

Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church

Rev. Brian D. Hunter, M.A., Pastor - Teacher

FACE TO FACE

21 Days of Prayer & Fasting



BERKELEY MT. ZION MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH | REVEREND BRIAN D. HUNTER, PASTOR-TEACHER
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Missionary Baptist Church



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I am truly excited about the possibilities the new year will bring. What better way to start the new year than by prayer and fasting. I am asking the Berkeley Mt. Zion Family to partner with me as we embark on 21 days of prayer and fasting. We have designed this time for consecration, strength, revelation, and direction as we seek God concerning our personal lives and the life of this ministry. Beginning Wednesday, January 11th - Tuesday Jan. 31st we will participate in our 21 Days of Breakthrough Prayer and Fasting.

Prayer Component

As we begin our 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting please use your daily S.O.A.P. (Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer) as a guide during the fast.

Join our 6:00am Prayer Call - (425) 436-6329

Access Code: 462995

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21 DAYS

of Prayer & Fasting

Fasting Component

Fasting is a spiritual discipline to help me focus on my walk and relationship with God. “We give up to grow up.” Fasting is giving up something to grow up in an area of your walk with God. The ultimate goal of fasting is to draw closer to God. Fasting is not a bribe. We don’t fast to bribe God, to show Him what I’ve done for you and now you need to do something for me. Fasting is not a diet, though you may lose weight during a fast. A fast is not a weapon. You don’t fast to get back at someone. But a fast allows us to abstain from something that appeals to our flesh that we might focus on something spiritual. We will fast every Wednesday beginning Wednesday, January 11, 2023, we will observe 21-Days of Prayer and Fasting. During this time we abstain from certain foods or activities as a means to deny our flesh and draw closer to God. Whatever you decide to fast from, it should be a REAL sacrifice. For some it's finances, for others it may be TV or social media. If you are not sure that you can fast from food or have medical restrictions please consult your doctor first or simply choose to fast from something else.

Please make sure your fast is safe and healthy for YOU!

DAY 01 // 2 Chronicles 29:34

“The priests, however, were too few to skin all the burnt offerings; so, their relatives the Levites helped them until the task was finished and until other priests had been consecrated, for the Levites had been more conscientious in consecrating themselves than the priests had been.”

Observation

In chapter 29 of 2 Chronicles, King Hezekiah did not waste time during his reign. In the first month of his reign, he ordered the priests and the Levites to repair the temple and clean it from defiled items so the temple doors could be opened again. King Hezekiah chose to do what was right in the eyes of the LORD, although King Ahaz, his wicked father, had raised him. It was said that King Hezekiah’s father was so wicked that he had his son pass through the fire, which some say meant he sacrificed his son by fire to the god, Moloch. Like King Hezekiah, the priests and the Levites had a choice to make. Both were given the same assignment, but the Levites were more conscientious, attentive, ready, and cheerful about consecrating themselves than the priests.

Application

As we apply God’s Word, remember God can always see your heart before your hands even touch your assignment. Your posture, disposition, motives, attitude, and intention behind what you do are more important than what you do. The priests and the Levites were asked to do the same thing – consecrate themselves and the temple; however, one chose to take the assignment more seriously than the other.

As you begin day 1 of the fast and consecration, be like the Levites - conscientious, excited, and serious about the next 21 days. See this as an opportunity to spend time with God, seeking and praying about what He wants you to do and what He wants you to stop doing. Have the proper posture, motives, and attitude while fasting, and ask God to consecrate you not only for 2022 but also for your entire life. Be prepared in your heart

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first so that your life is dedicated to not only serving God exactly where and the way He desires but also serving Him with a clean heart.

Prayer

Father, I pray that I would enter the next 21 days more conscientious than ever about this time of consecration, fasting, and prayer. Change me in such a way that impacts my life so that my destiny will shatter the ceiling of my life and move me to the next level You have for me. Prune and prepare me, and then position me so that in Your timing, I put into action everything that You have assigned me to do. And LORD...may my walk continue to be a stark contrast from the way I used to live before You entered my life and saved me. In Jesus name, I pray, amen.

