

21 DAYS

OF PRAYER AND FASTING



EVERY DAY PRAYER FOCUS

1. Humble ourselves. Asking for forgiveness for our sins and the sins of our land.
2. Seeking God. Declaring our dependence on God in every area of our lives.
3. His Kingdom Come. Praying for the completion of the Great Commission and for revival in our generation.
4. Hear from Heaven. Inviting the Presence of God in our church and our lives (souls saved, signs, wonders, miracles, and transformed lives.)
5. Next Steps. Praying for all people in their journey of faith to Know God, Find Freedom, Discover Purpose, and Make a Difference
6. Believing God for answered prayer to our specific needs (Connection Cards, Pastoral Care Update Cards, and prayer requests).

VIRGINIA PRAYER GUIDE

Leaders of Our Country

- President Joe Biden & Vice President Kamala Harris
- Supreme Court Justices: John Roberts, Jr., Clarence Thomas, , Samuel Alito, Jr.,
Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh,
Amy Coney Barrett, Ketanji Brown Jackson
- U.S. Senators: Tim Kaine, Mark Warner
- U.S. Representatives: Robert J Whitman, Jen Kiggans, Robert C. Scott,
Jennifer McClellan, Bob Good, Benjamin Lee Cline, Abigail Spanberger,
Donald Sternoff Beyer Jr., H. Morgan Griffith, Jennifer Wexton,
Gerald Edward Connolly

Leaders of Our State

- Governor: Glen Youngkin, Lt. Governor: Winsome Sears, Attorney General:
Jason Miyares

Leaders of Our Church

- Lead Pastor: Bill McIntosh
- Church Staff: Jenny McIntosh, Jordan & Akeem Howell, Scott & Robin Frary,
Savannah & Cody Huddleston, Dianna Rainey, Frankie Todt, & Ben Rozelle
- Board: Bob McCulley, Steve Rainey, Dannielle Watson, Danny Smith,
Parker Wingfield, Rodney Harris

NEW LIFE CHURCH FAMILY PRAYER GUIDE

Our Vision

- Know God (Weekend Services): Pray for the lost to be saved
- Find Freedom (Small Groups): Pray for group members to connect relationally and experience freedom
- Discover Purpose (Growth Track): Pray for people to discover their God-given purpose and be motivated to take their next step
- Make a Difference (Dream Team): Pray for all who serve others

MY PRAYER LIST

THOSE THAT I INFLUENCE

Close Friends (make a personal list)

THOSE THAT NEED SALVATION

People that you know in need of Christ (make a personal list)

MY CHURCH

- Pastor
- Small group leader
- Small group members

MY LIFE

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

**MY PERSONAL PRAYER NEEDS
(MAKE A LIST)**

HOW TO BEGIN A FAST

Start with a clear goal. Be specific. *Why* are you fasting? Do you need direction, healing, restoration of marriage or family issues? Are you facing financial difficulties? Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Pray daily and read the Bible.

PREPARING SPIRITUALLY

Confess your sins to God. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of weakness. Forgive all who have offended you and ask forgiveness from those you may have offended (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4). Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ and reject the worldly desires that try to hinder you (Romans 12:1-2).

DECIDING WHAT TO FAST

The type of fasting you choose is up to you. You could go on a full fast in which you only drink liquids, or you may desire to fast like Daniel, who abstained from sweets and meats and only drank water. Remember to replace that time with prayer and Bible study.

DECIDING HOW LONG

You may fast as long as you like. Most can easily fast from one to three days, but you may feel the grace to go longer, even as much as 21 to 40 days. Use wisdom and pray for guidance. Beginners are advised to start slow.

WHAT TO EXPECT

When you fast your body detoxifies, eliminating toxins from your system. This can cause mild discomfort such as headaches and irritability during withdrawal from caffeine and sugars. And naturally, you will have hunger pains. Limit your activity and exercise moderately. Take time to rest. Fasting brings about miraculous results as you are following Jesus' example when you fast. Spend time listening to praise and worship music. Pray as often as you can throughout the day. Get away from the normal distractions as much as possible and keep your heart and mind set on seeking God's face.

HOW TO END

Don't overeat when the time comes to end your fast. Begin eating solid food gradually; eat small portions or snacks.

