

21 DAY FAST DEVOTIONAL

21 Days of Learning to Pray Like Jesus

TWENTY TWENTY TWO

FASTING

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

Fasting is a humbling of the flesh, saying “no” to the earthly things we crave, in order to say “yes” to more of God.

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

But the primary aspect of fasting is that it always makes room for an increased life of prayer; without the increase of prayer, a fast is merely a diet.

DIDN'T YOU KNOW I HAD TO BE IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE

LUKE 2:49

For Jesus, a life of prayer superseded a prayer life. His very being and life became a life of prayer and devotion, it wasn't simply an item to be checked off of his daily to-do list. This characteristic of His life began before His preparation for ministry, and would be evident until His final days on the earth. Sometimes Jesus would draw away into solitude to pray; sometimes He would create His own sphere of silence in the midst of the noise but quietly and personally crying out to God; and other times, He did it in the midst of the public sphere, allowing others to experience and witness the personal interaction.

R.A. Torrey notes that Jesus prayed early in the morning as well as all night, that he prayed both before and after the great events of his life, and that he prayed "when life was unusually busy."

One way we can learn to pray is by looking at the prayer life of Jesus. Although the Gospels don't provide a detailed biography of Christ, they do offer captivating glimpses into His prayer life. Jesus prayed as an example to His followers. This is an example we continue to learn from. Through his prayer life, we see what it means to truly depend on God.

Pray about what God is calling you to fast during this time, and use this devotional guide as a way to learn first-hand what communion with God looked like for Jesus, and put it into practice the principles of prayer we learn from His life. Every day is guided by not only a passage from the life of Jesus, but a time where Jesus is either praying, or specifically teaching His disciples about prayer. We hope this guide is only the beginning for you, and that it launches you into a life of prayer for 2022. As you diligently and faithfully fast and pray, you will see the blessing of God on every part of your life.

**SOME OF
THESE
THINGS
ONLY
COME OUT
THROUGH
FASTING
AND
PRAYER.**

MARK 9:29



**YES, LORD,
WALKING IN
THE WAY OF
YOUR LAWS,
WE WAIT FOR
YOU; YOUR NAME
AND RENOWN ARE
THE DESIRE OF
OUR HEARTS.**

MORE ABOUT FASTING

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 ONE

SUNDAY

DAY 1

DOWNWARD PRAYER

READ

Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

Luke 3:21-22

**"THE TREASURE WE
HAVE IN HEAVEN IS
ALSO SOMETHING VERY
MUCH AVAILABLE TO
US NOW. WE CAN AND
SHOULD DRAW UPON IT
AS NEEDED, FOR IT IS
NOTHING LESS THAN
GOD HIMSELF AND THE
WONDERFUL SOCIETY
OF HIS KINGDOM EVEN
NOW INTERWOVEN IN
MY LIFE."**

- DALLAS WILLARD

**"PRAYER IS THE
CONDUIT THROUGH
WHICH POWER FROM
HEAVEN IS BROUGHT
TO EARTH."**

- OLE HALLESBY

REFLECT

Before Jesus began his life of ministry, He was baptized and received an affectionate affirmation from the Father. Even though Jesus was both God and man and had the power and authority to do the miraculous, He prayed to His Father and depended on Him to meet His earthly needs. In this moment, as a voice comes from heaven and a dove descends down, God shows us what true communion is. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are represented in perfect unity. Jesus received the adoration of the Father and is filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is showing that when we pray, we can experience the ultimate communion and togetherness between us and God, as we experience His joy, submit to His will, and are filled with the Holy Spirit. Prayer is how we present ourselves and our needs to the eternal, all-powerful Creator. While prayers move upward from earth to heaven, they also move downward. Upward prayer lifts our desires, concerns, needs, and confessions to God.

RESPOND

How is God leading you to a greater level of dependence on Him to start the year? What is it that you need today, this week, and this year, to live out God's calling for your life?

MONDAY

DAY 2

SLIPPING AWAY FOR SOLITUDE

READ

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.

Mark 1:35

REFLECT

Jesus often went to a solitary place to pray, but would emerge to engage His followers and minister to the crowds. His habit was to move from solitude to community and back again.

