

# Saint John Baptist Church

## Corporate Prayer & Fasting

### DEVOTIONAL

Refocusing | Realigning | Recommitting  
to the King and the Kingdom

Matthew 6:33



JANUARY 7th - JANUARY 28th 2024



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Greetings Saint John Members & Friends,

I am honored that you have joined me on this journey of a 21 Day Prayer and Fast, to seek God first and foremost for His guidance, direction, empowerment, and favor in 2024. It is my desire that we refocus, realign, and recommit to the King and the Kingdom. According to Matthew 6:33, when we do this, all other things that we desire will be added unto us.

Now is the time for us, as a church, the body of Christ, to **refocus** on Christ and the Kingdom Agenda in Matthew 28:19-20: that is to evangelize the lost, make disciples of the saints, and equip the Church to advance the Kingdom of God, through the various ministries of the Church.

Now is the time to **realign** ourselves under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit, whose job is to lead, guide, and direct our paths as we take dominion over every area of our life. For Ephesians 5:18 said, "Be not drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled with the Spirit."

Now is the time for us to **recommit** to walking by faith and not by sight. It is our faith that helps us to please the Lord, Hebrews 11:6. It is our faith that helps us rebound, recover, and be restored, Habakkuk 2:4. It is our faith that gives us the victory to overcome the world, 1 John 5:4. We must get back on track with advancing the Kingdom's agenda, aligning under the power and influence of the Spirit of the King, and committing to live, walk, and triumph by our faith in the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

As we walk by faith to honor and obey the King and the Kingdom in 2024, I believe it is appropriate for us to begin our journey with a 21-day prayer and fast. This book is a guide to fasting that includes a 21-day devotion to help you get in tune with God, to access a closer walk with Him.

During the fast, I'm asking while you draw closer to God and pray for your individual plans and goals, to please pray for your ministry goals, and Saint John's Vision, Mission, and Goals for 2024. Remember, that the purpose of fasting is to work on our flesh so that God's Spirit may move in our lives, transforming us into what He has called us to become. When you are fasting, your main source of **"food"** is God and His Word. Therefore, it is very important that you spend time with God daily and that you remove as many distractions as possible during the fast. This will allow you to clearly hear from God.

My prayer for you over the next (21 days) is that your passion for God and His Word will be ignited and that you will develop a hunger for His presence that is greater than ever before! As you read this devotional and the scriptures, keep in mind the following three things: *1.) Read daily 2.) Read prayerfully 3.) Read with expectation.* God is prepared to reveal Himself to you in new and refreshing ways. Let us move forward and consecrate ourselves corporately and individually. I look forward to our collective transformation in God.

May this special time with Him bring you clarity, peace, and divine blessings as we seek to establish order in our lives. Furthermore, I encourage you to take advantage of this book during your daily prayer times with the Lord.

Peace and Blessings,

*Dr. Jamey O. Graham, Sr.*

Jamey O. Graham, Sr.

Pastor

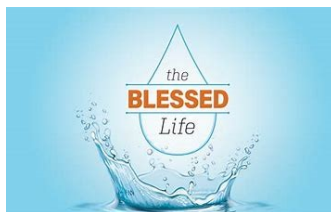
# Answering the Call to Discipleship: Mastering Life In Christ Jesus

## Christian Discipleship *Defined-*

**Developing a personal, lifelong, obedient relationship with Jesus Christ in which He transforms Your Character into Christlikeness; changes your values into Kingdom values; and involves you in His mission in the home, the church, and the world.**

### Reference

Willis Jr, A. T., & Moore, K. (1996). *The Disciples Cross Masterlife Book I*. Nashville: Lifeway Press.



## The Disciple Maker's Prayer

Lord, you have commanded me in the Great Commission, to go and make disciples of all nations. You have commanded me to occupy, to invest your Word, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God into the people of the world. This occupying, is to make disciples, produce disciples, to be fruitful, to bear the fruit of discipleship, to multiply disciples, to replenish the earth with disciples to the point where I am subduing the earth with disciples of Jesus Christ until Jesus Christ comes again.