- **FULL FAST**
Drink only liquids (you establish the number of days).

- **THE DANIEL FAST**
Eat no meat, no sweets and no bread.
Drink water and juice.
Eat fruits and vegetables.

“Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink.” DANIEL 1:12

“I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.” DANIEL 10:3 KJV

When going on a Daniel fast, or any type of fast, if you have questions outside of what Scripture says, prayerfully seek the Lord, consult your doctor and be led by the Spirit for the specifics for your personal fast.

- **3-DAY FAST**
This fast can be a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or give up at least one item of food.
- **PARTIAL FAST**
A partial fast is from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm or from sun up to sundown. You can select from three types of fasting – a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or give up at least one item of food.
- **JUICE FAST**
A juice fast is simply consuming vegetable and fruit juices instead of solid food. Many people include protein powder in their liquid plan as well. This is one of the most popular fasts. Even if you choose not to make your entire fast liquids only, substituting one or two meals for liquids is a great alternative.
- **MEDIA FAST**
Although a media fast is not a traditional “food” fast, it can greatly complement and enhance your food fast by providing more undistracted time to seek God. This also helps accomplish the purpose of the fast by getting closer to God rather than just a diet, by abstaining from certain foods. Some have fasted TV, Social Media, Secular Music, Video Games, etc. The idea is to empty our self of the influences of the world and to fill our self up on God, through time in prayer and reading the Bible.

Step 1: Be Specific

Daniel was not vague in his objection to the Babylonian diet. He defined the problem immediately.

1. The king's food was against dietary laws.
2. Daniel and his friends had vowed against wine.
3. The king's food had been offered up to idols/demons.

Step 2: Fast as a Spiritual Commitment

The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God.

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." DANIEL 1:8

Step 3: Reflect Inner Desire by Outer Discipline

Many people have an inner desire for better health, but they can't discipline themselves to avoid junk food, and other foods that are not good for their health. The physical health you seek from God may be more than an answer to prayer. Your physical health can be linked to any of the following factors:

1. Your food choices.
2. The level of your spiritual commitment as reflected in constant prayer during the fast.
3. Your time commitment. If you determine to fast for a certain time, keep it. For example, if you determine to fast 10 days, don't stop on Day 9.
4. Your testimony commitment. Your fast is a statement of faith to God that you want Him to heal your body, and faith is foundational to the Daniel Fast.

Step 4: Pray to Perceive Sin's Role in Poor Health

"Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." JAMES 5:13-16

- Sin is something related to the cause of sickness.
- Lack of health/healing may be the result of spiritual rebellion.
- Lack of health/healing may be due to sin of wrong intake, i.e. drugs, pornography, bad food
- Repentance is linked to health according to James.
- Elders have a role in healing both spiritual and physical health.

- Sick people must desire to be well
- The anointing oil could mean:
 1. Medicine for healing,
 2. Symbolic of the Holy Spirit, or
 3. It could be baptism
- Prayer alone may not gain healing, faith is the major factor.
- In Greek there are several words for “sick”. James uses “Kanino”, which not only includes disease, but also means weak or weary.
- Attitude is important. James said, “are there any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.”

Step 5: Fast as a Statement of Faith to Others

Daniel was making a statement of faith when he asked for only vegetables to eat and water to drink, then dared the overseer to compare the appearance of the four sons of Israel with the young men who ate the king’s food (Daniel 1).

Step 6: Learn the Effects of the Food You Eat

Why are some foods good for us, and other foods not? What does certain food do to your body? If we really knew, there would likely be some things we would never eat again.

Step 7: Yield All Results to God

“Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.”

DANIEL 1:13

DAY ONE

Heart After God

God desires our hearts. When we pursue Him wholeheartedly, His love for us and the hope, peace, and confidence that comes from knowing Him displaces all that is not of Him. Starting the year with prayer and fasting is a great time to assess and adjust. This pause from the normal routine causes us to evaluate our course and see where we stand in relation to pursuing God with everything and provides us with clarity to move forward.