DAY 02 // Daniel 10:17-19

“How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe.” Again, the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. “Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,” he said. “Peace! Be strong now; be strong.”

Observation

In this passage, Daniel prayed to God, and it seemed as though there was no hope. It seemed as though God did not hear him or as though God had forgotten him. Daniel pleaded, prayed, fasted, and nothing happened! As time went on, Daniel became weaker and weaker. Finally, God revealed to Daniel that he heard him from the beginning, but evil forces were working against him. In fact, not only did God hear him, but He was also working behind the scenes the whole time and left Daniel with peace, strength, and assurance that He would fight Daniel’s battle.

Application

There are times in our life when we pray and feel like it has fallen on deaf ears. It feels like we are alone, and God is nowhere to be found. However, this passage reveals to us

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that God hears the prayers, pleas, and petitions of His people. You might be waiting on God now and feeling like He has forgotten you, but we serve a God who often works behind the scenes for our benefit and His glory. In the meantime, we must receive the peace and strength that only comes from Him. On day 2 of this fast, remember our God is faithful!

Prayer

Father, there are times when I am waiting on You and wondering if You even care. Do You hear me? Are You still there? While I trust You to work behind the scenes on my behalf, please give me peace and strength. You are my sustainer, so I put my faith and trust in You! In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 03 // Matthew 6:21

“Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”

Observation

Earlier in the passage, Jesus is teaching the disciples how to pray. He tells them to pray, “May Your Kingdom come soon. May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (vs. 10). It is as if God is reminding us not to get too wrapped up in what this world values and lose sight of His values. The more we are focused on the Kingdom of God being manifested here on earth, our treasures, and the things we value, begin to reflect the heart of God more than selfish ambition.

Application

On day 3 of this fast, let's take a moment to reassess our values and our treasures. Do they reflect the Kingdom of God, or have we become so impacted by this world's system that we value it more than we do the Lord?

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Trust me; it is so easy to get caught up. Social media, television, YouTube, the radio, etc., are all around us. We can also become so influenced by the multitude of messages streaming through these mediums that we lose focus of what the voice of God sounds like. Perhaps this is a time for you to reconnect with God and make sure that your treasures align with what He treasures. Let the Kingdom of God manifest on earth as it is in Heaven, through your life!

Prayer

Lord, please give me discernment. Please show me what is helping me and what is hindering me. I want to treasure what You treasure, and I want a heart that is pure and devoted to You. As I move into this time of prayer and fasting, change me, cleanse me, redirect me, and realign me. Show me those areas I could not see before, and I thank You now that on the other side of this fast, I will be able to say, “My heart reflects God’s heart.” By Your grace, I can and will be the person You have already designed and empowered me to be. In Jesus’ name, I pray, amen.

DAY 04 // Romans 12:2

“Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”

Observation

Don’t just go along with what everyone is doing without putting any thought into it. This passage tells us to be deliberate and stay focused on what God is telling you to do. When you follow God’s instructions, you will experience a total transformation from the inside. The world does not offer this kind of change. God wants to rebuild, develop and mature you.

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Application

It is important to regularly read the Bible and pray. When we do these two things consistently, it is easier to distinguish the difference between the voice of the culture and the voice of God. It is easy to get caught up in the things of the world without giving much thought to it or question- ing why we are doing it. We need to slow down enough to think about where this will lead us. As believers, we are in the world but should not be swept up in all the hype, music, social media, fashion, and idols of the day. People should look and talk to us and see a notable difference. How will this fast be different from last year? On day 4 of this fast, what spiritual disciplines, patterns, or rhythms will you cultivate this year to develop your spiritual walk?

Prayer

Father, I desire to follow Your path and not the ways of the world. I pray that I hear Your voice over everything competing for my attention. May Your Word be a lamp to my feet and guide me. May my heart be filled with Your Word, and I choose to follow the path You have for me. I pray that I experience the transforming power of Your Word in this season. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 05 // Galatians 5:16-17

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other so that you are not to do whatever you want.”

Observation

Paul encourages the Galatians to walk in the spirit and not in the flesh in Chapter 5 of Galatians. The spirit and the flesh oppose one another, and they are not friends. The flesh doesn't like the spirit, and the spirit does not like the flesh. We can't just do whatever we want to do!