It is my prayer, Lord, to obey your command and Evangelize (*Be fruitful*) and Make Disciples (*Multiply*) to the point where the church increases in membership and the number of abundant life discipleship groups increase and spread across the City of Columbia, South Carolina. In Jesus name, I decree and declare this increase of Disciples, in the church and in the community.

Amen.

# FASTING GUIDE

January 7th - January 28, 2024

Note: This is a 24 hour a day Fast starting 12:00 AM

Sunday, January 7th and ending 12:00 AM Sunday, January 28th

Like prayer and Bible reading, fasting is one of the spiritual disciplines for followers of Jesus. The next few paragraphs are here to help you get your mind around fasting, and help you get started in this powerful Christian habit! **If you want to know more, hit up some of the online resources at [www.awake21.org](http://www.awake21.org).**

## What is fasting?

Biblical fasting is, very simply, denying oneself food for the sake of seeking and honoring God. Prayer is connecting with God; fasting is disconnecting ourselves from the world. That's a great way to describe the feeling. You can fast from other things that keep you connected to the world, too. Things like TV, video games, social networking, snap chat, and more.

## Why should I fast?

Over time, it's very easy for our souls to get "gunked up". Fasting is a way to give our bodies and our souls a deep cleaning. When we do, we find that not only do we feel better, but as we draw closer to God, we are more in tune with His voice.

## How do I fast?

There are several different types of fasts. In this guide and over the next (21) twenty one days, we have laid out a plan that will help you detach from some of the distractions of everyday life. This twenty-one day plan involves cutting out some food items, and has a few days where you only drink liquids (like juices, smoothies and such). Other days you will eat just fruits and vegetables.

The plan provided in this guide is just that– don't make this time thinking about what you eat, or don't eat. This is all about drawing closer to God and replacing some of our common distractions with time to pray, read our Bibles and seek God like never before.

## How should I prepare to fast?

For a 1-day fast, it doesn't take much preparation. It's best to slow down your eating before the fast, then pick it back up slowly by eating small, simple foods. For a longer fast, **DEFINITELY** prepare this way. It's smart to plan ahead and make sure you'll have plenty of the fruits, vegetables, juices, etc.

# DISCLAIMER

**PLEASE NOTE:**

*Pastor Jamey O. Graham and the Saint John Baptist Church advise all members and participants of this consecration to consider their personal health needs and to consult their personal health physician prior to beginning this fast.*

*Therefore, we specifically disclaim any responsibility from any physical reaction from this fast.*

# What should I do while fasting?

Drink lots of water



Pray



Read your Bible.



Listen to worship music.



Think



Write your thoughts





**Drink lots of water.**

**Pray.**

**Read your Bible.**

**Listen to worship music.**

**Think and Meditate.**

**Grab your Bible, this devotional, and perhaps a journal to capture your thoughts and what God shows you.**

***Get Ready!***

**This experience is going to be like no other!**

# FASTING GUIDE

January 7th - January 28th

*Note: This is a 24 hour a day Fast starting 12:00 AM*

*Sunday, January 7th and ending 12:00 AM Sunday, January 28, 2024*

**(Choose one)**

## Daniel Fast ( Option #1) For all 21 Days

**Week One: Fruits and Vegetables (Lots of Water)**

**Week Two: Fruits and Vegetables (Lots of Water)**

**Week Three: Liquids (Lots of Water)**

While everyone is encouraged to seek the Lord on how they are too fast, please consider the suggested model of fasting by eating only fruits and vegetables (weeks one and two) and all liquids, meaning 100% fruit and/or vegetable juices (Store bought or by juicing through blender and so forth) and water. (week three). Remember to limit or avoid television, electronics, or any other distraction that may dampen your spiritual focus. For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord and write your thoughts from the daily devotions. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

## Modified Fast (Option #2) For all 21 Days

**No fried foods**

**No meats** (No Red Meat, Pork, ) *(Only Turkey, Chicken and Fish)*

**No BREAD**

**No soda, soft drink, power aide, caffeine** *(WATER AND NATURAL JUICES ONLY)*

**No sugar or sugar additives**

**No fast foods**

**No more than 2-hours** of media entertainment per week -

*(includes television, movies, newspaper, texting, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter, Hulu, etc.)*

**You may watch Christian media**

**Wednesday SALAD only**—(lettuce, tomato, cucumber, onion, carrots, beets, peppers)

**\*Drinks Lots of Water**

For more information on Fasting Suggestions and Tips please visit:

Saint John Baptist Church – <http://saintjohnbaptistchurch1900.com>

Jamey O Graham Ministries - <http://jameyograhamministries.org>

## GOD PROVIDES

My God will meet your every need out of his riches in the glory that is found in Christ Jesus.

