

EYES TO SEE
EARS TO HEAR

10 DAYS

OF PRAYER & FASTING

10 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

JANUARY 2 - 11

Intro

Dear Church,

There's nothing like a fresh start. A clean slate. A new day. The turning of a page.

You recognize the opportunity to begin afresh if you've transitioned into a new location, office, room, car, etc. Regardless of how you left the previous space, you acknowledge the chance to be intentional about what you bring into the new space. Just because you had something in the last space doesn't mean you want it in the new.

So it is with a new year. As good or bad as the last year has been, you and I have an opportunity to be intentional about what we do with the new year. Habits, attitudes, addictions, relationships, etc., can be left behind, and we can begin anew.

This fresh start is spiritual, as well.

For the last several years, we have begun the year with a season of prayer and fasting. It's a season of consecration, a period of dedicating ourselves to God. In these intentional and purposeful moments, we seek to clear our spiritual eyes and ears to see and hear God.

From January 2 to January 11, I ask that you join us for 10 Days of Prayer and Fasting. Beyond your usual routines, enter into a focused period of prayer. In addition, commit yourself to fasting—the giving up of food (and other things) for the purpose of drawing near to God. Prayerfully choose to abstain from something of significance in order to express your humility and hunger for God. Unlike any other disciplines, prayer and fasting have extraordinary power to open our communication with God.

As you consider your fast, this resource will provide prayers, devotions, and information to help you grow.

To close this period of consecration, we'll gather for a powerful time of prayer and worship on Wednesday, January 11th.

I'm looking forward to all God will show us and speak to us.

Blessings,

Pastor Allen

Pastor Allen

Father, give us eyes to see and ears to hear.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lifestyle Prayer	4
The Lord's Prayer	5
Warfare Prayers	7
Personal Prayer Targets	9
Prayer for Those Who Need God	10
Fasting Information	11
Daily Devotions	
Day 1: Vision	15
Day 2: Humility	16
Day 3: Forgiveness	17
Day 4: Hunger	18
Day 5: Purity	19
Day 6: Listen	20
Day 7: Wisdom	21
Day 8: Freedom	22
Day 9: Power	23
Day 10: Boldness	24
My Prayer & Fasting Journal	25

LIFESTYLE PRAYER

How do we make prayer a part of our everyday life? We can learn from three things that Jesus did...

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed (Mark 1:35).



• **A CERTAIN TIME**

Jesus got up very early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. In order for prayer to work, we should do the same. Make a daily appointment with God and keep it.

• **A CERTAIN PLACE**

Jesus had a prayer place. Your prayer place needs to be an undistracted environment where you can pray out loud and perhaps have some worship music playing in the background.

• **A CERTAIN PLAN**

Go into your prayer time with a plan. If it changes that's fine. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave His disciples a prayer outline. We call it the Lord's Prayer. This outline along with several other tools are available in this resource.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray..." (Luke 11:1).

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever"
(Matthew 6:9-13).

"Our Father in heaven..."

1. CONNECT WITH GOD RELATIONALLY

You have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15 NLT).

God loves for us to call Him our Father. Establish your intimate relationship with Him and thank Him for the relationship you have with Him.

"...Hallowed be Your Name..."

2. WORSHIP HIS NAME

God's name is a place of protection—the righteous can run there and be safe (Proverbs 18:10 MSG).

What are His Names?

- Righteousness – He makes me clean
- Sanctifier – He has called me and set me apart
- Healer – He heals all my diseases
- Banner of Victory – He has defeated my enemy
- Shepherd – He speaks to me and leads me
- Peace – He is my peace in every storm
- Provider – He supplies all of my needs

"...Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."

3. PRAY HIS AGENDA FIRST

He will always give you all you need from day to day if you will make the Kingdom of God your primary concern (Luke 12:31 TLB).

God's priorities:

- Saving the Lost
- Guiding those in authority – parental, spiritual, governmental, workplace
- His will in us

“...Give us this day our daily bread...”

4. DEPEND ON HIM FOR EVERYTHING

I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth! (Psalm 121:1-2 NLT).

Ask God for what you want and need and then trust Him for the answer.

“...Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors...”

5. GET YOUR HEART RIGHT WITH GOD AND PEOPLE

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Ask God to check your heart and motives. Receive His forgiveness for any area that He brings to mind. Forgive anyone who has offended you in any way. You can even forgive people in advance.

“...And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one...”

6. ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12).

Take your stand against the enemy and fight the good fight of faith. Every lie that the enemy has told you should be replaced with the truth of God's Word.

“...For yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever.”

7. EXPRESS FAITH IN GOD'S ABILITY

“Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jeremiah 32:17).