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Application

It's interesting that our time of fasting and prayer opens with this passage in Galatians. Although I'm usually excited about beginning the fast, my flesh gets in the way by reminding me of what I "can't have" during this time. Regardless of what I decide to sacrifice, I've decided not to focus on what I'm giving up but on what I'm getting. I like to think of it as - redirecting my mindset. This is when I get to lay aside something that I probably could use a break from anyway and direct my heart, mind, and spirit toward God and what He wants for me. Fast, and see how God wants to lead, guide, and direct you this year?

On day 5 of this fast, make sure you are carving out some time with God each day, pray, yield to the Spirit, and watch your spirit soar. Yes, it may be hard at first, but I promise, it's worth it!

Prayer

God, I need you. It is evident just by the fact that I'm committing this time of fasting and prayer to you, I know that my flesh will want to take over, so I'm trusting You to keep me as I focus on You and Your Word. I am ready and open to listening to what You have to say to me. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 06 //1 Kings 8:18-20

"But the Lord said to my father David, 'You did well to have it in your heart to build a temple for my name. Nevertheless, you are not the one to build the temple, but your son, your own flesh and blood- he is the one who will build the temple for my name. The Lord has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father, and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised, and I have built the temple for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel.'"

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Observation

Solomon had built the temple for the Lord. This was the same temple his father David had in his heart to build for the Lord. Solomon dedicated the temple to the Lord, blessed the people assembled, and then prayed to the Lord for them. God is a promise keeper, so we should be comforted knowing that what God has promised will come to pass. Sometimes, the fulfillment of their promises is coming through you. On day 6 of your fast, be assured that God will keep the promises He has made to you. They will come to pass at the appointed time. Expect it, and give thanks and praises now for it.

Application

In this time of fasting, you should reflect on God's promises to you. See which ones have come to pass and which promises you are still waiting for God to fulfill at the appointed time. Give thanks to God, and don't lose heart if what you were promised hasn't materialized in your life yet. Pray and ask God for guidance, peace, and clarity as you wait for your God-given promises. In your prayer time, write down what God speaks to you in your spirit. Then, hold on and be encouraged, knowing that God is the promise keeper!

Prayer

Father God, I thank You for keeping Your promises to Your people. I pray that during this time of fasting and consecration, I will be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in Your Word and Your promises to me. May I be strengthened in my inner person and encouraged, knowing just as You kept your promises to David and Solomon, You will keep Your promises to me. I expect it and rejoice in it now. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 07 // 1Peter 1:11

“They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward.”

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Observation

Peter explained to the people how fortunate they were to be living and experiencing the fulfilled prophecy of the Messiah. He made known to them that the prophets who spoke of Jesus in the Old Testament wished they could be in their shoes. He also shed light on their mindsets and attitudes towards their mission. God told the Prophets all they needed to know. He told them they were serving the next generation through their obedience. That information alone was enough to motivate them. He also shared that the Messiah would suffer, and glory would follow that suffering. Christ showed them how to suffer and the benefits of His suffering not only for the kingdom of God but for you too.

Application

Verse 13 says, “Prepare your mind for action and be completely sober.” Understand that trials and suffering are coming, but God’s grace is actively covering you. Don’t be distracted or intoxicated with fear, anger, greed, worry, or lust. Be “Sober Minded” in all things and situations. Just as the prophets had to understand that they would not get to see or experience the Messiah, you may not experience the benefits of what you made sacrifices for in your lifetime, but your children will, and your community will. You must stick to the mission even if you’re not alive to experience the blessing. Realize whenever you suffer for God, glory will always follow. Christ suffered and paid the ultimate price, but he also gained glory. Glory is gained through amazing achievements. Christ died for us who deserved death and at the same time conquered death. He did the right thing even though it caused him great suffering. We are His Glory. What is God asking you to sacrifice, give up, or change for someone else’s sake?

On day 7 of this time of prayer and fasting, ask God to help you understand the value of sacrifice for the next generation. Ask God to help you understand suffering and to keep it in the right perspective. Ask him for the strength not to be moved by what the world is doing and keep you sober-minded.