-PHILIPPIANS 4:19 (CEB)

Day 1

Sunday  
01-07-2024

When a great drought hit, the water pump in our house broke. My parents didn't have the money to buy a new one. We prayed constantly for rain, but it didn't rain.

We cannot live without water. But thankfully some neighbors who had sophisticated water pumps with sufficient water supply offered to help. They allowed my family to take as much water as we needed. So every day my parents and I carried buckets to the neighbors' houses to fetch water until the dry season was over.

This experience was a reminder to me that God doesn't always answer prayers the way we want or expect. It didn't rain immediately after we prayed. But God answered our prayers according to our need by bringing us kindhearted neighbors to provide water for us to use everyday.



*Prayer: God our provider, help us to trust that you will answer our prayers even if the answer is not what we expect. We give thanks for the help you offer us and pray as Jesus taught us, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen"*

(Matt. 6:9-13, KJV)

Day 2

Monday  
01-08-2024

## BLESSINGS WITHIN BURDENS

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.

-ROMANS 8:28 (NIV)

At age 22, our son, John, who had Duchenne muscular dystrophy, had surgery to insert feeding tubes. Loss of muscles, including those that control swallowing, created a condition that contributed to frequent pneumonia. John had also lost weight.

Two months after the surgery, with Thanksgiving approaching, I felt despondent because John could no longer join in family meals with us. The scripture reading at church about Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead took on new meaning, however. Instead of lamenting that John couldn't eat, I thanked God that he was alive. How wonderful that God gave people the knowledge and skill to put all nutrients needed to sustain human life in a can!

John could not enjoy family meals as he once had, but he could laugh, talk, play games, defend his views, give advice, tell jokes, and watch his favorite football team. Although the ingenuity and underlying feeding-tube that restored his life differed markedly from Christ's miraculous raising of Lazarus, it allowed John to be with us for 11 more years and live to see his younger sisters become adults.



*Prayer: Dear God, thank you for helping us see how you can use even heavy burdens to restore life. Help us live one day at a time, trusting you to provide for us. In Jesus' name. Amen*

## GOD IS OUR GUIDE

You teach me the way of life. In your presence is total celebration.

-PSALM 16:11 (CEB)

Day 3

Tuesday  
01-09-2024

I remember one time when my children were young, we walked a maze. We followed the wall path; but when we neared what we thought was the exit, there was another wall. We had to back up and look for another way out. It was a bit difficult to reach the end, but with perseverance we reached the goal.

Life is like a maze. Many times, we ask God why certain things happen to us. We try to grasp difficult situations but are unable to understand them. We hurry here and there looking for the right path. Obstacles stop us in our tracks, and we don't understand why we must backtrack or even face those obstacles in the first place. It becomes crucial to allow God to guide us through the twisting and turning passageways of life so that we can find the path that will lead to the fullness of joy that only God can offer.



*Prayer: Almighty God, show us the path that leads to the fullness of joy in you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Day 4

Wednesday  
01-10-2024

## BEFORE WE ASK

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful  
- HEBREWS 10:23 (NRSVUE)

As I write, my beloved wife is undergoing her seventh surgery for breast cancer in just over three years. She has also endured 13 months of chemotherapy. After checking in at the hospital this morning, we prayed together.

Once she was taken back for anesthesia and surgery, I prayed earnestly for her and for all the doctors, nurses, and technicians involved in her surgery. I then read my daily devotional. When I completed that reading, it occurred to me that in my prayer life I have asked for many things. Although I do thank God for the gift of grace through Jesus Christ and for the many blessings of my life, I feel as though most of my prayers ask for a particular outcome for my loved ones, for those in need or suffering, or for myself.