Jesus displayed that while community is needed for a fruitful life, so is time of prayerful solitude. It's in moments of silent solitude that what is truly deep inside of us – our fears, joys, beliefs, and struggles – is revealed and can be given to God. In order to have intimate connections with others, what is inside of us must be realized.

YOU MUST CULTIVATE THE CAPACITY FOR SOLITUDE, THE ABILITY TO BE SEPARATE, TO GATHER YOURSELF. SOLITUDE IS WHERE YOU FIND YOURSELF SO THAT YOU CAN REACH OUT TO OTHER PEOPLE AND FORM REAL ATTACHMENTS."

- SHERRY TURKLE

Spiritually, when we don't cultivate solitude and silence, we fail to grasp a sense of self to share with God. We don't know what's really inside of us to identify what ought to fill our prayer. And if we are never alone with God, it is likely we will not recognize the presence of God in others.

RESPOND

Why was it so important for Jesus to step away into solitude? Why is it important for us? Take some time in solitude today. Put your phone down, eliminate distractions, and commune with the Father. How can those times of solitude make us more aware of God's presence in the noisy times?

TUESDAY

DAY 3

TAKING OUR PRAYERS OUT OF
THE PARENTHESES

READ

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

Luke 11:1

REFLECT

While Jesus was praying, His disciples observed Him. It's notable that the disciples did not ask Jesus about the proper way to heal the sick, organize a church, or teach the scriptures. They also witnessed Him perform those acts, but they didn't ask Him how to do those, but they did ask Him how to pray. They recognized there was something different and unique about the way that Jesus prayed. It was the central, most important thing about Him. If His life were a car, prayer was the engine that gave the car power. Prayer was not just an air freshener or an accessory.

Although prayer was a common practice in their Jewish culture, they recognized something different about the way Jesus prayed. Jesus desired to teach and show them that prayer was intimate, unending, and the source of His life's strength and power. Prayer was central for Him, and He wants it to be central for us. It is not an optional accessory for us, it is not something to only tack onto the beginning or end of our day, or even an event of our day. It is the greater purpose, and the fuel that gives the necessary spiritual energy to every part of our lives.

RESPOND

How do we use prayer as an "add on" in our lives? Take inventory of your life – is prayer a focus? Is communing with God a priority? If not, why does that happen? When it becomes the central part of our lives, everything else becomes impacted by it. The things we formerly prioritized over prayer now become fueled by prayer – and as a result, fueled with God's inspiration, God's power, God's resources and God's touch.

WEDNESDAY

DAY 4

DON'T WAIT FOR THE NOISE
TO STOP!

READ

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Luke 18:1-8

REFLECT

For some of us, silence is the greatest obstacle to prayer. It might sound contradictory, but think about it. We live in a noisy world. Between the music, podcasts, television shows, text messages and phone calls, our attention is always being grabbed by something. Some studies suggest that we are exposed to nearly 10,000 advertisements every day. We are so used to noise that when the noise stops, our internal volume rises. We think of the phone call we forgot to return, the bill we need to pay, or the assignment at work or school that awaits us.

“THE TROUBLE IS, AS SOON AS YOU SIT AND BECOME QUIET, YOU THINK, OH, I FORGOT THIS. I SHOULD CALL MY FRIEND. LATER ON I’M GOING TO SEE HIM. YOUR INNER LIFE IS LIKE A BANANA TREE FILLED WITH MONKEYS JUMPING UP AND DOWN.”

- HENRI NOUWEN

What do we do with that inner noise, or that monkey, when we are trying to pray? Well, don’t pretend the monkeys aren’t there. Instead, welcome them in. We can present and submit whatever distracting ideas, tasks, or images that flood into our minds. We can start praying wherever our thoughts are. If we wait until the noise dies down, we’ll never pray at all.

RESPOND

Our lives are full of noise - and while it’s good to retreat away from it at times, we can’t always wait for the ideal conditions to spend time with Jesus. Reflect on the 7-12-7 practice of taking time at the beginning, middle, and end of your day to spend time with God, and consider incorporating that into your life year-round.

THURSDAY

DAY 5

WHAT DOES THE LABEL SAY?

READ

And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?" They answered and said, "John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

Luke 9:18-20

**"WHAT COMES INTO
OUR MINDS WHEN WE
THINK ABOUT GOD IS
THE MOST IMPORTANT
THING ABOUT US."**

- A.W. TOZER

REFLECT

Jesus, in this question, attempts to cut past all of the theological jargon. If you had to bottle up your relationship with God, what would the label describe it as? Jesus wants to know, 'What is the label that you approach me with? What is the label that you place on God?'