End your prayer time by reminding yourself of God's ability.

Return to praise and make your faith declarations.

- “Yours is the Kingdom” – all rule belongs to You
- “Yours is the Power” – all mightiness flows from You
- “Yours is the Glory” – Your victory shall be complete

WARFARE PRAYERS

Prayer is not only communion with God; it is confrontation with the enemy. These prayers are very helpful in spiritual warfare.

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people (Ephesians 6:11-18).

THE ARMOR OF GOD

(based on Ephesians 6:13-17)

"Thank You, Lord, for my salvation. I receive it in a new and fresh way from You and I declare that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ and the place I have in Your kingdom. I wear Your righteousness today against all condemnation and corruption. Cover me with Your holiness and purity—defend me from all assaults against my heart. Lord, I put on the belt of truth. I choose a lifestyle of honesty and integrity. Expose the lies I have believed, and show me the truths I need today. I choose to live for the Gospel in every moment. Show me where You are working and lead me to it. Give me strength to walk daily with You. I believe that You are powerful against every lie and assault of the enemy. You have good in store for me. Nothing is coming today that can overcome me because You are with me. Holy Spirit, show me the truths of the Word of God that I will need to counter the traps of the enemy. Bring those Scriptures to mind today. Finally, Holy Spirit, I agree to walk in step with You in everything as my spirit communes with You in prayer throughout the day."

THE WEAPONS OF WARFARE

(based on 2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

"Father, Your Word says that no weapon formed against me shall prosper (Isaiah 54:17). Therefore I declare that no weapon formed against me prospers this day or any day to come in Jesus' name. Your Word says that trouble will not arise a second time (Nahum 1:9). Therefore I declare that Satan cannot make trouble for me again, in this manner, as he did in the past in Jesus' name. I declare all of these prayers accomplished and brought to pass by trusting you through faith and expectation in the name of Jesus. Lord Jesus, I confess to You all of my sins this day, yesterday and every day past. I repent and renounce them, those known and unknown, those of omission and commission, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do. I lay down at Your feet all of the sins of the flesh, the tongue, and of the heart, and all unholy thoughts and actions. Thank You, Lord, for shedding Your precious blood for me.

I stand on Your Word. The enemy is driven out from before me, above me, around me, and below me; from my home, workplace, church and its ministries, children, and loved ones; from my works and labors, land, and my presence. I declare that he is not able to stand against me,

and his works are taken captive and destroyed. No weapon formed against me will prosper, for the Spirit of the Lord shall raise a standard against them. I declare all of these things accomplished by Your Word. Jesus, my Lord, I give You thanksgiving, praise, glory, honor and worship for Your righteousness and holiness given to me by Your Word on my behalf.”

PROTECTION PRAYER

(based on 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, 10:3-5; Romans 12:1,2)

“Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to You. I submit myself only to the true and living God and refuse any involvement of the enemy in my life. I choose to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. I pull down every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ. I pray and thank you for a sound mind, the mind of Christ.

Today and every day I ask for protection over my spouse; each of my children; our immediate family members, relatives, friends, acquaintances and myself. I also ask today for protection during all of our travels; for our provision, finances, possessions, health, safety, and welfare. I put all of these things under the covering of Your precious blood and declare that Satan cannot touch them, on this day or any day to come.”

GENERAL CONFESSION PRAYER

(based on Romans 10:10; James 5:16; I John 1:7-9, 3:8)

“Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. You are the Messiah, come in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil. You died on the cross for my sins and rose again the third day from the dead. I now confess all my sins and repent. I receive your forgiveness and ask you to cleanse me from all sin. Thank You for redeeming me, cleansing me, justifying me, and sanctifying me in Your blood.”

FORGIVENESS PRAYER

(based on Matthew 6:14,15; Leviticus 19:18)

“Lord, I have a confession to make. I have not loved, but have resented certain people and have unforgiveness in my heart. I call upon You, Lord, to help me forgive them. I do now forgive (name them). I also forgive and accept myself in the name of Jesus Christ.”

PRIDE PRAYER

(based on Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 26:12; 1 Timothy 3:6)

“Father, I come to You in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know pride is an abomination to You. I renounce anything that would cause me to have pride in my heart in dealing with other people. I renounce these and turn away from them. I humble myself before You and come to You as a little child.”

Study Proverbs 6:16-19 and remember that fasting is a means by which a person humbles himself before the Lord.

PERSONAL PRAYER TARGETS

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Pray for those in authority and those under your authority.