I wondered if God ever tires of my many requests. So I turned to the Bible. In numerous passages I received assurance that God desires my prayerful requests. Those prayers tell God of my true and abiding faith in God's grace. Paul said it well in his letter to the Philippians, "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6). That is exactly what I am doing today. God is love, and I am most thankful for that and for God's listening ear.



*Prayer: Dear Lord, you know what we need even before we ask. May our prayerful requests reveal our sincere and abiding faith in you. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

## LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Put away...all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

- EPHESIANS 4:31-32 (NRSVUE)

Day 5

Thursday  
01-11-2024

My day started with hurt and irritation from a friend's critical remarks. While I ran errands my anger grew, and I began to develop a grudge. The grocery store parking lot was full, but I spotted an open space one lane over. I sped up and rounded the corner to grab it but then saw a car approaching with its blinker flashing. I scowled as I waited for the other driver to park. But to my surprise, the man stopped and waved me into the parking spot. I was grateful but unmoved by the gesture.

I raced through the store and found myself behind the same man in the check- out lane. He turned, smiled, and began emptying my cart for me while the cashier scanned his items. I stood amazed. I returned the smile and thanked him for both good deeds. He shrugged and said, "It doesn't cost anything to be nice." I cringed and felt my face go red as I remembered Jesus' command: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (Jn. 13:34). I realized I was angry over something trivial, and a sudden rush of gratitude swept over me. I am thankful for the man whose acts of kindness had an impact on my attitude.



*Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to focus on being kind when things don't go our way. May we always remember to love one another no matter what the circumstances. Amen.*

Day 6

Friday  
01-12-2024

## GOD'S RENEWING POWER

The Lord turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground.

- PSALM 107:33-37 (NRSVUE)

One day, I looked across a valley and saw a garden of maize. I wondered why the garden had been planted in such a hot, sandy, and dry place. I was surprised there could be such green growth in an almost desert area. Then I learned that the farmer had dug wells to water his garden so that he was able to plant the maize and get a plentiful harvest.

When I seem to be stuck in barren situations, God is able to make waters spring up and bring me renewed life. Oftentimes, when we feel like we are dwelling in a desert, our needs overwhelm us. When our work seems not to be yielding anything good, we feel lifeless, barren, unfruitful. But God is able and willing to cause waters to flow in the midst of our deserts to give life, fruitfulness, and productivity - even where there seems to be no hope. So let us be encouraged by our powerful and loving God!



*Prayer: O Lord, may you create fruitful fields from the barren situations in our lives. In the name of Jesus. Amen.*



## MAKING TIME

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- 2 JOHN 1:9 (CEB)

Day 7

Saturday  
01-13-2024

At our mountain cabin, nestled among the quaking aspen, we have a small pond. Every summer a family of ducks with several ducklings nests in the pond's cattails, and we spend a lot of time watching them from our deck.

One day I watched as the ducklings played. Some of them explored on their own and then rushed to catch up; several scurried ahead, not waiting for their mother; and a few stayed beside the mama, mimicking her every move.

It occurred to me that their actions resembled my walk with God over the years. Many times I would lose focus, letting my Bible study and time with God take second place to more "urgent" matters. Eventually, I would realize my need to focus on God, so I'd hurry to catch up, hoping I hadn't missed God's message for me. Other times, I would be trying to get on to the next thing, so I would rush ahead in my studies, not taking the time to meditate on scripture and its meaning. But when I have stayed anchored to God's side, following God's leading and studying scripture, I have been rewarded. Whenever I take time to hear God's voice in God's word, I find my faith is stronger and more fruitful.



*Prayer: Faithful God, help us to block out distractions and take time to walk with you, anchoring ourselves in your word. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Day 8

## BEHIND AND AHEAD

Sunday  
01-14-2024

The Lord guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.  
- PSALM 23:3 (NIV)

I am facing south on a long, narrow strip of land that is nearly at the southernmost point of Africa. Sometimes it is calm and beautiful at Cape Point, but today it is buffeted by storms. The raging Atlantic Ocean is on my right and the turbulent Indian Ocean to my left. I have walked bravely but with trepidation to my present position below the towering lighthouse that has guided mariners for many years. Behind me is the solid bulk of the African continent, and far ahead of me, unseen beyond the horizon but certain in my mind, is Antarctica. I stand awed and exhilarated.