How we answer Jesus' question has the potential to change our lives. In the grand scheme of things, if we acknowledge that Jesus is the Savior of the World, is the living Word of God, and is God's Only Son, we will surrender to Him and live lives that glorify Him. Let's think even more specifically than that. If we acknowledge God as our ultimate Provider, we won't hesitate to give to Him; if we see Him as the Friend that sticks closer than a brother, we will walk courageously as we surrender our anxieties and fears to Him; if we view Him as all-powerful, we will approach His throne boldly with every one of our requests; and if we see Him as love, we won't sheepishly hide or cower, but we will open ourselves up to be vulnerable with Him.

RESPOND

What are the first things that come to mind when you think about God? Do you carry any insecurities into your relationship with Him? How do your past experiences factor into the filters with which you see and label God?

FRIDAY

DAY 6

NOT A SECOND THOUGHT

READ

Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 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 the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Luke 11:5-13

REFLECT

Read the parable again. Do you see the key to the parable? It's in verse 8: 'shameless audacity.' The Greek word is *anaideia*, literally meaning, 'without shame.' Jesus is saying that it's not the sleeping neighbor's friendship that will get him out of bed to help, but it's the desire to protect his own reputation that will. Jesus' teaching is simple: God does not answer prayers because of our reputation, but because of His. Jesus takes the focus off our righteousness and instead emphasizes God's character to not only do what He says, but to continually care for His people.

"I DISCOVERED AN ASTONISHING TRUTH: GOD IS ATTRACTED TO WEAKNESS. HE CANNOT RESIST THOSE WHO HUMBLY AND HONESTLY ADMIT HOW DESPERATELY THEY NEED HIM."

- JIM CYMBALA

We can often get too caught up with ourselves. Instead of asking with a 'shameless audacity,' we get in our own heads. We give a second, third (and countless) thought about whether we deserve what we're asking for, what we should be doing instead of asking, and what God might be thinking of us as we ask. But Jesus' teaching implores us to approach God with a shameless audacity – no shame, no second thoughts.

RESPOND

Do you ever hesitate to approach God because you're too caught up with yourself? Write down how your prayers would be different if you took on a shameless audacity; and then, pray those prayers!

SATURDAY

DAY 7

FORGIVE THEM

READ

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

Luke 23:34

**“TO BE A CHRISTIAN MEANS TO
FORGIVE THE INEXCUSABLE,
BECAUSE GOD HAS FORGIVEN
THE INEXCUSABLE IN YOU.”**

- C.S. LEWIS

REFLECT

Sometimes our greatest power as believers is an act of forgiveness. It's something we received from God when we didn't deserve it, and it's what God calls us to extend to others. Jesus, while being crucified, dishonored and disrespected, while hanging on the cross, cries out on behalf of His oppressors: "Father, forgive them."

Jesus showed how not to hold onto the anger, pain, and bitterness that can often linger when others have wronged us. Forgiveness removes judgment and aligns mercy for the other individual, releasing God's grace and power into their lives. Forgiveness allows us to end cycles of sin and bring healing to the world around us, creating a new, grace-infused future for ourselves and others.

RESPOND

Part of communion with God is leaving our earthly offenses behind – not just for a moment but once and for all. Take inventory of your heart today. Are there any lingering offenses that you have not forgiven someone for? Then take a moment and dream about the possibilities that lie ahead when you are no longer burdened with that pain. God wants you to forgive them, because it releases them and also releases you.





WEEK TWO

SUNDAY

DAY 8

TURNING FEAR INTO LOVE

READ

But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

Luke 22:32

REFLECT

After this prayer, the soldiers arrived to arrest Jesus, and His disciples were terrified; some fled and others attacked. Peter drew a sword and cut the ear of one of the soldiers. This is what the world's power looks like. It fights. It attacks. It kills. The strength Jesus was given, looked totally different. Jesus knelt to the ground, picked up the severed ear of the enemy, and healed him. Through prayer, what was fearful now was an opportunity for God's strength to be seen, for love to be shown. The strength God gives us is shown through love. When we pray God reminds us of who we are and how much we are loved. When you know how much you are loved you aren't afraid to give love away.