Distractions will happen, schedules will fill, and busyness will take over if we aren't intentional. What started as a committed time to God can turn into trying to fit Him into our day. Instead, as Christ-followers, we are to put God first and then add all the rest. When we stay connected and in a relationship with Him, we are less likely to be distracted by second-best things and drift away. We'll find that we can release the weight we carry—care, worry, anxiety, negative emotions, trauma, disappointment, discouragement—to be filled with God's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control: fruit that will keep us going in the right direction and lead to life. For the next three weeks, commit to setting aside time daily to put God first wholeheartedly.

PRAYER

God, as I prioritize prayer over the next twenty-one days, I desire more of You and less of me. I will fix my thoughts on You, submitting my ways for your plans. Have your way as I stir a hunger within me for even more of You. I empty myself of all that is not of You. I prioritize time with You and invite You to move and speak. As I draw near to You, I expect to grow in my faith and experience You like never before.

I am looking forward to everything that You will do!

JOHN 3:30

He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

DAY TWO

Love Others

Research has recently shown a surprising number-one indicator of longevity in humans. It's not exercise or diet-related and has nothing to do with whether you're a smoker. The number one indicator of a long life is relationships. This means that the greatest investment in our lives is our relationships!

As Christ-followers, growing healthy relationships start with an attitude of humility. Being humble changes how we positionally think about God, ourselves, and others—placing God above all else and seeing ourselves as His creation gives us significant value. This unconditional value and love from God empower us to value and love others the way they are: setting aside our opinions, free from judgments, and with no strings attached. A person of humility cultivates their relationships and adds value to any they come in contact with by looking for ways to elevate conversations and enhance interactions.

PRAYER

Father, I ask that my life continue to be molded and shaped to reflect You. I want to walk in selflessness and prefer others above myself. Help me be humble and show genuine interest and investment in the lives of others. I want to take the time to truly hear those around me and display love through listening and action. Let humility override pride and selfishness. May we collectively, as Christ-followers, show the world we are yours by our love for You and one another. Help us model our lives after Jesus and exemplify His unconditional love for others. Let me be interruptible, always willing to make space to listen and love as You do.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others

DAY THREE

Serve Others

Life is a constant series of transactions or exchanges. For every “yes” to something, there has to be a “no” to something else. People exchange their time and money based on where they find value: a “yes” to money for a purchase means a “no” to money in savings. A “yes” to time with the family means a no to time spent scrolling socials.

Jesus is sometimes referred to as the servant-king. While people of His time expected a king of pomp and circumstance, He exchanged a crown and instead arrived as a humble king who connected with the outcasts and washed their feet. It didn't make sense to an earthly system of me-first.

King Jesus then showed the incredible value He placed on others by making the ultimate exchange: He gave up His life so humanity could experience life and freedom. As His followers, we are then called to follow in His footsteps by exchanging our old life and ways for His new life and counter-culture behavior of serving others. Our “yes” to others often requires some form of “no” to ourselves. However, each time we serve others, in our communities, around the dinner table, or on the job, we fulfill our purpose and discover true joy.

PRAYER

God, I want to follow Jesus' example of serving. Help me focus on others, saying 'no' to my selfish ways and 'yes' to yours. I know in your kingdom, serving others produces joy and blessing. Today, I will look for opportunities to serve those around me and put their needs above mine. Loving and serving others displays your heart to the world. God, what an honor to be your hands and feet to those You love!

MATTHEW 20:28

just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

DAY FOUR

Generosity

God's Word states that His desire is for us to prosper in our relationships and endeavors: it brings Him delight to see His children prosper and do well. To set us up for success, God has established methods by which we can live and wisdom we can follow to generate prosperity in all areas of our lives.

Your prosperity is connected to what you can both generate and give to others. All the abundance we have, be it monetary or talent or spirit, isn't meant for us to bottle up and reserve for only ourselves. God's system says that when we sow, we reap even more, and when we take care of the needs of others, it's like we care directly for Him. Emphasis is always put on our hearts and attitude: giving should always take priority over consuming in our lives. Being generous isn't something you do; it's who you are. Generosity displays outwardly that we genuinely trust God's promise to provide for our every need above and beyond what we can imagine.

PRAYER

Father, I want to reflect your heart of generosity. Show me creative ways that I can give of my time, money, talent, and resources. I long to give with a cheerful heart, and I know that You promise to bless and refresh me when I do. God, give me a love for people and your church so that generosity becomes a part of who I am. When I am tempted to hold back, remind me of the ways You have been faithfully generous to me. Your Word says to test You in this area of giving, so I trust that as I give, You will always provide for me.

