
21 DAY FAST

DEVOTIONAL



2021

When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert and fasted for 40 days and nights, he went knowing full well he would be tempted. He was hungry, uncomfortable, tired, and depleted. Each time the enemy tempted him, though, Jesus answered, "It is written."

In this, two characteristics of Jesus are displayed: He was hungry and weak in the flesh, yet full of the word of God and strong in his mission. Each lie, whisper and temptation was immediately rejected with truth from Scripture—and his mission never wavered. He came for the glory of the Father and the salvation of all people. This mission rooted him as he fought in this season of fasting.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

PSALM 73:26

In the weakness of our flesh, we make room for the strength of the Lord. By saying, "It is written," we are able to combat the temptations of this world and the attacks of the enemy. We gain strength when we devote ourselves to God through prayer, learn his Word and rely on his power in our daily lives. This story from Jesus' life is vital to our understanding of fasting. Fasting is a humbling of the flesh, saying "no" to the earthly things we crave, in order to say "yes" to more of God.

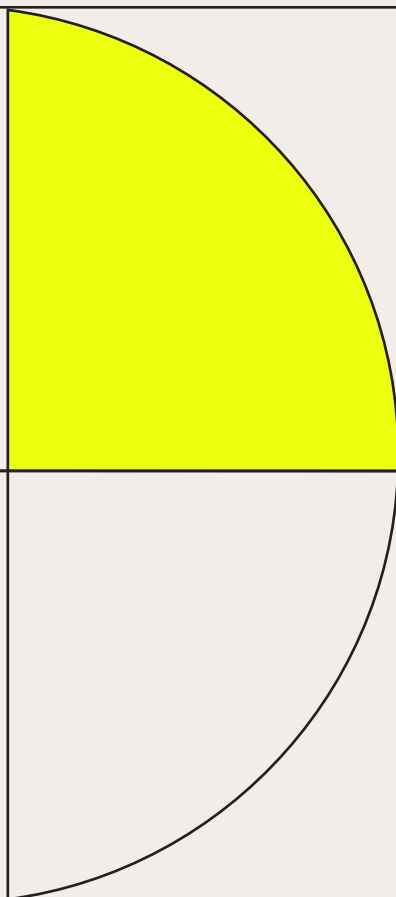
FAST ING

**FASTING IS EXCHANGING THE NEEDS OF THE
PHYSICAL BODY FOR THOSE OF THE SPIRITUAL.**

There is no “formula fast” or one “right” way. Fasting is about the condition of the heart. Our goal in fasting is to create closer intimacy with Christ.

While fasting in the Bible generally involved the abstention of food, some choose to fast from something such as media, TV or the internet.

Pray about what God is calling you to fast during this time, and see the blessing of God on your life as you faithfully and diligently seek him.



**Yes, LORD,
walking in the
way of your
laws, we wait
for you; your
name and
renown are
the desire of
our hearts.**

ISAIAH 26:8

Fasting is waiting on the Lord. Fasting is fighting the temptations of the flesh. Fasting is leaning into our mission and trusting God for breakthrough.

Fasting is devoting our hearts to seeking God's face. His glory is our aim. Fasting is an opportunity to devote extra time, extra energy and extra focus to the Lord.

During this 21 Day Fast, it is our prayer that you be led by the Spirit, answering the enemy with "It is written" and saying "Yes, Lord" as you wait on him!



WEEK

01

INTI

MACY

DAY 01

SUNDAY

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

read

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Genesis 1:27-31

reflect

Isn't it amazing to realize that we are made in the image of God? When we meet someone who has a baby we often comment on how similar the child looks to the parents. There is a certain joy that comes when parents observe their child taking on their traits, so wouldn't it make sense for our Heavenly Father to be thrilled with his people who also resemble him? In fact, after each day of God's creation he steps back and admires what he has done, calling it "good". But at the end of the last day, the day he created man, he acknowledges that "it was very good".