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Prayer

Lord, You made a great sacrifice for me, and I, in turn, ask that You give me the same strength and selflessness. Lord, give me the courage to overcome my fears and worries. Make me more like You. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 08 // Ephesians 5:15-16

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”

Observation

This section of Paul's letter to the churches in Ephesus is a call for believers to Spirit-filled living. This includes growing in godliness as defined by learning to live a life that honors God and follows the example of Christ. We are to live in such a way that our lives are pleasing and fragrant offerings to God.

Application

Dedicated seasons of fasting and prayer provide an excellent opportunity for self-examination by God. The exhortation to look carefully at how you walk is to assess your lifestyle to see if a disconnect exists between your beliefs and your behaviors. This is because your behaviors indicate what you truly believe, even when it differs from what you say. In an age where everything around us competes for our attention (television, social media, and even work), how you spend your time serves as a direct reflection of your priorities. Where do you spend the most time? Time is extremely limited and how you manage your time is crucial to living a life that honors and glorifies God. In our verses, it is the unwise person who cares less about living a Spirit-led life because the majority of their time is spent not on what pleases God but on what pleases them. On day 8 of the fast, let this be a time to get clear on exactly what God wants you to do, and

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then use the time He has given you to do what He's told you to do. In these times, letting your life be filled and led by God's Spirit is the best way forward.

Prayer

LORD, as I fast and pray, please help me to look carefully at my life, to see it as You do, and to make all adjustments necessary to live in a manner that is pleasing to You. I ask for wisdom to live life well so as not to waste a moment. Please help me properly prioritize the time I have and maximize every opportunity You bring my way so that I see and seize the chance to glorify You in all I do. May I be a blessing to others in the process? In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 09 // Genesis 13:14-15

“The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.”

Observation

The Lord came to Abram, gave him instruction, and proclaimed a blessing over his life. Abram acted on God's instructions, but there were things he did along the way that blocked some of the blessings God declared over his life.

Abram was told to leave his father's house and family, but he took Lot, his nephew, with him. This eventually created envy and strife between Abram and Lot. There is confusion and every evil work where envying and strife are. Where there are envy and strife, you will find distractions and waste time and energy on someone who is not even supposed to be there.

Once Lot was removed, God spoke, reaffirmed His blessing on Abram, and encouraged him to go forward.

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Application

Sometimes we hear the Lord clearly and move in the direction He has said, but along the way, we are unconscious of the things we do that actually block blessings established over our lives. What is the proverbial Lot in your life, blocking the blessing the Lord has already declared over you? Get into the habit of asking God to search your heart and reveal anything keeping you from His best for your life. This time of seeking the Lord through fasting and prayer is the perfect opportunity to listen and realign yourself to His instructions for your life.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the blessing You have already proclaimed over me. During day 9 of fasting, please help me identify and remove anything that keeps me from receiving that blessing and moving within the purpose you created me. In Jesus name, I pray, amen.

DAY 10 // 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3

“As for other matters, brothers, and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.”

Observation

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to Christians in a town in Greece called Thessalonica seeking prayer. In this passage, Paul knowing the power of intercession, asked the believers to intercede with laser-guided, very specific, and targeted prayer requests. We all need to pray for others, and we all need the prayers of others.

Application

Prayer is one of the greatest privileges we have as Christians, not only a privilege but

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one of our most powerful weapons. On this 10th day of fasting and praying, be reminded that prayer connects us with the unlimited resources of our Father. One factor that makes our praying so weak and ineffective is that we pray such generalized prayers. Asking for specific prayers is not a sign of weakness; it's a mark of dependence. We must seek God's will and pray deliberate prayers for ourselves and others.

Prayer

Father God, thank You for giving me this opportunity to seek You for my Pastor, church, brothers and sisters, and myself. I ask that You teach me how to petition You with specific and targeted prayers. You said in your Word, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well," so today, Father, I ask that You remind me that the power of my prayers is in the petition of my prayers. In Jesus name, I pray, amen.

DAY 11 // Exodus 23:25

"So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you."

