

21-Day Fasting and Prayer Guide

Fasting is a principle that God intended for everyone to be able to enjoy. It's not a punishment; it's a privilege! By making fasting a way of life, you can get closer to God and grow in your spiritual walk like never before. Fasting is one of the most powerful weapons God has given us for our daily lives. Through fasting, you can experience a release from the bondage of sin ... restoration in your relationships ... financial blessings ... spiritual renewal ... supernatural healing and so much more!

Another reward of fasting has to do with your future. God has given you a vision, a divine dream for your life. When you fast, you open up the blessings and opportunities He has provided for you to pursue that dream. As you fast, pray for God's direction and guidance. Focus your faith on your dream and God will show you how you can turn your vision into a reality. Begin pursuing your divine dream today and make the rewards of fasting part of your lifestyle.

When you fast and pray, you will see amazing results from God. You will see godly changes in your home/family, prayers answered in incredible ways, wisdom gained about hard issues, and in it all, you will mostly appreciate that your own desires become secondary to God's. It's all about putting Him first, and letting our Shepherd lead the way all year long. Without a doubt, fasting sets you on a great course every year. Ps 37:23 says, "The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way" (nasb).

Types of fast and what they require.

Broad Types

1. Corporate: This is a called fast done by the Pastor or Leader of a church or group of people. (see 1 Kings 21:9, Ezra 8:21, Ester 4:16) This type of fast requires that the people are on one accord about the fast and will be in compliance to what the Pastor or Leader, by the leading of Holy Spirit has called them to do.

2. Private: This is a personal fast for an individual or husband and wife; lead by the Lord. (see Matthew 6:18)

Specific Types

1. Daniel Fast: No meat, sweet foods, or strong drinks (see Daniel 10:2-3). This can be done for an extended period of time, this could also be considered a vegetarian diet because there is no meat intake.

2. Partial Fast: This would be not eating one main meal you would usually eat on a daily routine, such as breakfast, or lunch, or dinner. This meal would be skipped until the fast was over.

3. Half-Day: Fast until 3 P.M. (ninth hour). This is the fast John Wesley participated in. (see Acts 10:30-31)

4. Complete Fast: This would require you to abstain from all solid foods, liquids only. When Jesus fasted in the desert, the Bible says, "After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry." This verse does not mention Jesus being thirsty. (see Luke 4:1-2)

5. Total Fast: This is a full and complete fast, no food or drink. Acts 9:9 describes when Paul went on a full fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Esther also called for this type of fast in Esther 4:15-16. This type of fast should be done with extreme caution and not for extended periods of time.

6. Juice Fast: This is a fast where only fresh fruits and vegetables are juiced in a juicer. If you can't juice your own fruits or veggies try buying juices without sugar or additives. When using fruits that are acidic, such as lemons, oranges, and even tomatoes dilute them with water for your stomachs sake.

Lengths of Fast

1. Half-Day: see Judges 20:26, Acts 10:30

2. One Day

3. Three Days: see Acts 9:9, Esther 4:15-16

4. Seven Days: see 1 Samuel 31:13

5. Fourteen Days: see Acts 27:33

6. Twenty One Days: see Daniel 10:3

7. Forty Days: see 1 Kings 19:8, Luke 4:1-2

NOTE: The length of the fast should be dependent on three factors – 1. Your health, 2) God's leading, and 3) Type of fast. **USING WISDOM IS ALWAYS IMPORTANT IN FASTING.**

Other activities to commitment to Fasting

Although not mentioned in the Bible we as Christians today can also commit to fasting from other activities:

- a. Electronics
- b. Computers
- c. TV
- d. Video games
- e. Limited cell phone use if possible.
- f. Try to give up some entertainment like sports and movies and focus more on prayer and studying the Word of God during the times we do some of the mentioned activities.

Other Food items to Avoid during Your Fast

- a. Avoid caffeinated drinks.
- b. Avoid chewing gum and mints even if your breath is bad. Drink decaffeinated mint tea to assist with your breath.

*These items stimulate digestive action in your stomach and may make you feel hungry.

Why Pray?