As we begin this fast, let's be reminded that we are created in the very image of God, and that he truly delights in us, just by the mere fact that he made us. We do not need to get his attention; he has been paying close attention all along. We do not need to earn his love; his love is not based on our actions. He is more than ready to respond to us.

respond

Speak this truth over yourself each day: "I am made in the image of God. I am loved and God delights in me."

"Lord, I begin this fast, not because you are far off, but because I need to refocus my attention on you. I look forward to connecting with my Heavenly Father on a deeper level. Your plan all along was for your children to have an unhindered relationship. That is my heart's cry for this fast, for this year, for my life. Meet me where I'm at, in Jesus' name, amen."

MONDAY

WALKING WITH GOD

read

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

Hebrews 11:5

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

Genesis 5:21-24

reflect

Sometimes much is said by how simply it is stated. The story of one of the most extraordinary men in history is not more than a few verses in the Bible, but it speaks volumes about a very powerful principle: walking with God. We don't know much about Enoch.

All we know is that he walked with God, pleased God, and he did not experience death. If we turn to Jude verses 14-15, we also learn that Enoch was a prophetic voice during his time on earth. He was not just faithful for the duration of a typical lifetime, he was faithful for over 300 years! If we ever get weary in doing good, let's remember Enoch's example. What a sweet reward from God to take him so that he did not have to experience death! Wouldn't it be amazing to have such a close relationship with God that we literally get "caught up" into heaven? While that may not be the destiny of many of us, may we have such a longing to be with God that heaven would become more of a home than any place here on earth.

respond

With so many distractions with social media, the news, and worries on our minds, it can become difficult to truly "walk with God." For the next few weeks, set your alarm for 7am, 12pm, and 7pm. These will be reminders for you to remember to take a walk with God. Even in the busyness of your day, or in the middle of a meeting, you can recognize God's presence, and shoot up a prayer. Let's make it a habit to talk with our Heavenly Father at all times. He's always ready to meet with his children.

"Lord, increase my ability to focus my attention on you. Help me to include you in all my life's activities. Draw near to me as I draw near to you. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 03

TUESDAY

ABIDE

read

"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. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:5-8

reflect

In 2018, a national survey showed that only 21% of American households are now putting up real Christmas trees while the rest prefer artificial ones. Some claim it's too dangerous. Others agree they don't want to bother with the maintenance. After all, it is a dead tree that we're trying to keep alive until Christmas. Dead trees, no matter how much we decorate them, will eventually brown and decay.

Jesus is teaching us an important lesson here. The only way that we can do anything that glorifies God is by "remaining", or abiding in Jesus. In fact, Jesus said "apart from me you can do nothing". We have a choice every day to try hard to please God, or to let the power of God flow through us naturally, because we're remaining in Jesus. The more we depend on him the greater our prayer life will become. Jesus promises that our prayers will be answered. How much better to let God answer prayers than for us to try to make them happen!

respond

Take some time right now and reconnect with Jesus.

"Lord, be my source of strength today. Help me spot my tendencies to try to do things on my own. Give me the power to bear much fruit so that I can glorify the Father. In Jesus' name, amen."

WEDNESDAY

PRESENCE

read

Moses said to the Lord, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" And the Lord said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

Exodus 33:12-17

reflect

In this passage Moses reminds God of his promises. God loves when we remember and remind. We take time to remember what kind of God he is, what he has done, and what he will do. Then, when things seem confusing, or lies begin to creep into our heads, we remind God of what he has done. God doesn't need the reminder, but it helps to build our faith and strengthen our relationship with him. Moses, even though he was such a mighty man of God, knew where his power rested. Moses understood that all he really needed was the presence of God with him. God responded to his desire for his presence. In the same way, he delights in making his presence known to us, giving us assurance, rest, love, and direction.

respond

When was the last time that you truly rested in God's presence? Yes, God has called you to great things, but God loves using people who receive well. Take time today to just be in God's presence and receive.