I liken my situation in this moment to my life in Christ. At times calm, at times buffeted and storm-tossed, I have walked bravely along a narrow path. But Jesus is my eternal beacon. If I listen carefully I can hear his voice calming the waters and bidding me to keep the faith, knowing that behind me is the solid ground of forgiveness, power, and love. Ahead of me, unseen and awesome but certain, lies eternity with Christ.



**Prayer: O God, grant us strength and guidance when we encounter the stormy gales of life. Help us to be beacons of your grace and shelter for others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## WORKING FOR THE LORD

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord. - COLOSSIANS 3:23 (NIV)

Day 9

Monday  
01-15-2024

Preparing to graduate from university and commissioned as a military intelligence officer in the United States Army, I envisioned a highly successful career in the armed forces. I experienced health issues during my senior year of college, however, and I was medically discharged. My plans were dashed. Reeling from disappointment, I accepted the first job I could find after searching for months. I found an entry-level position answering phones for a small business. I was disappointed and struggled with a poor attitude about my work. *How will I possibly find fulfillment in a job like this?* I wondered.

In Colossians 3:23, the apostle Paul encourages us to work at whatever we do with our entire hearts, as if working for the Lord. No job God has placed us in is unimportant. When we commit whatever we do to God, working willingly with everything we have, we honor God. Whether we are working as a CEO, custodian, teacher, secretary, or stay-at-home parent, God can help us to bear fruit for the kingdom. No job is small or insignificant because we do not serve a small or insignificant God.



*Prayer: Dear God, help us to commit everything we do to you and to remember that nothing we do is small in your eyes. Amen.*

Day 10

Tuesday  
01-16-2024

## GOD'S COMFORT

The Lord said, *“As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.”*  
- ISAIAH 66:13 (NIV)

One dark, frosty morning my mother called and asked me to come help her and my father because she was experiencing dizziness and vomiting. When I heard her feeble voice, my stomach turned into a knot, my hands started sweating, and I felt my heartbeat in my throat. I had lost my husband the year before and had experienced multiple difficult life changes, so I was already feeling vulnerable and distressed. I thought, *God my life is hard enough without having to handle one more crisis.* I felt as if God had abandoned me.

When I came home after an exhausting day with my parents, I opened my Bible. God spoke to me through Isaiah 66:13. In this chapter, the Lord spoke to the Israelites, ensuring them that God had not abandoned them and offering them comfort and hope for the restoration of Jerusalem.

God longs to comfort us. In our most difficult moments, God whispers words of peace, love, comfort, and encouragement to our souls. When I was deeply distressed, God brought comfort to my heart, heard my prayers, and gave me strength to help my parents. Our good God desires our well-being and is ready to extend comfort and peace anytime.



*Prayer: Dear Lord, we come to you asking for your comfort and peace. Comfort us as a mother comforts her child. Ease our pain and fill our hearts with encouragement. Amen.*

## GOD'S PROTECTION

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.

- PSALM 57:1 (NIV)

Day 11

Wednesday

01-17-2024

My wife and I operate a small farm. One evening, we were away from home when we received a call from our neighbor who told us that one of our cows was having her calf in the pasture. The time immediately after birth can be dangerous for both the mother and the newborn since both are weak and the birth process often attracts predators.

It was dark when we got home. After getting our flashlights and going out to the pasture, we were rewarded with the sight of a healthy newborn calf lying beside its mother. We also found our llamas and our livestock guardian dog standing in a circle around the cow and calf.

The llamas and dog provided comfort and protection to their vulnerable charges. As we moved the cow and her calf to the shelter of the barn, we were escorted by the llamas and dog.