Praying to our Heavenly Father, in the Name of Jesus Christ, using God's Holy Word (scripture) in prayer is the most powerful thing we can do for ourselves and others. *The heart of prayer is the will of our Heavenly Father. Part of that will is simply coming to Him. He desires us, as His dear children to know Him. He desires your love, your attention, your fellowship (more than just being related to Him through Jesus), He also desires a time of communion, an intimate time of personal exchange and involvement, and finally a release of His will and manifest Presence in the earth through prayer.*

As you pray for your needs and the needs of others, you are actually becoming a prayer warrior, an intercessor, just as Jesus was and is today for each of us. Jesus is constantly interceding for us to our Heavenly Father. It is written that Jesus was sent to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John 3:8. We are to do the same. We have the power and authority through Jesus Christ. All we have to do is live in the promise of the Word of God and to use His precious Name.

The most powerful weapons we have are the Name of Jesus Christ and God's Holy Word against Satan and his demons. No power of darkness can stand against the Word of God in the Name of Jesus Christ, and through the Blood of Jesus Christ.

The importance of confessing our sins and worshipping God, according to the Word of God: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalms 66:18. "We know that God does not listen to sinners: but if anyone is God-fearing and a worshipper of Him and does His will, He listens to him." John 9:31.

The following devotionals were used with permission from:
James River Church in Ozark, MO

Day 1: Focus on God's Might

Devotional

Today we begin 21 days of fasting and prayer. Today we set our sights on seeing God's supernatural power collide with the natural world as He responds to our prayers! Today we begin believing for mountains to move! The foundation for this kind of confident expectation comes straight out of God's Word and from the mouth of Jesus, when he said in Matthew 21:21–22, “even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

That's an extraordinary promise! Yet, too often we can find ourselves obsessing over the size of the mountain instead of reflecting on the magnitude of God's might. Max Lucado gives great wisdom in writing, “Don't measure the size of the mountain; talk to the One who can move it.” Instead of giving our time and energy to rehashing how huge our problems are, let's take God at His word and ask him to supernaturally show up and show off in our situations.

Whatever you need God to do, start this time of fasting and prayer by meditating on God's miraculous power!

Nothing is too hard for him!

Scriptures

Jeremiah 32:17 (ESV) ‘Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

Matthew 21:21–22 (ESV) And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”

Day 2: Depending on God Through Prayer and Fasting

Devotional

One of the most stunning statements about the significance of fasting comes from the mouth of Jesus in Mark chapter nine. The scene is a chaotic spectacle of finger-pointing and frustration. A weary father had brought his demon tormented son to Jesus' disciples only to be disappointed by the absence of the power they were proclaiming. It's in this moment of confusion that Jesus shows up not only with supernatural authority but also with spiritual instruction.

Mark tells us that after the boy was delivered, "[Jesus'] disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" He replied, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." (Mark 9:28b-29)

Most translations make a note in the margin that only some manuscripts of the New Testament include "fasting," but as biblical scholar, Alan Cole notes, "There is some good... evidence for the addition of prayer and fasting at this point." The fact of the matter is this passage is all about dependence on God, and there is nothing like fasting to call our attention to our need for God. Jesus is calling the disciples to a place of greater spiritual dependence.

During these 21 days, one of the best things that will happen is that you will become more and more aware of your absolute dependence on God. No matter who you are, you cannot do what God has called and created you to do without His empowering presence!

Scripture

John 15:4-5 ESV

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Day 3: Doing Battle

Devotional

No matter what you are fasting, but especially if you are fasting food, day three tends to be difficult. It can seem like every reason to quit shows up in force. But it's important to remember that the reason fasting is a battle is because we are doing battle. Prayer and fasting accelerates God's victory in our lives as we take the fight out of the realm of pure physicality and bring it squarely into the space where it is actually won—the spiritual realm.

All of us will have battles in our lives, but the question is, how will we respond to these battles? In 2 Chronicles 20, King Jehoshaphat was confronted with a “vast army” who had the power to devastate his nation. Many would have assumed his problem was purely physical—it seemed like an issue of military might, battle plans, state-of-the-art weaponry, number of troops, and strategic leadership. But, Jehoshaphat correctly concluded the conflict was spiritual.

So, what did he do? He called the people to fast and pray, and notice how God responded, “Do not be afraid or discouraged by this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's” (2 Chronicles 20:15). Whatever you are facing, we serve a God who wants to fight our battles! Fasting may feel hard today, but with every hunger pang you feel, be reminded not only that you are doing battle but, as you fast, God is bringing the victory!

Scriptures

2 Chronicles 20:2-3 ESV

Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar” (that is, Engedi). Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

2 Chronicles 20:15-17 ESV

And he said, “Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the Lord to you, ‘Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you.”