"Lord, I long for your presence just like Moses did. Make your presence known to me all throughout this day. Guide my thoughts and actions, and give me your rest. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 05

THURSDAY

LINGER

read

Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the “tent of meeting”. Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent. The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Exodus 33:7-11

reflect

Joshua was Moses' aide. He didn't have the same relationship with God that Moses did, but he wanted to get as close as possible. He chose to linger in God's presence even after Moses left. Joshua didn't linger because he hoped to get some leftovers of Moses' conversation with God. He wanted his own relationship with God. Relationships take time. We can't simply piggyback on the deep relationship that our spiritual parents or leaders have with God. God desires to have a unique relationship with each one of us, and calls us to deepen it by inviting us to linger—just a little while longer.

respond

What would it take to linger in God's presence a little longer today? What about skipping a meal and just sitting in God's presence? How about taking a break from media tonight or waking up a little earlier tomorrow morning? Jesus makes himself available and longs for those moments with us.

"Lord, I want to learn the power of lingering with you. Give me patience to not rush through my times with you. You are worth it. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 06

FRIDAY

STEALING AWAY

read

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 5:15-16

reflect

Even though Jesus was often needed, he often got alone. Jesus himself told the people in his hometown that he was called to “to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus was busy with what he was called to do, but more than anything else, he knew that he needed to get alone with his Father. Away from the crowds, away from the constant pressures.

Stealing away might not be convenient or comfortable for us. Finding a quiet spot in our lives can seem nearly impossible. The important thing is to make the most of our alone times to connect with God.

respond

Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the stresses, constant noise from your children, endless to-do list, or pressure at work? Does it feel like it's never-ending? Take advantage of the opportunities to steal away and be alone with God. Maybe that looks like five minutes in a corner of the bathroom or putting the phone in the other room. God is ready to meet with us in the midst of what he has called us to do.

"Lord, I steal away right now to be with you, my Father. I need you every hour, so give me grace in the hours that I am busy with what you've called me to do. Help me to take advantage of the open moments that you've given me to spend quality time with you. Thank you that you are always available to listen to me. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 07

SATURDAY

TRUE SATISFACTION

read

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

Psalms 63:1

reflect

The Psalms are full of little windows into David's intimacy with the Lord. This psalm gives us a unique aspect of our relationship with God: spiritual thirst. Physical thirst is usually satisfied by a good drink of water. Spiritual thirst, on the other hand, almost has the opposite effect. David, even though he had such a deep, satisfying relationship with God, longed for more.

Satisfaction and longing are both wonderful parts of our relationship with God. They are not mutually exclusive. Any rich relationship has both. The more we learn about the beauty of our King, the more we desire him. This psalm is an expression of a soul that has tasted a portion of who God is, and longs to be satisfied by more.

respond

You may find yourself in a place where you are satisfied with your relationship with God. There is more and he wants you to have it. You may have had rich encounters with Jesus in the past and you long for a deeper relationship today, or maybe you are new to your walk with Jesus. Pray this psalm out loud. Even if it feels like you have stronger desires for other things, God hears, and wants a relationship with you even more than you do.

"Lord, I do long for you. I don't seek satisfaction in any other thing. Only you can fill me up. Quench my thirst, Lord Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."



WEEK

02

PUR
ITY

DAY 08

SUNDAY

THE FATHER OF LIES

read

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Luke 4:5-8

reflect

The devil is cunning, but God protects us with truth. In John 8:44, Jesus calls him out as “the father of lies.” The devil can only trick us if we don’t know the truth. In this passage the devil claims that all authority had been given to him, yet in Matthew 28:18 Jesus declares “all authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me.” The devil’s claim was false, and his temptation worthless, because Jesus didn’t need what the devil was offering. He already had it.

How many times do we feel like we need what the devil is offering us? Contentment? Joy? Peace? Pleasure? How many times do we believe his many lies? The devil has nothing to offer that God hasn’t already given us or will give us. The devil can only mimic and pervert the truly good gifts that God generously gives to us.

respond

Ask the Lord to reveal the lies that the devil has spoken to you. Then, choose a Bible verse to memorize this week that combats those lies. Invite another brother or sister in Christ to memorize it with you.