For me, that was a memorable illustration of the protection and refuge God provides. We may not face the same physical threats as livestock, but we do face fear, worry, temptation, loneliness, and grief that prey on our relationship with God. When I look back at difficult times in my life, I can see that God provided protection and comfort, often in the form of support from fellow Christians. Just as the llamas and dog provided protection and comfort to the cow and her calf, God provides protection and comfort to us.



*Prayer: Our Father, thank you for the many ways you comfort us when we are vulnerable. Help us always to find our refuge in you. Amen.*

Day 12

Thursday  
01-18-2024

## GIVING IT TO GOD

Paul wrote, *“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”*

- PHILIPPIANS 4:11 (NIV)

After I learned that I had torn my other ACL, my spirits sank. I had just recovered from the same injury to my other knee eight months prior, and now I was going to have to go through the same grueling journey all over again. Surgery, crutches, ice, and physical therapy would be my main focus for the next two weeks. I felt as if I would never understand where God was in all this or how God could possibly use this injury for my good.

It was around this time that I came across Philippians 4. I was familiar with this passage of scripture, but I had never spent much time studying and meditating on it. After reading it, I decided that although I did not understand why I was going through this trial, I knew that turning to God would be the only way I could get through it. I took a leap of faith and decided to trust God. Now I have found joy and a peace that I did not have when I was healing from my first knee injury. Giving this struggle to God is something I have to do every day, and doing so helps me remember that I am not going through this hardship alone.



*Prayer: Dear God, help us give our struggles to you daily, and remind us that the trials that we go through will strengthen our faith and trust in you. Amen.*

## A FRUITFUL VINE

Jesus said, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

- JOHN 15:5 (NIV)

Day 13

Friday  
01-19- 2024

One sunny morning I woke up to the sounds of birds chirping. I looked out my window and saw that it was the long tendrils of my passion fruit plant that had attracted the birds. I recalled Jesus' words in John 15:5 and meditated on the verse with curiosity, knowing that the Holy Spirit had brought it to my mind to reveal something to me.

I realized that the image of the vine in John 15:5 and my passion fruit plant have something in common - they both have winding, clinging branches that bear fruit. They don't have trunks; they cling to nearby objects for support, and their branches grow out of the vine. In John 15:5, Jesus was making it clear to us that he supplies our needs and makes it possible for us to flourish.

In order to thrive and bear fruit, climbing plants depend on a strong central vine and require occasional pruning. Jesus is our true vine, and when we remain connected to him, we can bear much fruit. All we need to do is receive and rest in Jesus' love. Just as a plant's nutrients flow from the vine to its branches, God's divine love flows from Christ to us.



*Prayer: Dear Lord, as we cling to you, restore our peace and hope and remind us how much you love us. Amen.*

Day 14

Saturday  
01-20-2024

## LETTING GO

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit

-PSALM 34:18 (NIV)

My family had experienced three recent deaths: my father, my mother, and my nephew. After cleaning out my parents' house for a new family to move in, reality hit hard. We would never gather at my childhood home again. Dad would not read Luke 2 on Christmas Day. Mom would not make raspberry jelly or pecan pies. My nephew would not give another prank gift or bear hug. Our family would never be the same.

As I walked through the empty house, Dad's orchard, and the woods at the edge of the yard, I cried. I thanked God for a great family and childhood home and asked God's blessings on the young family who would live here now. Yet, a few hours later, I realized I had never given God my grief. I understood in a new way that God loves us and reaches out to us in our sorrow. However, we must offer our sorrow and grief to God.

Doing so does not remove our pain or eliminate the need for grieving. But it does offer the assurance that God holds our lives and sustains us through any devastating loss. We will never have to carry our burdens alone because God carries them with us.



*Prayer: Thank you, never-failing Father, for your presence, comfort, and peace, especially in times of grief. Amen*



## MOVING ON

The Lord said to Abram, *“Leave your land, your family, and your father’s household for the land that I will show you.”*  
- GENESIS 12:1 (CEB)

Day 15

Sunday  
01-21-2024

As I have gotten older, I have felt more resistant to change. So when I felt God asking me to make a major life change - moving to live in a city on the other side of my country where I knew no one - I didn't want to go. It would mean leaving behind my friends and my church. But while I continued to disobey this urging, I had no peace.