2 Chronicles 20:25 ESV

When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found among them, in great numbers, goods, clothing, and precious things, which they took for themselves until they could carry no more. They were three days in taking the spoil, it was so much.

Day 4: Fasting and the Power of Praise

Devotional

Yesterday, the story of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20 reminded us that God fights for us when we do battle through prayer and fasting, but that is not the only insight we get from that passage. Verse 21 tells us, as they were preparing to fight, “Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise Him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out to the head of the army saying, ‘Give thanks to the Lord, for his Love endures forever.’”

Praise paved the way for victory. The Bible says, “As they began to sing and praise,” the Lord began to defeat the enemy. The people’s posture of praise released God’s power in the midst of the battle!

One of the most important things we can do is spend time thanking and worshiping God. Don’t just pray about the problem, but praise God through the problem. Right now, praise Him in advance for bringing the victory. No matter the conflict we face, celebrating who God is and what He is going to do always opens the door for His miraculous power to be unleashed in our lives!

Scriptures

2 Chronicles 20:20-21 ESV

And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed.” And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, “Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.”

Psalms 68:1-10 NET

God springs into action! His enemies scatter; his adversaries run from him. As smoke is driven away by the wind, so you drive them away. As wax melts before fire, so the wicked are destroyed before God. But the godly are happy; they rejoice before God and are overcome with joy. Sing to God! Sing praises to his name! Exalt the one who rides on the clouds! For the Lord is his name! Rejoice before him! He is a father to the fatherless and an advocate for widows. God rules from his holy palace. God settles those who have been deserted in their own homes; he frees prisoners and grants them prosperity. But sinful rebels live in the desert. O God, when you lead your people into battle, when you march through the desert, (Selah) the earth shakes, yes, the heavens pour down rain before God, the God of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel. O God, you cause abundant showers to fall on your chosen people. When they are tired, you sustain them, for you live among them. You sustain the oppressed with your good blessings, O God.

Day 5: Empowered for the Impossible

Devotional

Someone once said, “faith sees the invisible; faith hears the inaudible; faith does the impossible.” But, what pathway does faith travel to see the impossible realized?

In 1 Kings 17, the nation of Israel is no longer experiencing the blessing of God in their lives and on their land. The people have followed their king, Ahab, into paganism and idolatry. But, in the midst of their national rebellion, God sends a prophet named Elijah to King Ahab. 1 Kings 17:1 says, “Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, “As surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the word!” And for three and a half years, it didn’t rain a drop. Finally, Elijah presents himself to King Ahab and challenges him and his false prophets to a showdown in order to prove that there is one true God. After God demonstrates his power by sending fire from heaven, there is national repentance, and Elijah tells King Ahab that the miracle of no rain is about to become the miracle of rain.

After more than three years of extreme drought, it had to seem totally impossible that rain could begin falling at a moment’s notice. So, what did Elijah do? What path did his faith take him? In 1 Kings 18:42, we read, “So Ahab went to eat and drink. But Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and bowed low to the ground and prayed with his face between his knees.” It seems clear that Elijah knows what God’s will is, but he also recognizes the necessity of praying God’s will into existence. And he does that by fasting. Notice that he sends Ahab to eat and drink, but he climbs Mount Carmel to pray. Verse 45 says, “And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.”

This story reminds us that simply knowing God’s will is not enough. God’s desire is that we would pray his will into existence in our lives. Whether you are believing for God to do the impossible in your life, your marriage, your family or your job, fasting and prayer is often the God-ordained pathway that faith travels to put your miracle in motion.

Scriptures

1 Kings 17:1 ESV

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”

1 Kings 18:41-45 ESV

And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain.” So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” And he went up and looked and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go again,” seven times. And at the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud like a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.’” And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.

Day 6: Just Like Us

Devotional

In the New Testament, James makes an interesting observation about the story we looked at yesterday when he writes, “Elijah, for instance, human just like us, prayed hard that it wouldn’t rain, and it didn’t—not a drop for three and a half years” (James 5:17, The Message).

If we’re not careful, we can easily place the people in Scripture on a pedestal. We can feel they do life in a different dimension. But, the Bible reminds us again and again of what James makes crystal clear—men and women who populate the pages of Scripture, like Elijah, were just like us. They had the same struggles. They had good days and bad days. They had wins and losses. They had ups and downs. They were just like us, but James includes a critical component of Elijah’s life that led him to experiencing God’s power in his life. He “prayed hard.”