“Lord, I acknowledge that you are my source for all good things. I do not need anything that the devil offers me today. Help me to recognize and renounce the lies that I have believed. Fill my mind with your truth so that I can live in victory, in the fullness of the abundant life that you offer. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

MONDAY

DON'T ALLOW FEAR

read

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:27

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:7

reflect

Fear is giving something or someone permission to paralyze us. The verses above describe fear with words like "troubled" and "timid." But notice the other words that describe the opposite of what fear is: "peace," "power," "love," and "self-discipline."

We all long for these things, but circumstances or lies from the enemy persuade our minds to spiral into a cycle of fear and worry.

While many of us desire to live our lives far from fear, there just seems to be too much resting on our performance and behavior. Or is there? Notice that in both these verses there is nothing about our own efforts, but rather, what God gives to us. Peace is given by God. Power, love, and self-discipline come from God. The devil wants us to focus on all the bad things that could happen, and then make us feel helpless and guilty for not preventing them. God wants us to focus on all the good things that are available to us, and then gives us the grace to receive them.

respond

Have you felt helpless and full of fear this past year? Write down the top three things that cause you the most fear and then ask God to give you the peace, power, love and self-discipline you need to live without worry or condemnation.

"Lord, I release all my anxieties and fears today. I receive all the good things that you freely give me. I reject the paralyzing lie that my life depends on my own efforts, and I accept your power to live each day in your peace. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 10

TUESDAY

OFFENSE

read

A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

Proverbs 19:11

reflect

Offense is an active word. It is done by one person to another. However, it is also something that can be actively received. Offense does not need to be an automatic response to the offender. This proverb shows us another way: patience. Patience allows for others' mistakes, even if they hurt us--even if they hurt us intentionally. This is not easy to swallow.

The word "overlook" has the meaning "to pass, to cross over." It means something similar to crossing over a bridge, or passing by someone on the sidewalk. It doesn't mean ignoring or avoiding the issue, but looking at the big picture. Romans 3:25 describes how God views the way we have offended him: "...God put [Jesus] forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins." If God can "pass over" our sins because of Jesus, we can do the same.

respond

Have you been deeply offended by someone lately? Maybe you felt judged for your political views, or someone said something hurtful. There may be a broken relationship that was caused years ago due to offense. Spouses, is there tension in your marriage because of this? Let's remember how God chooses to view our offenses. Today is the day to surrender all our painful experiences to the Lord, and pass over the bridge of offense.

"Lord, I choose today to release my offenders. I no longer hold their offenses against them. Give me your heart for them, and help me to become like you: patiently overlooking the offenses that come my way. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 11

WEDNESDAY

FROM COMPLAINT TO PRAISE

read

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

reflect

Have you ever wondered what God's will is for your life? This verse gives us a powerful truth: part of God's will for your life is to be thankful. Imagine your life where no matter what happens, you respond with gratitude. No complaining, no moping, no jealousy. This does not mean you live in denial of life's difficult moments. Even in those frustrating or painful situations, however, there is always something to be thankful for. But it takes a shift in perspective.

The key to experiencing such a change of attitude from complaint to praise is in the phrase "in Christ Jesus." Only Christ can change our perspective and lead us into this area of God's will. The very fact that we are in Christ Jesus is reason to praise him every moment of every day. Can you remember those dark days before you met Jesus? The hopelessness, the anger, the pride, the lack of peace? Now that we are in Christ Jesus, anything we go through, no matter how frustrating or difficult, will be with the help and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

respond

Take at least five minutes today and thank the Lord specifically for the many amazing things that he has done in your life. Some examples:

- *Your relationship with God*
- *Health*
- *Family/Friends*
- *Provision*
- *Unexpected blessings*

"Thank you, Lord for your power to transform my outlook on life. By the power of Christ Jesus, make me someone whose first reaction is to thank instead of complain. May my gratitude be a witness to those around me who have not yet experienced your hope and salvation. Make me shine for you today. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 12

THURSDAY

GOD OR MEN?

read

Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in [Jesus]. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue.

John 12:42

reflect

Picture yourself in these leaders' shoes. The Jewish people had waited for centuries for their Messiah. They had wondered what he would look like, what power he would demonstrate. Jesus had indeed done miracle after miracle. He spoke God's truth with an authority like no other scholar had ever spoken. This was he. He was without a doubt the Messiah. The eyes of these leaders were opened, and faith arose in their hearts.