MY GOVERNMENT

- President
- National leaders
- State leaders
- City leaders

MY FAMILY

- Spouse
- Children
- Parents
- Siblings
- Extended family

MY CHURCH

- Pastor & Staff
- Volunteer Teams
- LifeGroup leaders
- LifeGroup members

MY LIFE

- Employer
- Co-workers
- Employees
- Teachers/Professors
- Close friends



THOSE WHO NEED GOD

1. PRAY THAT THE FATHER WOULD DRAW THEM TO JESUS

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him (John 6:44).

2. BIND THE SPIRIT THAT BLINDS THEIR MINDS

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4).

3. LOOSE THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION (SONSHIP)

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15).

4. PRAY THAT OTHER BELIEVERS WILL CROSS THEIR PATHS AND ENTER INTO POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field (Matthew 9:38).

5. LOOSE THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION ON THEM SO THEY MAY KNOW GOD BETTER

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better (Ephesians 1:17).



FASTING INFO

Biblical fasting involves abstaining from eating (and/or drinking) for spiritual purposes.

In the Old Testament, Israel celebrated certain annual fasts, the most prominent being the Day of Atonement. There were also occasional fasts tied to specific historical events, sometimes individual and sometimes corporate. Here are a few of the occasions for fasting: at a time of grief (I Sam. 31:13; Nehemiah 1:4), at a time of repentance (I Sam 7:6; I Kings 21:27), as an expression of humility (Ezra 8:21; Psalm 69:10), and as an expression of a need for God's guidance and help. What all of these fasts share in common is that they were *an expression of dependence on God*.

Several New Testament passages give us insight about fasting.

Fasting teaches us that God's Word nourishes us: Matthew 4:1-4 records the only example of Jesus fasting, just prior to His being tempted in the wilderness. He faced temptation with these words, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3-5 which talks about the 40 years Israel spent in the wilderness, depending daily on manna to sustain them. He says that God humbled them and let them be hungry in order to teach them to depend on God's Word to sustain them. By His example of fasting, Jesus reminds us that food alone can't sustain us. We need to be nourished by God's Word.

Fasting teaches us that doing God's will sustains us: John 4:31-35 records Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. When the disciples return, they encourage Jesus to eat. He responds by saying, "I have food to eat that you know not of." Then He adds, "My food is to do the will of the Father." Again, Jesus reminds us that food alone is not enough. We are sustained by doing God's will.

Fasting teaches us that Jesus Himself sustains us: In John 6:48-50 Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die." We see this pictured symbolically in the bread and the cup of the Lord's supper. Jesus is the source of eternal life. Fasting is feasting on Jesus.

Jesus assumed that fasting would be a part of His disciple's spiritual life. In Matthew 6:16-18, He says, "*when* you fast," not "if you fast." He warns us not to fast to impress people, but to be near to the heart of God.

What is the purpose of fasting?

Fasting is designed to intensify our dependence on God by weakening our dependence on food and other things.

How does it do that?

Fasting reveals and heals our dependence on food (and other things) to fill the discomfort caused by low self-esteem, unfulfilling work, unloving relationships, uncontrollable circumstances, etc. It removes the false peace derived from the pleasure of eating.

Richard Foster says, “More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. We cover up what is inside us with food and other good things, but in fasting these things surface. If pride controls us, it will be revealed almost immediately. David writes, “I humbled my soul with fasting” (Psalm 69:10). Anger, bitterness, jealousy, strife, fear—if they are within us, they will surface during fasting.”

Fasting teaches us that we can go without getting what we want and survive. Fasting can free us from having to have what we want. Therefore, fasting can teach moderation or self-control, not only in relation to food, but in other areas as well. It teaches contentment. (I Timothy 6:6)

Fasting expresses and deepens our hunger for God. Richard Foster says, “Fasting reminds us that we are sustained “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God:” (Matt. 4:4). Food does not sustain us; God sustains us. In Christ, “All things hold together” (Colossians 1:17).

Therefore, in experiences of fasting, we are abstaining from food or other activities and feasting on God’s Word. Fasting must always, first and foremost, center on God. It must be about Him.

Step 1: Clarify the purpose of your fast

Why are you fasting? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically. Fasting is God-led and God-initiated. That means that He fuels a desire to fast and pray. He loves it when we fast.

Step 2: Specify the kind of fast you will do

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast. (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14,15) For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long you will fast - one meal, one day, one week, several weeks, certain days (beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts)?
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake - discussed in the Types of Fasts section below.
- What physical or social activities you will restrict.
- How much time each day you will devote to prayer and God’s Word.
- Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life’s pressures tempt you to abandon it.

Step 3: Prepare your heart, mind, and body for fasting

Fasting is not a spur-of-the-moment thing. It is planned. We must prepare. The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Un-confessed sin can hinder your prayers. There are several things you can do to prepare your heart.

- Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.
- Do not rush into your fast. Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high fat and sugary foods. Eating raw fruit and vegetables prior to your fast is helpful. Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.
- Prepare your heart and mind: Remember that God is your Father and He loves you and is for you.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3,4). Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1, 2). Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others. (Psalm 48:9,10; 103:1-8, 11-13)
- Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart. (Hebrews 11:6)
- Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit. (Galatians 5:16,17)
- Finally, and of deep importance, Jesus instructs us in Matthew to not let others know about your fasting. The strict details of your fast should not be something you constantly talk about to others. It should remain between you and God.

Types of Fasts

Now that we have explored the Old and New Testament teaching and instruction on fasting, we can proceed to discuss specific kinds of fasts.

Biblical fasting almost always concerns food. Since the purpose of fasting, as we saw above, is to focus on God, to humble ourselves and to remind ourselves that we are sustained by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, then the task in fasting is connecting our "going without" to "hungering for God." This takes time, focus and prayer in itself. Please do not expect to be an "expert" at fasting right away. Fasting is a discipline that can take a very long time to understand well. Also, do not let this fact deter you or intimidate you.

Fasting is not unlike a beautifully written masterpiece of literature. It is simple enough for a student to understand and enjoy, and yet magnificently rich enough for the scholar to devote his/her entire life to.

Abstaining from certain types of foods

This type is a good one for beginners to fasting or those with health needs and special or restrictive diets. Choose to abstain from something like breads, sweets, sodas, coffee, or even red meat. Perhaps spend some time reading through Daniel's fast in Daniel chapter 1 and

chapter 10. Stick to only fruits and vegetables like he did or something similar. Check out www.daniel-fast.com for helpful information about this type of fast.

Determine the timing and duration of your fast and begin. You may choose to go without this specific type of food on only certain days like Fridays, or you may go without during the weekdays only or perhaps every day. Finally, choose the duration of your fast. This fast is 10 days but that does not mean you must go without for all of the 10 days. Determine the timing and duration ahead of time and stick to it. Rather, pray through it.

Abstaining from all food - Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9

This kind of fast is more difficult but can be broken up by timing and duration. This seems to be the most prevalent of the fasts we see in the Bible. It is also the most intimidating, but refuse to let it scare you. Fasting from all food is not scary if you determine beforehand when you will do so and for how long. Here are some ideas.

- Start slowly. Begin with fasting for only a part of a day (lunch, or lunch and dinner). Do this for one day a week, or perhaps three days a week. You determine the timing and duration. Take a step of faith. Fasting is risky and involves our faith.
- Next, try fasting from food but not beverages. This means that according to your timing and duration, you would not eat any solid foods but only water, juices, smoothies, or perhaps simple soup broths.
- Do this for the first one or two weeks. Devote the time that you normally would eat to Scripture reading and prayer. Focus on Jesus' statements about food.
- Next, try a 24-hour fast. This means that you get up and eat a good breakfast and drink only water or juice until the following breakfast the next day. Set aside specific time, during normal meal times if possible, to pray and seek God.
- Finally, you may progress to a two or three day fast. For some, progression may lead to a multi-day, even multi-week fast. But remember the purpose of your fast.

Abstaining from entertainment - Daniel 6:18

The king's voluntary "fasting" from entertainment in the time of Daniel helps us further understand yet another type of fast. Fasting from entertainment can be particularly helpful and accessible to kids and teens.

Think of abstaining from television, iPads, video games, all reading except the Bible, music, texting, etc. for the duration of your fast. This can be a very powerful decision even as a supplement to food fasts.

Choosing your fasting plan is a very personal decision. We are all at different places in our walk with God and our spirituality should never be a cause for comparison or competition. There is nothing more "inherently spiritual" about one type of fast as opposed to another. Your personal fast should present a level of challenge to it, but know your body, know your options, and most importantly, seek God in prayer about this and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do. It's also important to not let what you eat or do not eat become the focus of your fast. This is a time to disconnect enough with your regular patterns and habits in order to connect more closely to God.

If you do not choose to fast, or no matter what kind of fast you choose, please seek God with us in prayer.

Day 1: Vision

Ephesians 5:13 (NASB 2020) But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

As the dark of night was slowly overcome by the dawn of a new day, I sat quietly, anticipating what my eyes might behold in the fullness of light. Having been to the location countless times, I knew the landscape well. Just outside the front window was an open field, spotted with a few shrubs and a line of trees in the distance.

Beyond what I could see with the limited light stood a feeder. A feeder that would soon dispense corn and beckon the deer, birds, and squirrels to come and dine. Again, I had beheld it in the day and was convinced of its existence. Nevertheless, I couldn't see it...