God didn’t halt the rain because Elijah was such a great guy. God halted the rain because he prayed with faith-filled passion. For James, Elijah is a shining example of what he writes in chapter five and verse six, “The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. ” (James 5:16b, NIV).

When we recognize that the heroes of the faith in the Bible were just like us, it will change the way we pray. We will pray with the confidence that the same God who came through for them will come through for us!

Scriptures

James 5:16b-18 ESV

The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

Hebrews 4:16 ESV

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Acts 10:34 (ESV)

So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality.”

Day 7: All About Appetite

Devotional

Fasting is all about appetite. The writer of Hebrews says, “Watch out for the Esau syndrome: trading away God’s lifelong gift in order to satisfy a short-term appetite” (Hebrews 12:16, MSG).

In Genesis 25, we read that Esau came home famished from hunting, and noticed that his brother, Jacob, was cooking. As you would expect, he asked for some of the food. Jacob offered a trade – he would give Esau his stew if Esau gave Jacob his birthright (note: a birthright was the right to the inheritance and spiritual leadership of the family). Here’s the crazy part, Esau accepted the deal. It seems bizarre that Esau would sacrifice something so valuable for something so small, but the truth is, it happens to all of us. We can find ourselves settling for less for the sake of satisfying short-term appetites.

Fasting is all about appetite.

Fasting is ultimately a declaration of what our greatest appetite is and what we believe will ultimately satisfy us. This is precisely why God honors fasting and works so powerfully through it. In his book, *A Hunger for God*, John Piper writes, “God rewards fasting because fasting expresses the cry of the heart that nothing on the earth can satisfy our souls besides God. God must reward this cry because God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”

Scriptures

Genesis 25:19-34 ESV

These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said to her,

“Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.”

When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.) Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” Jacob said, “Swear to me now.” So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Day 8: Daily Direction

Devotional

The average adult makes 35,000 decisions a day, which means you will make 735,000 during this fast! From the moment your alarm sounds, your decision-making process begins. With so many decisions to make, it can be hard to know where to spend your time, but the Apostle Paul points us toward one daily decision that will change the trajectory of every other decision we make.

Paul writes to the Thessalonian Christians, “Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, NLT).

He calls them (and us) to pray continually, because talking to God realigns our thinking and our priorities in a way that directly impacts every decision we make. One of the wonderful things about a season of fasting is that it helps us to put Paul’s words into practice because our empty stomachs remind us to!

In the 35,000 decisions you’ll make today and 735,000 you’ll make during this fast, make it a priority to invite God’s direction into every part of your day. Be encouraged that in these 21 days, you are going to experience God’s leading in every area of your life as you draw close to Him!

Scriptures

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Psalms 37:23

The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way;

Proverbs 3:6

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 16:9

The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

Day 9: The Kind of Fasting God Honors

Devotional

The issue of motive was at the heart of Jesus' first words on fasting. We see this in Matthew, chapter six. Jesus said, "But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you" (Matthew 6:17–18, NLT).

So, is Jesus saying that no one should ever know you are fasting? The short answer is no, but the fact of the matter is a spiritual activity, like fasting, can become an attempt to seek the admiration and applause of people. Jesus understood this pitfall and wanted us to avoid it. Instead of worrying about others, our focus should be on seeking the God who knows our hearts.

John Wesley declared, "First, let [fasting] be done unto the Lord with our eye singly fixed on him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven." The kind of fasting that God honors is about putting our focus on Him. And when we do that, Jesus promises that God will see what others cannot and reward it!

As we continue in our 21 days of prayer and fasting, continue to make God's attention your aim and be encouraged that He is going to reward you as a result of this season!

Scriptures

Matthew 6:16–18 NLT

"And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

2 Corinthians 5:9 ESV

So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

Galatians 1:10 NLT

Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.

Day 10: Nearness

Devotional

Fasting is about nearness. Stop for a minute and consider Jesus' words in Matthew 9. Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast" (Matthew 9:15, NLT).

Jesus' analogy was all about nearness. He referred to Himself as the groom in a wedding party. At the moment Jesus spoke these words, His disciples were experiencing in-person communion with the Son of God, but Jesus knew there was coming a day when that nearness would be interrupted. And that day started the moment Jesus ascended to Heaven after His resurrection and continues right into the present. Though Jesus is present with us through the person of the Holy Spirit, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:8, "We [would] prefer to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord." In other words, every Christian experiences a kind of homesickness for the Savior.