Throughout His journey to the grave, Jesus showed this strength because He knew He belonged to His Father. In spite of the betrayal and abandonment of His friends, in spite of the injustice of the authorities, in spite of the mocking, the insults, the ridicule, the physical and emotional pain, Jesus still found the strength to love because He knew who He was and whose He was.

RESPOND

How do we allow fear to control us, and what does it stop us from doing? Now, think about why love is the remedy to fear. How can you learn to be led by love over fear?

MONDAY

DAY 9

SEEING PAST OUR PRESENT PAIN

READ

Then they came to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus told His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took with Him Peter, James, and John, and began to be deeply troubled and distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is consumed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch.” Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour would pass from Him. “Abba, Father,” He said, “all things are possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Mark 14:32-36

REFLECT

Jesus, as He prays this prayer, is very aware of what lies ahead. Humiliation, abandonment, torture, and death. The gravity of His awareness lies in the brutal honesty of this prayer. Jesus asks not to suffer. This was Jesus at His most human, at His most vulnerable of moments.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam faced a similar decision between following God's will or His own. Instead of surrendering himself to God, Adam rejected the will of God and declared through his actions, 'My will be done!' His disobedience, which represents our own, unleashed sin, evil, and death into God's creation. Jesus, whom Scripture calls the second Adam, countered the first Adam's rebellion. While honestly confessing His desire to not follow His Father's plan to the cross, He abandoned His preference and submitted to the goodness, love, and power of the Heavenly Father.

Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus accepted the cross and its shame "for the joy set before him." Somehow, in the darkness of that garden and in the anxiety of what lay before Him the next day, Jesus was able to see what was on the other side of the cross. He saw the empty tomb. He saw Himself sitting next to the Father. He saw Himself enthroned over creation with all power and authority. He saw every knee in heaven and earth bowing and every tongue confessing that He was King. He saw you and He saw me. Through prayer, He saw that the coming dawn would overshadow any present darkness. This joy that is set before us is all we need to rise and take the next step forward.

RESPOND

Jesus was very honest with God in this moment. Have you been honest with God, allowing your heart to be vulnerable to Him? God wants to align your heart with His will, and often our ability to be vulnerable is what unlocks a new vision of God's will for our lives.

TUESDAY

DAY 10

REVELATION > KNOWLEDGE

READ

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, “Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.

Luke 9:28–36

REFLECT

We all have moments in life where ‘you just had to be there.’ We experience something, and it’s difficult to explain what really took place; but deep inside, we know that it changed who we are. When Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to the mountain, they were given a fresh revelation of Jesus. However, it starts as only knowledge to Peter. Peter takes in what he sees, and tries to implement his new knowledge. He tries to build tents around these figures as he attempts to control the moment and place parameters on what is spiritual. There is a difference between knowledge and revelation. Oftentimes, we can focus too much on our religious activity and unknowingly limit the space for transformation through God’s revelation.

But, Peter gets interrupted and is given a fresh revelation: “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.” The move of God in our lives has less to do with us and more with God. When we try to take charge of our lives and control things, we minimize God’s role, often unknowingly removing Him from the equation.

RESPOND

How do you try to control God’s plan by placing limits or paradigms of knowledge on it? What happened to Peter? And how did God get Peter’s attention? Today, God wants to get your attention – pray for a new revelation of His love and power today.

WEDNESDAY

DAY 11

THE SIMPLEST PRAYER CAN LINK
HEAVEN AND EARTH

READ

“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Matthew 6:5-6

**“WE NEVER
OUTGROW THIS
KIND OF PRAYER,
BECAUSE WE
NEVER OUTGROW
THE NEEDS WHICH
GIVE RISE TO IT.”**

- JOHN DALRYMPLE

REFLECT

Early on in life, Vincent van Gogh, a famous artist, was a missionary amongst coal miners in Belgium. The experience impacted him deeply, leaving him with a deep admiration for the working poor. They did not comprehend deep theology, but possessed God with a raw authenticity that was different than Van Gogh had seen before. In 1882, Van Gogh made a charcoal drawing of an elderly man in a chair near a fire with his face buried in his hard, peasant hands. The reason for the man's posture isn't immediately clear. Perhaps he's crying or exhausted, but Van Gogh revealed the truth with the drawing's title – *At Eternity's Gate*. It's a portrait of a peasant in prayer. Van Gogh would say, "This is far from theology, simply the fact that the poorest little woodcutter or peasant on the hearth or miner can have moments of emotion and inspiration which give him a feeling of an eternal home to which he is near."