I tried to calm my unsettled soul by reading about characters in the Bible who had been asked to move by God. Abram was prompted by God to move to an unknown destination; at least I knew where God wanted me to go. God asked David to change his location and his status; I would only be changing my location. Gideon was so reluctant to obey that he questioned God and tested God's intentions with a fleece; I didn't need a fleece.

I obeyed God's instructions questioningly and reluctantly. I am now living in a house that is better suited to my older age. I am happy in my new church, and since moving I have learned that my former church has closed. The city I now live in has more opportunities for service. I will be forever grateful God urged me to move. God always knows best.



*Prayer: Dear God, may we always obey your still, small voice.  
Give us courage to follow your leading. Amen.*

Day 16

Monday  
01-22-2024

## WORKS OF ART

We are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.

- EPHESIANS 2:10 (NRSVUE)

One day at lunch, I went with a friend from work to the nearby Institute of Contemporary Art in the Boston Seaport District. I confess my tastes lean more toward the masters, and I sometimes struggle with contemporary works of art. But that day, I saw several pieces that intrigued me. They were created from repurposed materials like scrap metal, old paper, and cardboard. Without having read the exhibit label on the composition, it would not have been obvious what medium was used. The old materials had been made into something new.

Something like this happens when we come to Christ. God turns all the stuff we bring into our relationship into something new. This transformation will likely be a gradual process; for although God can picture the final result, often the material needs to be reworked in the creation process. As God's finished creation, we will find all that was once there - our addictions, brokenness, heartache, and selfishness - is being shaped into God's masterpiece.



*Prayer: Artist God, we give thanks for your transformation. Help us to be patient and to accept that change is not instantaneous. Open our hearts to the new possibilities of who we may become. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## FINDING JOY

You changed my mourning into dancing. You took off my funeral clothes and dressed me up in joy so that whole being might sing praises to you and never stop.

- PSALM 30:11-12 (CEB)

Day 17

Tuesday  
01-23-2024

A few years ago, I felt uncomfortable in the workplace due to the attitudes and actions of my boss and some colleagues. The situation got so bad I was at the point of quitting my job.

I started to read the Bible and The Upper Room daily devotional meditations and gave my life to Christ. I read other people's stories of situations like mine in the daily meditations. I learned I was not the only person going through difficult times. But God speaks to each of us in different ways. I learned to pray, first giving thanks to God for all things and then turning my concerns over to God.

Today, my boss is no longer with the company, the working relationship with my colleagues has changed, and I received recognition for my years of service. What I know for sure is that God never abandons us and can change our mourning into dancing.



*Prayer: Blessed be your name, O Lord. Thank you for helping us find joy and peace in the many blessings we receive every day. We pray as you taught us, "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation" (Lk.11:2-4, NIV). Amen.*

Day 18

Wednesday  
01-24-2024

## GOOD GIFTS

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!  
- MATTHEW 7:11 (NIV)

Three-year-old Kate had spent a day with me the previous week, and she delighted in the strawberries I had given her as a snack. When I picked her up again, her first words to me were, "Do you have strawberries?" I told her I didn't, and I watched her eyes cloud and her smile fade. I quickly added, "But I do have oranges and bananas." Kate's eyes brightened, and she excitedly exclaimed "Yeah, I like those too!" Kate enjoyed the oranges and bananas as much as she had enjoyed the strawberries.

This sweet interaction with Kate made me ponder our responses to God. We often ask for blessings and hope to receive the same gifts we were given before. But God may have a different gift in store for us. Do we respond positively to God's good gift or do we wish for something else?

When we pray, we should be open to the gifts that God has for us in the present. James tells us, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights" (Jas. 1:17). God has a variety of gifts and blessings to offer, and each one may be different than the last. We can anticipate them all with the excitement and joy of a child.