John Piper writes, "In this age there is an ache and a longing... inside every Christian that Jesus is not here as fully and intimately and as powerfully and as gloriously as we want him to be. And that is why we fast." When we long to draw closer to God and experience His empowering presence more fully than we are, fasting is the right response.

During this time of fasting and prayer, we are acknowledging with our hunger that we want to be closer, and that is a cry that God will honor!

Scriptures

Matthew 9:14-15 ESV

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

James 4:8a ESV

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Day 11: The Certainty of Change

Devotional

Maybe you've heard it said that "the only constant in life is change." Much truth rests in that simple statement because things around us always seem to be changing. Whether it's the constant change in technology or going from one season to another, we know that change is inevitable.

When we look at the stories throughout Scripture, we often see that new and spiritually significant seasons in people's lives were preceded by fasting. Moses fasted before he received the law and Jesus fasted before the start of his earthly ministry. Acts 13:2 shows us how fasting can bring new ministry into our lives: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off."

Through praying and fasting, new ministry began for the church in the New Testament and you never know what the Lord will speak to you regarding your future as you fast! There is one thing you can be sure of – whatever change the Lord brings, you can live with a holy expectation of great things. God won't send you without an anointing and preparation for what is to come.

Scriptures

Acts 13:2

"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off."

Exodus 34:28

So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Matthew 4:2

And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Day 12: Supernatural Results Are on Their Way!

Devotional

Prayer and fasting are some of the key ways we can accelerate the Lord's blessing in our lives. But, these spiritual disciplines also cultivate a greater sensitivity to God's voice and open our eyes to what God is doing in the unseen.

Daniel 10 provides an incredible story that gives us a behind-the-scenes look at what takes place in the supernatural realm when we are fasting. After receiving an upsetting vision of the future, Daniel decides to fast and pray for 21 days. The results are unbelievable.

On day 24, three days following the fast, Daniel's spiritual eyes and ears are opened as he sees and talks with the brilliance of the pre-incarnate Christ! Through this miraculous encounter, Daniel is given supernatural strength and insight into the future because he prayed and fasted! "And he said, 'O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage,'" (Daniel 10:19).

God wants to strengthen his people, and fasting helps bring that supernatural strength! Even when your body feels weak from fasting, know that God is strengthening you spiritually!

What situation have you been praying for but have yet to see answered? Whether it's the restoration of a broken relationship, the salvation of a relative or co-worker, or a breakthrough financially, fasting is the path for believers to see and hear from God. As you are fasting and praying, remember, supernatural results are on their way!

Scriptures

Daniel 10

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

Day 12 continued...

And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me."

Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince."

Day 13: Since Day One

Devotional

Yesterday we looked at the story of Daniel's 21-day fast in Daniel 10. The passage reaches a pivotal moment in verse 12 where we gain significant insight into the power of prayer and fasting, "Then he said to me, 'Fear not, Daniel, for from the *first day* that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.'"

Daniel, speaking with the pre-incarnate Christ, is given supernatural understanding into what's been happening in the spiritual realm during his fast. Jesus tells him the very first day he began fasting; things began to change. As we read on, we discover that the Lord was fighting for Daniel in the unseen world from the moment that he humbled himself before God in prayer and fasting.

The Apostle Paul writes about the reality of spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:12, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." There are powers and forces constantly working in the spiritual realm in ways that we cannot see and that we may never understand on this side of eternity.

Sometimes when we're fasting, it might feel as though nothing is happening. But God wants us to know that since the *FIRST DAY* we began the fast, things began to change. Your situation might not look like it's changed yet, but Daniel and the Apostle Paul remind us that even though we can't see it, we can know that God is fighting for us and victory is coming!

Scriptures

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Daniel 10

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

Day 13 continued...

And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me."

Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince."

Day 14: All the Strength You Need

Devotional

Have you ever tried to carry something that looked lighter than it actually was and ended up needing help from others to lift it? Maybe it was a boxed item off the shelf at a store, or maybe it was a piece of furniture at your house. Maybe it wasn't something physical you needed help with, as much as it was emotional and spiritual. Maybe you felt the weight of the pandemic on an emotional and mental level and were in need of strength outside yourself.