To my natural eye, the view before me was dim and lifeless. In *my* understanding, nothing but darkness stood before me.

But as I lifted my binoculars, I began to see a whole new world. It wasn't lifeless after all. Where I saw a void, a young deer stood dining on the remnants of yesterday's meal. Though nothing was scheduled to happen for another thirty minutes, it was already present.

What was the difference? Light. Vision begins with light. In fact, vision is the process of light. And what my eyes were not able to process naturally, the binoculars accumulated all available light and projected it into the lenses.

As I meditated on that lesson, I couldn't help but think how much I'm missing in the natural realm, without the illumination of God's Spirit. Before us, there are realities, not projections of our imagination, desires, or hopes, but spiritual realities that we cannot see without the Holy Spirit.

As we begin a New Year and this dedicated time of Prayer and Fasting, let's ask God to give us vision—supernatural vision to see what already exists, but we fail to see without His light.

— Pastor Allen Townsend

Prayer:

Father, as I enter into this season of prayer and fasting, will You illuminate the natural and spiritual realities that I cannot see in the natural? Allow me to see what already exists, but I have not seen. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 2: Humility

James 4:10 (NASB 2020) Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Humility is the foundation of all prayer. Humility says, “Lord, I am empty without Your fullness; I am broken without Your wholeness; I am helpless without Your strength; I am clueless without Your wisdom. Apart from You, I am nothing. I need You! I need you so desperately that I am pouring myself out to You in prayer.”

Andrew Murray once said, “Humility is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self is nothing.” Let us come to God with humble hearts knowing that He is God and we are not. Let us forsake any effort of promoting ourselves, instead let us trust God to promote His Kingdom through us as we more fully depend on Him.

But where does humility come from? Not false humility, but the real deal. The kind you can’t fake.

I believe it comes from a deep-seated belief that God is the source of all that we are and all that we have. And it’s the belief that any “success” in this life ultimately comes from Him. Humble people believe that whatever they’re being praised for wouldn’t be if it weren’t for God. Whether it’s His hand in the events and circumstances, His hand in the building of godly character, whatever is good in them, it’s ALL from Him.

If you really stop and think about what we’d be without God, it’s not a stretch to give Him the credit. He has utterly transformed us. He continues to work powerfully in and through us. All by ourselves, we’d be a lot less than we are with Him living inside us.

One of my favorite Proverbs (23:7 NKJV) says, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” If we truly think in our heart that we deserve the credit, that it’s really our tenacity, our brains, our personalities that’s making us successful, then we will never be humble.

God is the Creator and Sustainer of every bit of our life and success. He can end it in a heartbeat or allow a heart to stop its beat. Only with this realization will we be able to gain true humility. So whenever praise comes our way, we say thank you (it’s rude to reject someone’s kind words). But then we look for a way to immediately deflect the credit to the One who really deserves it. — Pastor Brian Mosley

Prayer:

Father, please cultivate within me a heart of authentic humility. Help me to focus more on You than I do on myself—to promote Your agenda rather than my own. Be enthroned upon my heart without rival and help me to remember that my life and success ultimately comes from Your Hand. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 3: Forgiveness

Mark 11:25 (NASB 2020) And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you for your offenses.

When I was younger, one of my siblings got their feelings hurt by someone from school. I don't recall the situation of the event, but I do remember my response. In my youthful zeal, I found verses about *forgiveness*, wrote them onto a piece of paper, and delivered the paper to my sibling. Can you imagine what happened to that paper? Yeah... it was crumbled and thrown into a trash can. I remember being so concerned and confused as to why my sibling wouldn't listen to my "wise" advice.

Although my understanding of forgiveness was accurate, I lacked empathy and my approach was awful. A few years later, I found myself in the same shoes that my sibling had been in. I had been hurt; actually, I had been cut deeply. Like my sibling, I didn't want anything to do with forgiving. And, before I knew it, my unforgiveness birthed bitterness and my relationship with God became affected.

In that season, there were two major lessons I learned that I want to share.

First, Jesus was hurt by my sins, yet He still forgave me. The hurt that I had experienced could not compare to the hurt that Jesus endured on the cross for my sins. Second, Jesus loved the person who hurt me just as much as He loved me. This was a hard lesson for me to learn. I was quick to say, "But, I'm in the right! They're in the wrong!" But, it didn't matter. God loved that person just as much as He loved me.