Observation

Between this chapter's 20th and 31st verses, God makes 12 promises to His people who choose to obey Him. He begins by sending them an Angel to keep them and take them where He wants them to go. He ends by promising to deliver them from their enemies so that they can have the life He desires for them. In the key verse (v.25), God blessed them by taking anything harmful from the food they ate AND the water they would drink! THEN He promised to protect them from sickness.

Application

We serve a God who not only delivers and sets us free but heals as well - all as a part of the divine exchange. He is our Heavenly Father, and we are His heavenly-bound children.

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He leads – we follow. He guides – we obey. He gives us life – we give Him worship. During the 11th day of prayer and fasting, meditate on the promises in this section that lies in wait for you this year. That is, if you choose to obey and worship Him alone. Ask God what promises He plans to fulfill in your life this year, and then continue to pray accordingly. God is a good God, and he desires only the best for you and seeks to establish a covenant (promise) that He will fulfill every day of your lives.

Prayer

God, thank You for the Angel You sent to keep, lead and take me further into Your will this year. Thank You for the promises You brought into my life today. I believe that You are the God that heals and the Blessor of my life. I choose to worship You alone and obey Your Word. Please help me do my part while I trust You to do Yours'. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen

DAY 12 // Genesis 45:7

“God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.”

Observation

In chapter 45 of Genesis, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery but let their father believe he was dead, although they had allowed him to be sold into slavery. While in Egypt, God gave Joseph favor, and eventually, he became a great leader - second only to Pharaoh. Later, there was a famine that impacted those near and far in such a way that everyone had to come to Egypt for provisions, including Joseph's brothers. As they arrived, they did not recognize Joseph; however, he recognized them. After a series of events, Joseph finally revealed who he truly was to his brothers. He could have said, “I will finally get my revenge. Lock them up!” In fact, his brothers feared that Joseph would seek revenge, but instead, when he revealed who he was, he extended forgiveness AND dealt kindly with them. He could have said, “I hold no grudge, now return home,” but

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he was also kind to them. Joseph shared how God had preserved him, provided for him, elevated him, and kept a nation from perishing.

Application

When you are sent by God, you don't always know the "why" behind the "where." In Joseph's case, God sent him to Egypt to preserve a remnant, and therefore, a nation would not vanish but continue. Sometimes God sends you ahead of the problem, but will you go without explanation? When you arrive, and it doesn't "appear" as if God is anywhere. Will you serve Him or disobey Him? Who will not perish but be saved because you stayed, stuck it out, and served God without bitterness, hatred, or unforgiveness? On day 12 of your fast, where might God be trying to send you in 2023? Who might God want you to forgive? How may He want to use you? We must never limit our journey to me, myself, and I... because God just might want to expand your journey to her, him, and them.

Prayer

Father, let nothing I experience in life get me stuck or glued to bitterness, hatred, rage, or anger. Help me choose to move on and go wherever You send me. Help me serve whomever You desire and witness with the love of Christ first, my life secondly, and my words last. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 13 // Psalm 27:1

"The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, whom shall I be afraid?"

Observation

This Psalm records David's resolve that the Lord is all he needs in the day of battle, and the Lord is the sum total of all he wants. While the enemy is seeking to take his life, David makes it known that his sole desire is to give his life away in worship. For when

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the enemy comes to devour him, the enemy will stumble and fall. Even though an army encircles him, David's heart won't fear because the Lord is his Salvation. When war breaks out against him, the Lord Himself is the stronghold of his life. Therefore there's no reason to fear, for whatever weapon the enemy forms against him, it shall not prosper.

Application

The most sinister enemies often come from within us and thereby stymie our spiritual health and fortitude. Proverbs 4:23 cautions you to guard your heart because the sum of all that you do flows from your heart. So, if the Lord is shining a light on your heart during this fast and exposing areas of bitterness, unforgiveness, envy, and the like, let Him lead you in wholehearted repentance. The Lord is the stronghold of your life and therefore protects and keeps you from those things that seek to devour you. On day 13 of the fast, remember that the Lord is your Light and your Salvation, and you have nothing to be afraid of because He loves unconditionally and knows you altogether.