*Prayer: Loving Father, thank you for the many gifts you have given us in the past. Help us to be open to the good gifts you are giving us today. Amen.*

## GOD'S BEAUTIFUL WORLD

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

- SONG OF SONGS 2:12 (NRSVUE)

Day 19

Thursday  
01-25-2024

I've always wished I could have some plants in my mobile home, but I never seem to have the energy or the ability to make that happen. But a few weeks ago a friend gave me a beautiful coleus plant in a small pot. The leaves were magenta, and the plant brightened the window area of my living room. Later my friend came to visit and said the plant needed to be trimmed. As he trimmed it, he handed me two of the small leaf sections he had cut off. He said that if I put them in a glass of water, they would form roots, and then I could plant them. After a week or so I looked at the glass; to my astonishment, new roots filled it! I planted them in potting soil, and now I have three beautiful coleus plants that are growing vigorously.

My experience with these plants made me think of the beauty God has placed all around us. Who can doubt God's creation when such wonders abound! Genesis 1:12 tells of the beginning of God's creative beauty: "And God saw that it was good." And Jesus said, "Even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these" (Lk. 12:27).

God created the world with boundless beauty. Such beauty reminds us that God is present and will care for us all our days.



*Prayer: Dear Lord, help us not to neglect seeing the beauty in your creation. In the name of Jesus, the Lily of the Valley. Amen.*

Day 20

Friday  
01-26-2024

## LOST AND FOUND

This thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

-LUKE 15:32 (KJV)

As I grow older, I am more inclined to forget where I've put things. So I have developed the habit of asking God to help me find what I've lost, and God graciously responds.

In our scripture from Luke 15, we read of a lost coin, a lost sheep, and a lost son. Each was precious to the one who had suffered the loss, and great was the rejoicing when the lost was found.

Many people have lost something that they think they will never find: a reputation, innocence, faith, hope, joy, enthusiasm, vision, purpose. Many have lost their first love for God. But when Jesus told these stories, he was offering hope for restoration.

Yes, God is kind and helps us with everyday situations - like lost household items. But God is greatly concerned about people who are lost - those who have drifted away or who have never been close to begin with. God longs to bring all of us home and restore us. When we have lost our way in the struggles of life, we can come to God and pour our heart out to our loving Father. God will always welcome us, embrace us, love us, and restore us.



*Prayer: Dear God, may the love you show us through others lead us back to you. Amen.*

## ALWAYS PRESENT

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.

- REVELATION 22:16 (NIV)

Day 21

Saturday  
01-27-2024

It had been raining steadily for five days, and the local forecast was predicting another two days of equally bleak conditions. I found myself increasingly unmotivated to do much of anything, especially when it involved going outside. Taking out the trash, driving to work, letting the dog out - every- thing was a wet, depressing chore that sapped my energy and dampened my disposition.

Having not seen the sun in nearly a week, I decided to head to the gym in hopes that some physical activity might change my outlook. While driving through a particularly strong downpour, the rain suddenly stopped, the clouds broke, and the brilliant sun shone through long enough to change my perspective.

In that moment, I was able to recognize that though the storm had been shrouding the sun, it was never gone. So it is with God who, as the Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 31, will always be with us, never leaving or forsaking us.

Too often, we are so focused on worldly cares that we forget that even in the midst of our storms, Jesus is still "the bright morning star" promised in scripture. It is good to remember that clouds cannot stop the light of the sun; they can only obscure it for a time. In a similar way, Christ never leaves us. He is with us through it all, ordering our days and preparing straight paths for when the clouds lift.



*Prayer: Thank you, God, for your faithfulness every day, no matter the storm surrounding us. Amen.*











# 12 Expectations From the Fast

## We Expect God:

1. To increase our FAITH, eliminate our fears and override every curse.
2. To give us Divine Favor and Protection.
3. To Anoint us to supernaturally increase, multiply, prosper, take dominion over every area of our life and to cancel every debt.
4. To empower our membership to expand the Kingdom through Evangelism.
5. To Bless our family, marriage, and our children.
6. To give us clear directions to his Masterplan for our lives.
7. To give us total healing in our mind, body, and soul.
8. To give us deliverance from every form of bondage.
9. To make us reign as champions and winners in life.
10. To give us a testimony of the GREAT things He has done.
11. To make our witness stronger for God.
12. To hear and answer our prayers.

*This book has been compiled from the following sources:*

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