When reading Mark 11:25, I was reminded of the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35. Jesus' story involves a servant who has a debt that he cannot pay but is *forgiven*. Yet, immediately after the servant is forgiven, he goes and demands payment from someone who owes *him* money. Crazy right? The servant *received* forgiveness but didn't *give* forgiveness. The unforgiveness of the servant became known and, to say the least, it didn't end well.

Let's be honest. We're quick to *receive* forgiveness, but we're slow to *give* it. But, Mark 11:25 and Matthew 18:21-35 teach us that our relationship with God is connected to our capacity to forgive— like He forgave us.

There will be hurt, pain, and heartache in life. There will be many opportunities for unforgiveness; nevertheless, we must live in forgiveness. In this season of prayer and fasting, let us remember how God has forgiven us and give forgiveness to others. — Pastor Caleb Flowers

Prayer:

Father, I thank you for your forgiveness. You endured the cross for our sins— all so that we can be forgiven. I ask for your strength to forgive others and to live a lifestyle of forgiveness. Amen.

Day 4: Hunger

Matthew 5:6 (NASB 2020) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Have you ever had one of those moments when the ‘all you can eat’ buffet became ‘more than you can bear’? Those endless trips through the line, working to ensure you get your money’s worth, soon become not worth what you paid.

So it is with life. We live in a world of unending pleasure. A smorgasbord of fleshy delicacies is set before us daily. From TV ads to social media feeds, we are inundated with the things we deserve. And yet, when we consume them, they often leave us feeling worse than we felt beforehand.

Financially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, we bear the pain of indulging ourselves in the pleasures of this life. And unfortunately, our flesh will never acknowledge that enough is enough.

Throughout this season of prayer and fasting, God has most likely shown you areas of your life where you have indulged yourself on the pleasures of this life rather than on the riches of a relationship with Him. Many of us have sought to satisfy spiritual hunger with physical pleasures. All the while, our souls are craving time with the Lord.

The discipline of spiritual fasting is a matter of voluntarily setting aside the things we can afford, have, and/or eat, to invest in our relationship with God. We do so, knowing this:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

As your flesh complains of hunger pains, headaches, and irritations, may they remind you to press into the promises of God; He will satisfy those who hunger and thirst for His presence. —
Pastor Allen Townsend

Prayer: Father, I hunger and thirst for Your righteousness more than I desire the pleasures of this world. In this season of prayer and fasting, satisfy me with Your eternal goodness and riches.

Day 5: Purity

Matthew 5:8 (NASB2020) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Purity is not exactly a popular buzzword in today's culture. In fact, when was the last time you heard someone use that word in a sentence? Unless you work as a jeweler, it probably has been quite a while. And when the topic is mentioned, most people only think it pertains to sexuality. Although that's definitely an important aspect of it, purity is primarily a characteristic of the HEART that affects every part of our lives—and the lives of others—both now and in eternity.

Purity of heart can be defined as a heart “free from contamination” or “absent of mixture.” It describes a person who is all-in with God and wholeheartedly devoted to love Him above all others. Purity is about who you are and then, what you do. It applies both to your character and as a result, to your conduct. Purity is a dynamic work of God centered in your heart and then flows out to affect your head (your thinking), hands (your actions), and habits (your everyday lifestyle).

As we pray today, let's ask God to work powerfully in us and form in us pure hearts.

Let's desire to please God in our lives by fearing Him, worshiping Him, obeying Him, cherishing Him, and loving Him. And the resulting promise of Scripture is that we will see God:

- We will see God because the Spirit will provide us with “eyes to see and ears to hear.”
- We will see God as His Holy Spirit moves in our circumstances.
- We will see God as His plans and purposes unfolded in our lives; we will see His hand of provision in our everyday experiences, we will be perceptive to His ways, discerning of His heart and understanding of His Word.
- We will see God as He lives in us and He reveals Himself to us in new ways every day.
- We will see God as He lives His life through us.

The pure in heart will see God because they are living life, filled with His Holy Spirit. If we have been washed in the blood of Jesus, if we have been made new in Him, if we are living our life under His lordship, filled with the Holy Spirit, we will invariably and inevitably see God. What a promise! — Pastor Brian Mosley

Prayer:

Father, help me to pursue purity of heart in my relationship with You. Please cleanse me from any ungodly contaminants or mixtures. I commit to living in prayerful anticipation to see You work powerfully in my life, in my family, and my church. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 6: Listen

Matthew 13:15 (NASB 2020) For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and return, And I would heal them.

From an early age, we receive intentional and focused training in reading and writing. Research has taught us the importance of teaching our children the skills of reading, writing, and speaking. These are necessary for our development throughout life.

Unlike these taught skills, research has shown that the skill of *listening* has been assumed to be an involuntary activity. And while our ability to *hear* is a natural ability, listening is a choice. It is an area we exercise control over what we choose to do with what we have heard.