Prayer

Father, I know that You are my Light and my Salvation and that You are more committed to me than I am to myself. Please expose any sinful dispositions that I've been holding on to. You love me perfectly, so I know I can trust You with the most intimate recesses of my heart; therefore, I confess my sins and repent of harboring them in my heart. In so doing, I have a blessed assurance that I have the forgiveness that I've asked for; for when I confess my sin, You are faithful and just to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 14 // Psalm 139:1

"O LORD, You have searched me and known me."

Observation

GOD KNOWS YOU...that is powerful...penetrating, thought-provoking...and packed with

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layers and layers of meaning. This dispels the lie that “nobody gets you, understands you, or really knows you.” God knows what is behind every tear you shed and every laugh you will laugh. He knows why you are pleased, angry, frustrated, excited, scared, surprised, or disappointed. This is humbling because God KNOWS all your secrets, every deed you have done, and what you hope certain people will never know...God already KNOWS. YET...He still decided to form you in your mother’s womb. YET...He spared nothing concerning your creation - you are a marvelous work of God, fearfully and wonderfully made. God really knows you, and yes, he really LOVES YOU!

Application

You must always be mindful of God’s love for you. Let this become a weapon to answer yourself, others, and the enemy when such things are said like, “You don’t matter,” “No one cares whether you live or die,” or “No one loves you anyhow.” Next, trust God’s call for your life because he perfectly matched your experiences and gifts to be used for your purpose and call. Therefore, do what God told you to do and stop disqualifying yourself. God KNOWS the real you, so you have nothing to prove. You can stop performing. You don’t need to be a perfectionist. You might as well throw people-pleasing and stop pretending to be some- one you are not because the world needs the real you now!

Prayer

Father, when I think about You really knowing me, it brings up feelings of happiness, amazement, reverence, peace, and comfort. So, on day 14 of this fast, I stop to say, “THANK YOU, JESUS!” Thank You for accepting the real me. Thank You for loving the real me unconditionally. Thank You for using the real me. In Jesus’ name, I pray, amen.

DAY 15 // Psalm 53:2

“God looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.”

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Observation

This passage speaks to the foolishness of the godless and the restoration of Israel. God is merciful and wants to save his people.

Application

I definitely don't consider myself godless, but I do have to ask myself the question, "Do I seek God?" In the busyness of my life with work, school, family, social media, and extracurricular activities, is there room for God? Do I seek Him? I can certainly name numerous times when I seek out other activities and people, but do I put that much energy into seeking God? Whoa! This causes me to think and look at the truth of God's value in my life. On day 15 of the fast, God wants you to seek him and spend time with him. Thank God for his mercy toward you! Seek God and stay strong. You can do it!

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for Your mercy towards me. I need it so desperately! When I get too busy and forget about You, remind me that I would have none of what I'm busy about if it were not for You. When I seek You, I find peace, love, and joy, and for that, I am grateful. I love You, Lord. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.

DAY 16 // 2 Corinthians 6:14-15

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?"

Observation

This passage starts with an exhortation and command for the believers in Corinth not to be yoked together with unbelievers. Next, the command is followed with examples to

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heighten the contrast between believers and unbelievers to reveal their stark dissimilarity. The examples can be viewed as things or forces that oppose one another (i.e., light/darkness and righteousness/wickedness), not just dissimilar because they are total opposites.

Application

This passage is often misquoted and emphasized only in the context of marriage. However, although applicable, it is not limited to such confines. Within this text, God reveals to you the danger of being yoked with someone who is not “like-minded” or who has opposing views or lifestyles. For instance, a yoke was used for two animals of the “same kind” to plow a field. To do so, they needed to be the same, so they could both understand the farmer’s commands to work together to accomplish the desired goal in the field. A farmer didn’t use the same commands for different animals. Therefore, if two animals of a “different kind” were yoked together, they risk running in different directions, creating more disaster than productivity.

Here we learn the danger of being yoked with someone who is an unbeliever. It can be disastrous!

Prayer

Father, as I make decisions and form relationships in my life, family, and business, please give me the awareness to be connected with like-minded people. On day 16 of this fast, I pray that You would also give me the courage to evaluate my life to ensure the call and purpose on my life is not negatively impacted by relationships that oppose who You are and who You have called me to be.

