper bags (one marked give up, one marked fill up), labels for bags, scissors

Use this activity to help kids learn that fasting is a way for us to give up something so God can fill us up.

Here's how it works: Give kids two paper bags; one labeled "GIVE UP" and one labeled "FILL UP" and a set of "Give Up, Fill Up" strips. Give them scissors and have them cut their strips apart. Tell them to put the "Give up" strips in the Give Up bag and the "Fill up" strips in the Fill Up bag. All you do is draw one strip of paper from each bag every day. One of the bags has something you will give up. But fasting isn't only about giving things up; it's about filling that space with something you do to fill up with God. So the other bag has something you can do to fill up with God and grow closer to Him.

ACTIVITY 2: GOD CAN FORGIVE ME FROM ALL OF MY SINS

SUPPLIES: ground black pepper, a plate, water, dish soap

When God forgives us, he casts our sins far, far away. He forgives us completely, meaning he doesn't hold any of our sins against us once we repent. He throws them out so far away so that they can't affect us any longer. God's love and forgiveness is also complete- He doesn't hold a grudge, or bring up our past sins later on, saying, "Remember when you did that bad thing?"

Directions: Pour some water into the plate. Sprinkle a bit of pepper all over the water. Dip your finger into some dish soap, and then into the pepper water. The pepper will "magically" spread out, away from the soap. Note: the less pepper you use, the more easily it will spread to the sides.

ACTIVITY 3: TRUST THAT GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF US AND LEAD US

SUPPLIES: Ping pong ball, bendy straw, blow dryer

What do you think will happen if I throw this ping pong ball up? It will fall down right. Let's see. (Throw it up and let it fall) Sometimes this is how we feel. We feel like we are trying really hard to keep things under control, but they keep dropping. (Throw another ball and let it fall) Most of us think that if we just try a little harder (Throw higher) then everything will be ok. (Throw the ball and let it drop each time) And the harder we try the more we seem to fail and eventually we start to lose hope. We start to feel like these things will never get any better. But can I tell you there is something really important you are missing!!!

Look what happens when we give these things to Jesus. He holds them up, He carries the things we cannot carry on our own. (Place the ping pong ball on the hairdryer and switch it on again. The ball should stay up) And you might be saying but that's cool and all but the problems I am facing are way bigger than a ping pong ball. Well let me tell you that Jesus is way more powerful than a hairdryer!

Nothing is too difficult for Jesus. He brings hope to even the most hopeless situations. He brings light to even our darkest moments. Stop trying to do it alone. Trust in Jesus.

ACTIVITY 4: PRAYER WALK

Take a prayer walk around with your family.

Journey Church
1320 E. College Avenue
Normal, IL 61761
309-452-3359
journeybn.com



21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

JANUARY 14 - FEBRUARY 4