But something cropped up in their hearts that halted their pursuit of the Messiah. Something that may seem so silly yet something that so easily entangles us: people pleasing. This overshadowed the pure faith that sprung up in their spirits. The opinions of man took preeminence over a living faith in Jesus, and the fire that at first burned inside them was diluted by fear. It is sad that we never hear about these leaders again. It is possible that they were some of the religious leaders who condemned Jesus to death.

What hinders my 100% devotion to Jesus? What holds me back from making Jesus the most important person in my life? Am I afraid of losing some sort of reputation that I have tried to maintain? Am I giving Jesus my second best when he deserves my all?

Jesus is worth it. Living my life to please him always yields unspeakable joy. No human can offer me that.

respond

Take the next few minutes and praise Jesus out loud. Then ask him to reveal to you any areas where you are trying to please people. Repent, and ask him to give you a heart that is 100% devoted to him alone.

"Lord, I long for an undivided heart that fears your name. No other person can fulfill me like you do. Deliver me from a fear of man and give me courage to live out a vibrant faith that blesses you. In Jesus' name, amen."

FRIDAY

THE BLAME GAME

read

But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Genesis 3:9-12

reflect

Taking responsibility for our mistakes is one of the most humbling things to do. Our natural tendency is to find some scapegoat instead of admitting our wrong. This often leads us into placing blame on someone or something else.

In this story, Adam is confronted about the sin that he committed. Yes, Eve was tempted first and gave the fruit to Adam, but Adam's sin was completely his responsibility, not Eve's. Later, God spoke to Eve individually concerning her sin. It's such a distasteful thing when a spouse places the blame on the person who is supposed to be his teammate, his partner. This is what a lack of humility can bring us to do.

The root of this sin is a lie that says, "You will lose your reputation if you admit what you've done wrong." In fact, the opposite is true. How many times has your respect increased when someone displays courage by confessing their error? Repentance brings restoration, and restoration brings real relationships, something that God desires for each one of us.

respond

Do you have a tendency to play the blame game? Do you avoid admitting your faults and sins? Take some moments and ask the Lord for a humble heart that refuses to blame others and that is ready to take ownership of your own actions.

"Lord, I refuse to play the blame game anymore. I acknowledge that I have flaws, but also that you have the power to change me. Give me the humility I need to have a deeper connection with you and with those around me. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 14

SATURDAY

WHAT WE CLING TO

read

Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

John 12:25

reflect

Jesus knows how dear our life here on earth can become to us. That is why he used such a strong word for how we ought to view this present life: hate. Jesus was trying to show such a contrast between this life and the one to come. They don't compare. Yet, so often we expend so much energy and time trying to get ahead in life, saving up for the newest piece of technology, or spinning our wheels trying to pursue a relationship.

Jesus calls us to put all our eggs in one basket. This requires full surrender. But look at what he promises: those who fully surrender will keep their lives forever! The amazing thing about following Jesus is that we can live to the fullest--not just in heaven, but here on earth! Jesus isn't asking us to drag our feet through this life until we get to heaven. No! He is asking us to surrender our desires and pursuits so that he can satisfy us with his abundant, eternal life starting now.

respond

What are you clinging to? If you were to lose that thing, how would it affect your joy? Ask Jesus to help you surrender your ambitions and desires and to replace them with his.

"Lord, I set my heart on you today. I admit that sometimes there are things here on earth that seem more beautiful than you. I surrender my life afresh to you today. I choose to live out your abundant life today. In Jesus' name, amen."



WEEK

03

IDENT
ITY

DAY 15

SUNDAY

DECLARATION

read

The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 18:21

reflect

What language are you speaking? The language of life or the language of death? Most of us are naturally quite fluent in the language of death. The language of death originates from the pit of hell. Satan loves when we talk about our lives negatively, or remind ourselves about how “we can’t do it” or “it’s just the way it is” or “this will never work.” The sad thing is that when we speak like this, it affects others. Think about how one negative word can bring down the mood in the whole house.