DAY 17 // 2 Chronicles 6:1-2

“Then Solomon spoke: “The Lord said He would dwell in the dark cloud. I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever.”

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Observation

Looking at the scriptures, we can only imagine what type of feelings were invoked when Solomon announced and launched building plans for a permanent temple for the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah. What we do know is that they worked together, completed the project, and the LORD was pleased and dwelled in the temple. Then they did what we all should do when God dwells with us; they praised God. Solomon was a wise king, and he led the people in a prayer of dedication. He took on a posture of humility and thanksgiving. He called the whole assembly together to honor the LORD, who is faithful.

Application

Some building projects seem to take forever, and even a simple remodel can test the patience and passion of even the most even-tempered individual. However, a completed project can lead us to praise God because He helped us see it to completion.

On day 17 of the fast, may you remember that every task in your life that God has established shall be completed. Be encouraged to praise Him for it's His presence that keeps you during the project and His presence that dwells once it is completed.

Prayer

LORD, help me appreciate the wonderful works You have brought forth in my life. May You be pleased to dwell in me, and may my heart be full of praise and prayer.

DAY 18 //1 Peter 2:20-23

“For what credit is it if you sin and are mistreated and endure it? But if you do good and suffer and so endure, this finds favor with God. For this you were called, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving an example for you to follow in his steps. He committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth. When he was maligned, he did not answer back; when he suffered, he threatened no retaliation, but committed himself to God who judges justly.”

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Observation

Peter gives instructions and insight into God's purpose and virtues of righteous suffering in this letter. In chapter 2 of this book, we discover that all disciples in Christ Jesus are special, chosen by God, extremely precious, and like living stones that God pours LOVE into so that others may have living examples of God's lovingkindness toward them. We are living trophies of God's love on constant display. Peter teaches that it's God's will that our loving actions shut the mouth of all haters by good deeds and love. Here we learn that our Lord Jesus Christ's sufferings are not only a major part of God's restorative work for all, but His sufferings are also a perfect example of how we are to respond when we are inevitably faced with righteous sufferings. Peter reveals that Jesus will not be alone in His suffering. You also are enlisted into the ministry of righteous suffering, and Jesus is our forerunner of how to embrace the reality of suffering in our lives. On day 18 of your fast, you have a perfect example of how you respond when you will inevitably face righteous suffering.

Application

How do we get into a position to be God's Trophies of LOVE? During this time of fasting, receive and obey Peter's charge to the disciples to lay aside all that is not like God in your life and lifestyle. During this season of spiritual reflection, take the time to search and make a fearless moral inventory and assessment of yourself. Take the time to also sit before the LORD, allow God's Word to be your filter to weed out attitudes, behaviors, and mindsets that are not in alignment with the Love of God. Write down what the Holy Spirit reveals to you. Then, fortified with the assurance of who you are in Christ, pray with thanksgiving in your heart, ask God to give you an eternal perspective, God's perspective, on your current struggles, tests, and sufferings. Ask the LORD to assess your struggles to see if they are indeed "Righteous Struggles." If they are not, then make amends to correct it. If they are a righteous struggle, then trust and believe that God will empower you to willingly accept the suffering as the Lord Jesus Christ did in His life and ministry.

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Prayer

Abba Father, grant me the courage to honestly search myself for Your likeness. Touch my eyes so that I may see with Holy Spirit clarity and precision my situation from Your perspective. Lead me to right actions and good works that will ultimately result in You receiving glory by utilizing my life and love. Father, strengthen me to endure until You finish Your work in me, and I reflect Your likeness as a son/daughter of God for Your name's sake.

DAY 19 // Leviticus 15:31

“You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.”

Observation

In this chapter, the Lord gives Moses and Aaron instructions for the Levites (priests) and Israelites, so they will not die. These instructions were put in place so the priests could worship God and know how to live clean and safely before God. Other guidelines would include the Israelites having clarity about worshipping God and living differently than other nations. Like, in our times, Israel still wanted to do what they thought was right. When God spoke, commanded, or made laws, they were not random ideas or lists of “do’s and don’ts,” but for the sake of order and not chaos. God knows what is best for His creation, like all creators of new things.