For example, when someone moves from a rural to an urban setting, they will often be sensitive to the various unfamiliar sounds of a new place. Eventually, those sounds become white noise in the background. And it's not that they become any less frequent or any quieter in volume; it's just that the brain is no longer alerted by them.

In our fast-paced, ever-moving, never-silent world, we *hear* a lot. But we *listen* far too little. Unlike the attention given to how well we comprehend what we read, we are not often taught how to *listen*, to glean the significance or value of what is being heard.

Is it possible that God is speaking far more than we are willing to *listen*? When Jesus stepped into the lives of humanity, He had lots to say. But many were unwilling to listen to what He had to say.

Seasons of prayer and fasting are not about contriving efforts to have God speak. Instead, they are far more focused on disciplining ourselves to *listen* to what God is saying.

As you devote yourself to hearing God, silence some of the noise around you and reawaken your spiritual ears to the still, small voice of God. In doing so, you'll find that God has lots to say if we are willing to *listen*. — Pastor Allen Townsend

Prayer:

Father, grant me ears to hear Your voice again. May the noise of this world be muted and may the clarity of Your voice be heard once again.

Day 7: Wisdom

Jeremiah 33:3 (NASB 2020) ‘Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’

I remember my inner turmoil one day in school as I was taking a test, and I didn’t understand the instructions on a particular segment. It seemed like everyone else understood their assignments perfectly—practically burning holes onto their pages from their rapid writing while I stared at my blank page at a total loss of how to proceed. Because it was a standardized test, they weren’t all the same. I felt like I had gotten the hardest version while everyone else could just coast through. I was praying that someone else would raise their hand and ask the teacher *my* question or say the words I was too scared to say: “What do I do?” Or “I don’t understand.”

You may not be taking a standardized test, but you just might be in the middle of one of life’s tests. Your test may not be exactly like your neighbor’s, but you have some questions and need understanding. You’re experiencing the “paralysis of analysis.” Whether we’re in seasons of testing or turmoil or just trying to be faithful disciples, what we need to face any season is **wisdom**. Wisdom, in the biblical sense, is simply *God’s perspective*.

In Jeremiah 33, Jeremiah was taking a test of his own. He was in prison—actually for saying what God had told him to say! Then, in that cold and lonely prison cell, the Lord sends word to Jeremiah: “**Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.**” In that moment of persecution and loneliness, the Lord cuts through the atmosphere with a stirring promise based on a simple premise: “If you call on Me, I will answer you.”

We don’t need to sit alone in our trepidation. We don’t need self-pity. We need Him. To get to Him, we don’t have to jump through any theological “hoops”; we simply need to call out to Him. And then, there’s this precious promise: “I will answer you, and I will tell you...” When we call out to the Lord, He will hear us and He will tell us *wonderful* things and give us wisdom for what we don’t know. Isn’t that spectacular news?

Why then are we often afraid to ask the questions? Maybe we grew up in an environment where it was seen as weak to ask for help. Maybe we’re embarrassed to admit that we don’t have all the answers.

But as Christ-followers, we’re not called or expected to have all of life’s answers. We’re called to call on the One who does. Paul prayed that God would give the believers of the church of Ephesus **wisdom** and **revelation** and that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened. (Eph. 1:17-18). James told his Jewish readers that if any of them needed wisdom, “let them **ask**.” (Jas. 1:5). We don’t have to figure it out alone. We can ask our God and He will hear us, and He will help us. — Pastor Dan Westbrook

Prayer:

Lord, I don’t have all the answers, but You do. Please give me wisdom in this season to know what to do and how to proceed, so I can bring glory to Your name. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Day 8: Freedom

Galatians 5:1 (NASB 2020) It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

It happened every year. As we sat awaiting the final bell to ring, my friends and I discussed how we would spend our Christmas vacation— free from school and responsibilities. We would stay up late, eat a lot of food, see distant family, get presents, and play tons of video games. We couldn't wait to rest and relax.

When the bell rang, we hurriedly rushed out of the building toward the school bus. Excitement and adrenaline filled the hallways as we said *goodbye* to school and *hello* to freedom.

One year, my excitement and adrenaline soon faded when I realized I had to go back to school *again* after two weeks. I realized my freedom was only... *temporary*.

That realization became a constant reminder throughout the break that my freedom wouldn't last. When it was time to go back to school, I left my freedom behind and grumbled my way until summer break— all to repeat the cycle.

Someone once said, "we're free to struggle, but we're not struggling to be free." In other words, the prison door is unlocked, but we must choose to walk through it.