Powerful prayer is available to the ordinary, simple, and even the ignorant. The simple prayer for food, safety, or thanksgiving offered in true dependency is always to be preferred over the elaborate prayer offered in self-righteousness. It's the kind of simple prayer Jesus taught His own disciples.

RESPOND

Why do we shy away from simple prayers? Today, be intentional about praying for small needs in quick ways. Jesus is as near as the mention of His name – even the simplest prayer can unlock Heaven's provision for you today.

THURSDAY

DAY 12

COMMUNION > COMMUNICATION

READ

“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

Matthew 6:7-8

“ALL OF US HAVE ONE ROUTINE PRAYER IN OUR SYSTEM; AND ONCE WE GET RID OF IT, THEN WE CAN REALLY START TO PRAY!”

- DR. ROBERT A. COOK

REFLECT

Communication is easier for some people than for others. While some people find it difficult to carry a conversation or explain things fully, others may be unable to tolerate silence, filling any verbal space with words. These tendencies exist in our prayers as well. Prayer does include communication with God, but that can be an incomplete and narrow understanding. Rather, prayer is about communion. It is primarily about relating to God and resting in His presence when words are not used. When we do employ words, we are confessing our dependency upon Him and our lack of faith in ourselves.

RESPOND

How do you usually communicate with God? God loves all communication from us, but sometimes we can get stuck in our own preferences and not listen, or simply take our rest in Him. Write out a prayer to God that articulates the state of your heart and the ways in which you desire to be closer to Him.

FRIDAY

DAY 13

A PATTERN, NOT
AN EMPTY REPETITION

READ

Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

Matthew 6:9-13

REFLECT

In teaching His disciples how to pray, Jesus models how to relate to God with a pattern. But it is just that – a pattern, not empty repetition. He did not say, ‘Pray in these words,’ but ‘Pray in this manner.’ It was not a prayer for us to memorize and recite. The model does show us that prayer begins with God’s interests, not ours: God’s name, God’s kingdom, and God’s will. It is then that prayer becomes the way that we are prepared for the proper use of His answer.

The structure provided by Scripture is meant to guide us into deeper waters of communion with God.

RESPOND

God hears every one of our prayers, but Jesus offers a pattern here – because it aligns us with God’s will. How can using this pattern reorient your mind and heart to God’s will?

SATURDAY

DAY 14

WATCH AND PRAY

READ

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”

Matthew 26:41

REFLECT

In 1999, two cognitive psychologists conducted an experiment now widely called the “invisible gorilla” test. People watching a video of a basketball team were asked to count the number of times the ball was passed between the players. Partway through the video, a person in a gorilla suit walked through the team thumping its chest as players passed the ball. About half of those watching the video were so focused on counting passes they never noticed the gorilla. The study concluded that our minds are wired to see what we expect to see and often miss what we do not intend to encounter.

Prayer trains us to see God where we might otherwise miss Him. Without heeding the command to ‘watch and pray,’ it is very easy to focus on everything other than God. Like the gorilla, He might be in the middle of our busy life thumping His chest to get our attention, but we never take our eye off the ball long enough to see Him. Prayer is a time to slow down, refocus, and notice God’s presence, creating an alertness to see Him in all the other aspects of our day.

RESPOND

How do we miss God when He tries to get our attention? Be intentional today, looking for His presence and His voice in places where you otherwise wouldn’t.





WEEK THREE

SUNDAY

DAY 15

REAL REMEMBRANCE

READ

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

Luke 22:14-19

REFLECT

Reflecting on the past was very important to God's people in the Old Testament. They were commanded to remember His Law by thinking about it day and night. Many times they were told to build memorials so that future generations would remember His faithfulness. In the Hebrew language, the meaning of the word remembrance was much different than it's meaning today. It was much more than thinking back on a good memory.