In the same way, there is nothing like fasting to remind you of your weakness, but there is also nothing like fasting to remind you where real strength is found. The Psalmist points us to the true source of strength when he declares in Psalm 62:11, "God said this once and for all; how many times have I heard it repeated? 'Strength comes straight from God'" (MSG).

At times, all of us can live under the illusion that we have what it takes to handle whatever comes our way, but seasons of fasting remind us that only through dependence on God can we truly overcome. In John 15:5, Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (NIV). And the Apostle Paul reminds us that Christ is our source of strength in every season and situation, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13)!

God has all the strength you need, and as you seek Him, you will see His strength flow into your life in a new and dynamic way. So, as you continue this fast be encouraged that though you may feel weak, He is making you stronger.

Scriptures

Psalm 62:11 (ESV)

Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,

Psalm 28:7 (ESV)

The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Isaiah 40:29 (ESV)

He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Day 15: Great Expectations

Devotional

Expectation [ex-pec-ta-tion] *noun*: a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future.

One of the results of the time we spend in prayer and fasting is an increase in our expectation of God's work in our lives. In other words, our faith grows! Spending time in God's presence has a way of strengthening and recharging these expectations. In fact, it's God's will that we would live with great expectation that we are going to experience his miraculous power. His Word is full of promises that declare how God always has our best interests in mind. This is the testimony throughout Scripture:

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Psalms 27:13

Yet I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness while I am here in the land of the living.

Philippians 4:19

And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 2:9

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him."

There is a holy confidence that comes as a result of spending time seeking the Lord. So, whatever you're praying and believing for, live with great expectation and certainty that God is going to move!

Scriptures

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Psalms 27:13

Yet I am confident I will see the LORD's goodness while I am here in the land of the living.

Day 16: Seeing and Seizing

Devotional

America is known as the land of opportunity. The potential of upward mobility in this nation has drawn and continues to draw many to USA. The reality is each day is filled with opportunities. And with these opportunities comes the need to identify and make wise choices for our lives.

That's why the Apostle Paul provides this helpful guidance to us as believers in both Ephesians and Colossians:

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV)

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, *making the most of every opportunity*, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NLT)

Live wisely among those who are not believers, and *make the most of every opportunity*. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

In both passages, Paul points back to how we live as a key to making the most of every opportunity. Making the most of every opportunity means you'll say no to good things so you can say yes to the best things, and that's exactly what we are doing during these 21 days. We are saying no to things we want, so we can receive something even better. As you position yourself to hear from the Lord, you are setting yourself up to see and seize the incredible opportunities He has for you!

Scriptures

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV)

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, *making the most of every opportunity*, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NLT)

Live wisely among those who are not believers, and *make the most of every opportunity*. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

Psalms 32:8

The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."

Day 17: This is Your Time

Devotional

In the book of Esther, we read an incredible story of how prayer and fasting bring justice and protection to thousands of people whose lives were at risk of death. The mighty king of Persia made a proclamation that would annihilate the Jewish people living in the land – all as a result of a Jewish man named Mordecai’s refusal to bow to Haman, the king’s chief official.

Mordecai then sends a message to Queen Esther, who is in a position to speak to the king on behalf of the Jewish people, and in verse 14, he writes a letter to her saying, “And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this.” Esther understood the weight of what was happening and immediately called for a fast. For three days and nights, the Jewish people fasted and prayed that the king’s heart might be changed, resulting in the reversal of his order to kill the Jews. Through what can only be described as a divine intervention, thousands of lives were saved!

It would be a mistake for us to think that our prayer and fasting couldn’t make an impact as significant as what we read in Esther 4. You might need a situation to change but are powerless to make that happen. Perhaps you need a circumstance to turn a corner that is out of your hands. Or maybe a decision has been made, and you are desperate to see God bring about a reversal.

The truth is, your time of fasting and prayer has the power to change the hearts of people in your family, your workplace, and your city! This is your time to see God work miracles so amazing that the only explanation will be God’s mighty power came as a result of your dedication to seeking him wholeheartedly!

Scriptures

Esther 4 ESV

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. He went up to the entrance of the king’s gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king’s gate clothed in sackcloth. And in every province, wherever the king’s command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther’s young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.

Day 17 continued...

Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people. And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say, “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.”