The language of life must be learned by the power of the Holy Spirit. The wonderful thing is that as children of God, we have full access to his power! The language of death, lies, and destruction must be combated through words of life. Satan is constantly trying to put words into our spirits, but when we declare the truths of God’s word, we silence the enemy. Not only that, but we build others up in the process. The more we cling to the Word of God, the more life flows out of us.

respond

This week read through Romans 8 each day. We will be diving into the powerful truths in this chapter. Take time to declare these truths out loud each day.

“Lord, I declare that I am a child of God. I am loved and capable of loving others. You have given me the power to learn the language of life. Give me opportunities to speak life over someone today. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

MONDAY

SPIRITUAL EYES

read

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Romans 8:9-11

reflect

We see things differently with Christ in us. The Spirit of God makes all the difference. The way we process events in our lives, the way we respond to criticism, the way we sacrifice so that others can be blessed. Many of us have heard the phrase "God helps those who help themselves." The Bible says we are incapable of helping ourselves. It is "the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead [who] will give life to your mortal bodies."

We are destined to die; the Spirit gives life. We are full of sin; the Spirit produces righteousness. We are mere mortals; the Spirit gives supernatural life. The world and the devil want us to think that we have everything to lose. The Spirit radically rescues us from the realm of the flesh into a new Kingdom with a new King. Life in the Spirit produces hope in the midst of hopelessness; joy in the midst of pain; peace as we face the unknown.

respond

Write down three areas in your life that have been causing you stress, anger, or pain lately. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you his perspective in each of those areas.

"Holy Spirit, I declare that I am part of a new Kingdom. I see things differently because you live inside of me. Thank you for giving me life that I could never produce myself. I choose to allow this life to flow out of me today. In Jesus' name, amen."

TUESDAY

SONS & DAUGHTERS

read

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:14-17

reflect

Adoption was never God's plan B. It was a beautifully crafted plan that gloriously opened a way for belonging that no other plan could. We didn't belong in God's family. We were enslaved to sin, fearful of God's wrath, far from all that was good. Because of the vast love of God, he chose to take these broken souls as full-fledged members of his family.

This was not done out of mere pity. God wanted us. He has always wanted us. Moreover, he has placed us in such a position within his family that we are not second-class children: we are co-heirs with Christ himself.

Because we so easily forget this incredible position we have as God's adopted children, God gave us the Holy Spirit who reminds us of everything that we have. The more we listen to the Holy Spirit, the more we will rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that we share in those sufferings with Christ. The more we listen to the Holy Spirit, the more we will fix our gaze on the future glory that is yet to come. Praise be to God for his infinite love!

respond

God is our Father by choice. He chose to adopt us even though we were far from him and had offended him. Spend a few minutes today thanking him for choosing you to be part of his wonderful family and providing you a place of belonging.

"Thank you Lord, that I am your adopted child. I didn't belong, but you chose me anyway. Thank you for the joy in the midst of suffering, and the hope that awaits me in glory. I live today as a full-fledged child of God along with all my brothers and sisters in Christ. In Jesus' name, amen."

WEDNESDAY

BEARERS OF GLORY

read

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

Romans 8:18-21

reflect

Usually when we speak of “glory” we are referring to God. This passage talks about a certain glory that awaits the children of God. Now, ultimately God deserves all the glory, but what these verses show us is that God wants us to share in his glory. We don’t know exactly what that will look like, but we can be sure that it is better and more amazing than anything we could ever imagine.

So amazing will this glory be that we cannot even compare it to the sufferings we experience at the present time. Sorrow will turn into joy, but that joy will be of such a caliber that will more than replace the passing sorrows we experience here on earth. Turmoil will be replaced with peace, but with an unimaginable peace that swallows up every conflict, stress, and rejection we have experienced during our whole lives. This glory is so beautiful that the entire creation is longing for the moment when this glory will be revealed. Brother or sister, you are destined for a life that is beyond your wildest dreams—and one that never ends. What a privilege to be a bearer of his glory.

respond

Glory awaits us. What an amazing promise to us! Ask the Lord to place a longing in your heart for that day when this glory will be revealed to us.