IN THE JEWISH WORLD, REMEMBRANCE WAS NOT A PURELY MENTAL ACTIVITY. IT WAS NOT SIMPLY ABOUT NOSTALGIA FOR THE PAST, BUT ABOUT ASKING GOD TO REMEMBER HIS PEOPLE AND COMPLETE HIS SAVING PURPOSE TODAY.

- PAUL BRADSHAW

Jesus' prayer in Luke was of thankfulness for God's provision and purpose, but it was also meant to show the power of remembrance. Although Christ died for our sins many years ago, the power of that sacrifice is everlasting. Remembering God's faithfulness in the past helps strengthen our faith today and to trust God for our future.

RESPOND

How has God been faithful to you in the past? How can that help you to see His faithfulness and goodness again?

MONDAY

DAY 16

SEEING GOD IN THE MIDST
OF DARKNESS

READ

“Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him. “For all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Are you not aware that I can call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?”

Matthew 26:52-54

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, temple officers, and elders who had come for Him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against an outlaw? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on Me. But this hour belongs to you and to the power of darkness.”

Luke 22:52-53

REFLECT

Jesus' enemies witnessed Him teaching in the Temple day after day, but waited until the nighttime to arrest Him. This was because they knew their actions were unjust and without reason. That's why, when the soldiers arrived in the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Him with swords and clubs, Jesus declared that this hour belonged to the darkness.

Jesus saw more than evil that night. He also saw the providence of God. Surrounded by the darkness and injustice that was unfolding in the garden that night, Jesus recognized that something deeper was happening. God's plan, foretold in Scripture, was being accomplished right before His eyes. What Jesus' enemies intended for evil, God was using to accomplish His good and perfect plan.

To have the perspective that Jesus had on that night, we need to allow prayer to seep into every part of our lives. As we carry our communion with God into everything we do and everywhere we go, we will begin to see certain places and situations as Christ sees them. Even in the hours of darkness, we will recognize the presence of the One who promises to never leave us.

RESPOND

How can we see God's greater plan in the midst of darkness or uncertainty? What does God want you to see differently today so that you can see a greater revelation of what He's doing now?

TUESDAY

DAY 17

IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, I
CAN'T EXPLAIN IT TO YOU

READ

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

John 14:8-14

REFLECT

CBS News anchor Dan Rather once interviewed Mother Teresa and asked, 'When you pray, what do you say to God?' 'I don't say anything,' she said. 'I listen.'

'Well, okay,' Rather replied, 'When God speaks to you, then, what does He say?'

'He doesn't say anything. He listens.'

Rather was stumped, dumbfounded, confused. He had no follow-ups. Mother Teresa simply added, 'And if you don't understand that, I can't explain it to you.'

She knew, like Jesus, that prayer was communion with God, not just talking to Him. When we have true communion with God, we enter into His presence and connect in a way that only happens in prayer. We are meant to live in unending connection with our heavenly Father, whether alone or with others, both in silence or with speech.

RESPOND

What are the things that take away our communion with God in our lives? How can we protect it, in order to prioritize the most important relationship in our lives?

WEDNESDAY

DAY 18

WHAT'S HIS IS OURS

READ

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

John 17:1-5

**"A PRAYER FOR SELF IS NOT BY ANY MEANS
NECESSARILY A SELFISH PRAYER."**

- R.A. TORREY

REFLECT

Jesus began the prayer in John 17 by praying for Himself. The word glory – which is used to describe the magnificence and holiness of God – is used five times in these verses and eight times in this prayer. It is because of this glory that we have the gift of eternal life. What is eternal life? It is knowing God personally. Not just knowing about God, but having a personal relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot know the Father apart from the Son.

Jesus glorified the Father in His miracles; Jesus glorified the Father in His suffering and death. While we often see the cross as a display of man's sin in crucifying Jesus, it ultimately magnified the grace and glory of God.

And because He shares His glory with us, we have access to His victory. His victory is our victory; His life is our life.

RESPOND

Have you believed any of the enemy's lies recently? Anything that has whispered, 'you're not enough,' or 'that's too large for you?' Jesus not only came to give you eternal life, but to offer you a place to share in His glory, in His victory.

THURSDAY

DAY 19

A FULL CUP

READ

“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”

John 17:6-19

REFLECT

“TO PRAY, I THINK, DOES NOT MEAN TO THINK ABOUT GOD IN CONTRAST TO THINKING ABOUT OTHER THINGS, OR TO SPEND TIME WITH GOD INSTEAD OF SPENDING TIME WITH OTHER PEOPLE. RATHER, IT MEANS TO THINK AND LIVE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.”