When the bell of faith rang, and we answered Jesus' call to salvation, we walked out of spiritual slavery. And the Good News is that we don't have to return to our old ways or continue the cycle of sin. Since we're new creations in Jesus, we can walk in the fullness of His freedom.

Although I had to return to school after the holiday break, we don't have to return to our old ways. Isn't that Good News? *The freedom He offers isn't temporary but eternal.*

Through His grace, we can say *goodbye* to sin and *hello* to freedom.

As we begin this new year, let's live in the freedom of Jesus and introduce others to this freedom. — Pastor Caleb Flowers

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the freedom You have given us. We could never earn or deserve Your freedom, but You give it anyway. May we live in the fullness of Your freedom and continue to grow closer to You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 9: Power

Zechariah 4:6 (NASB 2020) Then he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of armies.

It’s that time of year. The time when the trees dump their leaves, which in turn covers our lawns, driveways, etc. So, we find ourselves gathering the leaf blowers to remove them.

For convenience's sake, I grabbed a battery-powered leaf blower. It was set to be a quick and easy job. I began with great fervor. The lightweight blower moved the leaves rather easily. Or so I thought...

As the job lingered on, I found it taking more effort to move the pile than expected. And eventually, the small battery exhausted its charge. Prepared for the task, I replaced the battery with a fully charged one.

When I added the new battery, I was shocked by the amount of power it brought. Slowly and without notice, the effectiveness of the blower was lost as the battery drained. It had been so subtle that I hadn’t even noticed. But to compensate for the loss of power, I began to exert more energy.

Eventually, that battery died, also. So, I went old school and found a corded version. Once again, I was *blown away* by the power it possessed. If I had utilized it first, I would have completed the job much sooner.

How often do we live our spiritual lives in this manner? Where do we rely upon our own power, strength, and energy rather than the Holy Spirit? When our strength begins to wane, we work harder and exert more of ourselves.

God never intended for us to live our lives in our own strength. We require the work and power of the Holy Spirit. In this season of prayer and fasting, ask God to show you any area where you may be relying on your strength and not His Spirit. — Pastor Allen Townsend

Prayer: Father, forgive me for trusting in my strength. Today, I want to plug into the power of Your Holy Spirit. The strength that never wanes nor is exhausted.

Day 10: Boldness

1 Chronicles 28:20 (NASB 2020) Then David said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished.”

My sister was preparing to embark on a new season of her life. She was confident that she had heard from God, and was prepared to do what He had called her to. But why had she felt a tightness in her chest? Why were her hands clammy? My mom sat down beside her, recognizing the weight she was carrying and said three words, “Do it afraid.” The admonition was from the missionary pioneer, Elisabeth Elliott: “Sometimes when we are called to obey, the fear does not subside and we are expected to move against the fear. One must choose to *do it afraid.*”

These words aren’t meant as an invitation to fear, but really an invitation to boldness, in spite of feelings of fear. The Lord spoke to Joshua in Joshua 1:9, “...be strong and courageous,” much as He had spoken to Moses in Deuteronomy 31:6. Fear is a default enemy of the human race, but the Lord enables us to operate in a *new* default. See what Proverbs 28:1 says: “The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

The author of this Proverb, likely Solomon, is not insinuating that the wicked are *always* cowardly and the righteous are *always* courageous. Rather, he was pointing out that the enemies of God have no peace. They’re always looking over their shoulders and watching their backs. Adam and Eve hid after they ate of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:8). They felt the need to hide from the God who fashioned them, and breathed the breath of life into them.

But the righteous know Whose they are. The righteous ones know that the One seated on the throne looks upon with them mercy, and that we can approach His throne **boldly**. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

David, who had so desired to build the Temple for the Lord, was not permitted to carry out the assignment, but he continued to carry it in his heart. In his final days as king, he commissioned his son, Solomon to finish the work—knowing that it was a monumental undertaking, and the toll that kingship could have on his son, as it had on him. What was David’s clarion cry? What would be the counsel he would dispense to encourage his son to face the days ahead? “Be strong and courageous, and act...” In other words, “Be bold and do it.” But this boldness isn’t because of how great David was, or how great Solomon would be, but how great *God* is.

In this new year ahead, as you shoulder the weight of your calling and obedience, “do it afraid.” Be strong and courageous, and do it. Go to your Father with bold confidence. Your God is with you and He is for you.

And if God is for you, who can be against you? (Rom. 8:31) — Pastor Dan Westbrook

Prayer:

Father, as I do all I can to carry out Your calling on my life, in my family, and in my community, I confess that at times it feels daunting. But I thank You that I can come to You courageously and walk out the days ahead in *Your* boldness. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