"I declare that I am a bearer of God's glory. I will share in his glory and nothing that happens in this world will even compare to what that glory will look like. Lord, I long for that day when I will see you face to face! In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 19

THURSDAY

GREAT PURPOSE

read

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30

reflect

So often we hear this passage quoted, and rightly so. It is a powerful reminder that God is graciously orchestrating our circumstances for his purpose. But what purpose? The verses that follow describe the details of this great purpose to which we have been called.

Spiritual concepts such as being foreknown, predestined, one of many brothers and sisters, called, justified and glorified would take pages to unpack. When we combine these truths, though, they reveal a picture of a very high calling. God does nothing randomly, and this includes his choice of you. He has a very unique purpose for your life, so of course he would work all things for your good. God wants you to successfully live out your calling.

respond

Take some time and thank God for choosing you and for calling you specifically. Ask him to continue to clarify that calling on your life. If you have time, take a deeper look at some of those terms that these verses use to describe you. God wants you to live up to your full potential.

"I declare today that I am chosen, called, justified, and glorified. I join my many brothers and sisters as I confidently step into my calling. Help me today to be conformed to the image of Jesus in an even deeper way. In Jesus' name, amen."

DAY 20

FRIDAY

CONQUERORS

read

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Romans 8:31-37

reflect

If you memorize only one chapter of the Bible in your life, Romans 8 is a great choice. If there is ever a concentration of truths for victorious living, this chapter is it. If there is ever a voice inside your head claiming that you are a failure, this passage soundly silences it.

How can anything be against us? The answer to all these questions is: nothing. No one. God is for us. He will not allow us to suffer alone. Yes, there are times when we may feel like “sheep to be slaughtered.” Yet, we know the end of all things. We are on the winning side! Complete and total victory is available to us now. This ought to embolden each of us as we face the challenges of each day. God will see to it that he gets the upper hand every time.

respond

Consider memorizing these verses. They will become a weapon in your belt against the lies of the enemy.

“I declare that I am more than a conqueror. Thank you, Lord, for your victory, and that I never need to fear defeat. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

DAY 21

SATURDAY

BELOVED

read

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

Romans 8:38-39

reflect

God is unchangeable, and so is his love. There are definitely powerful forces at work in our world, but none compared to the love of God. Love softens the hardest of hearts. But most of all, it originates from the most powerful being in the universe.

When God chooses to love, nothing can stop it. Think of all the reasons why Jesus should have stayed in heaven instead of coming to earth and dying an unjust death. The love that God had was greater than those challenges.

Because God loves us, now we are called beloved. Once we were far from God's love, now we have entered into his great love story. Once we were broken and marred by sin, now we have a new identity that marks us. Brother and sister, you are beloved. Rest in that truth, knowing that the One who loves you best will never change his mind.

respond

Let God love you today. Sometimes it takes awhile to silence the voices of dejection and failure. Make this a daily practice, to just sit silently next to your Greatest Love and receive. No one can receive for you. God takes great delight in you specifically.

"I declare my love for you, Lord, and I receive your love for me. Help me to define myself by your love so that I can be an instrument of this love to those you place around me. Thank you for always loving me deeply and faithfully. I am your beloved. In Jesus' name, amen."

We pray that this devotional encouraged and strengthened you in your daily walk with Jesus. Our prayer for you is that you would continue to open God's word and allow him to speak to you everyday. The format for this devotional is something that you can apply on your own. All you need is your Bible and a journal or something to take notes with. We recommend you begin reading in one of the gospels, for example the book of Mark. When you read, take a small passage and reflect on what God is saying to you. Then take a few moments and respond by asking yourself: "How should I apply this to my life today?" End your time by praying. Thank God for His word and ask God to use the Word to transform you. When you finish with one of the gospels there are a lot of wonderful reading plans that will help you guide you in your reading. There are some very good reading plans on the YouVersion app. God is looking forward to meeting with you! He loves you more than you know.