- HENRI NOUWEN

As Jesus prays for His disciples, He asks for a filling on their behalf, “that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.”

Unlike other forms of meditation, prayer is not only about emptying our minds, or releasing our burdens, or replacing negative thoughts. These may have some benefit, but they fall short of what we have access to in prayer. When we pray like Jesus, we don’t merely empty ourselves or escape from the world, but we are filled with the presence of God, where His joy overflows. We are positioning our hearts to be filled with all the fullness of God, and to carry His presence into all we do.

RESPOND

Pray about the empty places in your life. How can God fill them? He wants to use you, but we need fresh, constant fillings of the Spirit to be used as He has designed.

FRIDAY

DAY 20

COME TOGETHER AND
STAY TOGETHER

READ

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

John 17:20-26

**“CHRIST'S CHURCH IS SUPPOSED TO BE A
BLESSING AND HIS CHURCH IS SUPPOSED
TO BE BLESSED!”**

- CHARLES SPURGEON

REFLECT

Jesus' conclusion to John 17 is a prayer of unity. He knows that the most powerful testimony to an unbelieving world will be a unified collection of believers: "Then the world will know..."

Being a blessing and receiving His blessing is impossible without unity. The Church – the collection of believers – were created to glorify God, edify His believers, and evangelize the world. And the key identifying feature of our belonging to Christ is our love for one another. Our love is exemplified by unity.

As followers of Christ, we are called to take a stand against separation. When separation of the believers takes place, it causes us to be divided from Christ, divided in our hearts, and divided from each other.

RESPOND

Why is unity so important, and yet so difficult to maintain at times? What are the roots of division?

SATURDAY

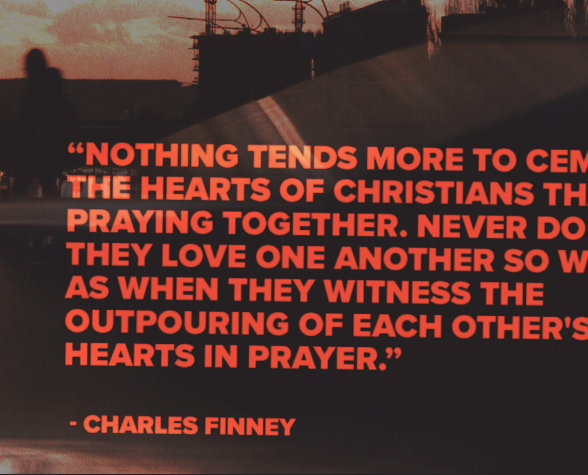
DAY 21

SPIRITUAL AGREEMENT

READ

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Matthew 18:19-20



**“NOTHING TENDS MORE TO CEMENT
THE HEARTS OF CHRISTIANS THAN
PRAYING TOGETHER. NEVER DO
THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER SO WELL
AS WHEN THEY WITNESS THE
OUTPOURING OF EACH OTHER'S
HEARTS IN PRAYER.”**

- CHARLES FINNEY

REFLECT

Jesus offers a bold promise to us in this passage, but it is based upon the condition of agreement. Spiritual agreement begins with being in agreement with Jesus and His Word. Agreement is a point of contact, a catalytic reality that God responds to, blesses, and rewards.

The key to this verse is the word “agree.” In the original text, this is the Greek word *symphoneo*. From this word we get “symphony.” The secret Jesus reveals to his disciples is that when two or three or a hundred of us come into explicit agreement in prayer, and our petitions align with God’s will, our combined prayers arise before the throne of God as a wonderful symphony, a band of finely tuned instruments making a melodic sound.

Agreement opens the door to hosting His presence and opens the door for Heaven’s miraculous provision. When multiple people bring their faith together in agreement, Heaven invades our earthly realities!

RESPOND

Today or later this week, gather with fellow believers and pray in agreement for His kingdom. Pray for your neighbors. Pray for God’s blessing to be poured out on your community and that people who do not know God or who are brokenhearted will be restored. When one person prays, come into explicit agreement and say, “Yes, Lord.”

21 DAY FAST DEVOTIONAL

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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.

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