And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.” Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Day 18: Beginning with Gratitude

Devotional

Studies consistently demonstrate that some of the happiest people on earth are those who excel in showing gratitude. The more a person is thankful and can show their gratefulness to others, the happier they become! Throughout Scripture, we see this truth as more than a result in a scientific study; it is in the very fabric of who God created and desires us to be. Psalm 100:4 calls us to “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!”

One of the keys to prayer and fasting is gratitude. Before we ask God for a single thing, we should start by thanking Him for what He has already done! Psalm 143:5 says, “I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands.”

Looking back at what God has done in our lives serves as a reminder of all the ways God has been faithful. And when we remind ourselves about how good God is, we can’t help but thank him! As we enter into God’s presence with thanksgiving and praise, we will experience even more of his joy and true happiness in our lives!

Scriptures

Psalm 100:4

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

Psalm 107:1

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

Psalm 143:5

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands.

Psalm 77:11

But then I recall all you have done, O LORD; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.

Day 19: Keep On Asking

Devotional

According to new studies by the CDC, nearly 40% of Americans eat fast food each day. This trend continues to rise as more people desire a quick meal option during their day to meet the demands of their on-the-go lifestyle. In our fast-paced society, if we're not careful, we can put the same expectations on God as to how and when our prayers should be answered – our way, right away.

God desires to move in and through our prayer life, but his way is not always the way we would envision it. Jesus provided instruction for us when it comes to how we should approach prayer. He says this in Matthew 7:7-8, "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."

Seems easy, right? Jesus promises that we will receive when we ask, but actually receiving the answer is far from instant most times. And in the waiting, we must remember the words of Jesus and "keep on asking." A continuous, never-giving-up attitude takes root in our hearts as we press through because God desires to do more in us through the process. But we can rest assured, even when we don't see the answer in our timing, we can be confident that God will answer!

Scriptures

Matthew 7:7-8

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Day 20: God Will Do More

Devotional

The Israelites had been held in captivity by the Babylonians for over seventy years, exiled from their homes and the land God had given them. After decades of displacement and servitude to foreign kings, something remarkable happened. A rival king, Cyrus of Persia, captured the Babylonian territory, including Jerusalem. Then miraculously, he let the Israelites return home. We learn in the book of Nehemiah that when the Israelites returned home, the city was in great disrepair.

Nehemiah hears about the condition of the city and is grieved by the report. He plans to take his request to the king to help repair the walls of Jerusalem but knows if the king is displeased with his request, he could lose his position as cupbearer and even face execution. Nehemiah is desperate for a favorable response from the king, so he fasts and prays.

Nehemiah 1:4 says, “As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.”

Nehemiah’s praying and fasting resulted in an unprecedented response from the king. Not only did the king allow him to go help in the repair, but sends security and timber with him to help with the reconstruction!

God delights to do more than we can ask or imagine, especially when we choose to humble ourselves and pray. You can rest assured that not only is God going to answer as you continue to seek him, but he’s going to answer in even bigger and better ways than you could have ever thought possible!

Scriptures

Nehemiah 1

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel, that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.” As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, “O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.

Day 20 Continued...

Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.' They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Day 21: Mountains Will Move

Devotional

In Exodus 33, we find a fascinating story of the people of Israel who were camped out in the desert, waiting to go into the promised land. During that waiting period, Moses would pitch a tent outside the camp, which he called “the tent of meeting.” It was here he would spend time seeking the Lord.

Each time Moses left the camp to go to the tent of meeting, the people would stand at the entrance of their tents to watch him as he passed by. Now, this is a guy who was facing some major mountains. He had enemies to fight, battles to win, and a nation to lead. And as he walked out of the camp, there had to be a million things on his mind. He would have passed by people awaiting his decision, people needing wisdom; there would have been as many complex problems as there were people in the crowd. But despite all his responsibilities, Moses left all these distractions behind to go to the tent of meeting and spend time in the presence of the Lord.

Scripture says, “Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend” (v.11a NLT). In Hebrew, the word used for “face” symbolizes not just someone’s appearance but also the very essence of who that person is. It identifies who they truly are. Moses did not simply seek the hand of God; he sought to know God.

This time of fasting hasn’t merely been about getting an answer but about drawing closer to God than ever before. If we are going to see battles won and mountains moved, it will be our nearness to God that makes all the difference!

As we finish these 21 days, if we have made it our goal to get closer to Him, we will see mountains moved!

Scriptures

Exodus 33:7–10 (ESV)

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.