Application

The Creator of Heaven and earth cannot be compared to any man, animal, leader, god, or idol. He cannot be found in any tomb, is not made from man-made materials, and was there before angels, men, or demons came into existence. When He wants something done, He commands it, and NO ONE can stop Him. At once, thousands of angels will show up for orders at His call, so why is man not mindful of God? Why do we resist obeying our Creator? Some say, “What He is asking doesn’t make sense.” Yet, when you walk into a

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courtroom, there are rules and protocols, and you obey them. You don't say, "Why do I have to rise and then sit down...that doesn't make sense?" or "Why do I even have to come to court?" We should do the same for God when He sets specific standards or asks us to do something. We are in a personal relationship with God, so we should honor and obey Him immediately. On the 19th day of your fast, think about whether God is more important than a Judge? When He asks you to do something, do you do it just because He said so? What position of authority does God really have in your life?

Prayer

Father, I don't like to be told what to do, and there is something in me that rises in opposition when I hear, "You cannot do that." However, please continue to be patient with me because I want to trust You. I want to go when You say go, and I want to do what You say do...because I love you. In Jesus name, I pray, amen.

DAY 20 // Psalm 150:6

"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!"

Observation

This is the last Psalm or song; it is an exhortation. The Holy Spirit speaks to us, through the writer, in no uncertain terms, that we are to praise the Lord; it is not a suggestion but a command. The entire Psalm provides clarity as to who, what, where, how, and why God is to be praised. We are to praise Him, period! We are to praise Him both because of Who He is and for what He has done. We are to praise Him with everything we have and not be quiet about it. Our praise, celebration, and gratitude ought to be noisy!!!

Application

It would be a mistake to think that your praise is limited to where you worship (the sanctuary on Sunday), but He wants your praise to reach His sanctuary, in Heaven, throughout the day! There should be no ceiling to your praise. Wherever you are, you can

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turn 360°, look up and look down, and see that praise is due to our God, for Who He is and what He has done. The first instrument which should be used to praise the Lord is our mind, then our voice, followed by our body. While a list of man-made instruments is mentioned, they can also be symbolic of the universe of instruments made to praise the Lord. Should you think that they are limited to musical instruments, the Holy Spirit clarifies the matter and says, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” On the 20th day of this fast and any other day you get the opportunity, you should lift up a praise to the LORD!

Prayer

Holy Spirit, I ask that You open my heart and mind to the opportunities I have throughout each day, to praise You Lord, with all that I am, and all I that I have to offer. Let me not withhold praise from You, nor give Your praise to another, for it is rightly Yours and Yours alone. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! In Jesus’ name, I pray, amen.

DAY 21 // Joshua 1:2

“Moses, my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead the people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them.”

Observation

In this chapter, Moses had led the people as far as he could. It was now Joshua’s turn to take the lead. In this passage, God instructs Joshua to move forward. He is reassuring Joshua that he is with him and that he will be successful. God constantly gives Joshua the encouragement he needs to lead the people into the promised land. Joshua was probably afraid. Most people would be afraid if faced with Joshua’s circumstances. However, if Joshua continues to focus on Moses’s death, his eyes won’t be on the God who has

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already ensured his success. Moses served his purpose, and now it is time for Joshua to do the same!

Application

Everything in your past wasn't bad. However, if you cling to the past instead of living in this moment, you will lose out on what God presents you with today. What are you holding on to that has already served its purpose? Even something good can be bad when it's out of season. Allow God to reveal this to you during your last day of fasting. Ask, and ye shall receive. God will show you the areas of your life that need to be released so that you can move into 2023 and grab hold of every single thing God has pre-established for you to have today, RIGHT NOW, on day 21 of the fast and throughout the year!

Prayer

Lord, please help me release the dead areas of my life. Help me not be so tied to the past that I miss out on the beauty of this moment and my future. God, I trust you with my heart. There may be some areas in which I am still afraid to let go, but I am asking you today to use this time of fasting as an opportunity to free me of yesterday and launch me into my newness. Give me faith to rise above my fears and possess the land You have for me. This is my time, and I choose to believe that You have equipped me with everything I need to lead in this new season of my life. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen.




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