PROVERBS 11:25

A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

DAY FIVE

Our Church

In a post-pandemic world, now more than ever, we recognize the value of human connection and doing life together. What better place for people to find community and develop no-strings personal relationships than within the Church; what other organization creates a space solely for people to connect? In today's world, the church can be a lifeline for the lost and the lonely.

We can see the assignment of the Church in the world, and attached to that is our assignment as an engaged partner with our home church. The church is an empty space without its people carrying out the work and will of God, and YOU are a vital part of that operation. As you pray and fast this month, seek strategies to actively engage in the church's mission to love God, love people & make disciples.

PRAYER:

Thank you, Father, for my church. I pray for strength for the church body, its pastors, and its leaders. Let our church be an example of your love for all to see, and show me my specific role within your church. You haven't called us to do life alone, so I thank you for my church family. As I worship alongside those different from me, open my eyes to see them as You do. Let the relationships here flourish across cultures, ages, and demographics, built on the common foundation of love for You. Help me to learn where I should and lead where I can. Thank you for placing me exactly where You have me for such a time as this. Use me as a part of Your church in this community to be a light for You.

HEBREWS 10:24

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

DAY SIX

Your City

The word “bless” means “to praise, to speak well of, to ask God to look favorably upon.” Can you imagine how much of that we see in social media and culture? What we see scrolling through around the clock is quite the opposite.

In a time of division, negativity, and slander, it isn't that hard to stand out. Where criticism is common, we can speak life over our civic leaders, nation, cities, and institutions. We can “bless our city” in prayer by lifting those in authority over our lives. When we develop the habit of speaking life to situations, we become solutions-oriented instead of problem-oriented; we will see answers and opportunities instead of issues and pessimism. A little light pierces through the deepest darkness, and this is our time to shine!

PRAYER

Father, today I pray for my city. I believe You have planted me in this community for a purpose. I pray the Holy Spirit would continually remind me to speak life and blessing over my city. May we walk in unity and love for one another. Let me be a part of the healing and solutions, not the hurt and the problems. I want to have a selfless heart and generous hands. Reveal opportunities to give back because I believe we will flourish as I bless my city!

PROVERBS 11:11

Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.

DAY SEVEN

The World / Missionaries

Jesus' Great Commission was yet another push-back on cultural mentality. Instead of taking this Gospel and keeping it separated and confined to a certain group, His followers were charged to share the Good News with every nation. This mandate remains with us and will continue until Jesus returns: the transformative Good News we have received isn't for us alone. All too often, our faith can be turned into a club to belong to rather than a life change to be shared.

God's heart is to save the lost, heal the sick, restore the brokenhearted and make disciples all over the world. God wants you to continually share His light in your world while keeping your heart tender and open for THE world. Some of us will go, some of us will send: all of us can strategize and do our part. God's love is without borders, so too must our love extend beyond boundaries to the nations.

PRAYER

Father, give me a heart for lost people around the world. Your Word says that You desire that all come into a relationship with You, and I want to develop a heart aligned with yours. Reveal strategies to reach people near and far. We pray that missionaries worldwide will find wisdom and provision for their mission. Strengthen them with fresh faith and vision. Grant them favor in their communities and soften the hearts of those who hear their words. Thank you for all You are doing worldwide to grow Your Kingdom, and show me the part that is mine to play.

MARK 16:15

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

DAY EIGHT

Unity

A wedding. A ski trip. A beach party. Different events and locations require different attire—and it would be a mess to mix these up! We know how to dress for the occasion. As we represent Jesus to the world, we are likewise called to “dress” our attitude and behaviors appropriate for the situations we walk into. God’s Word says that we put on and wear these qualities, like clothing. Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness—these qualities build unity in our marriage, family, church, and community.

We may not always WANT to wear a certain quality, but when we dress appropriately, we have quality relationships, peace of mind, and harmony with others. This unity makes us stand out in a culture given to division and causes us to wear our Christ-likeness well. Do a self-check: how are you looking today?

PRAYER:

Father, it is my heart to represent you well. I want to put on the things that display your heart: acts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love. Open my eyes to see the everyday opportunities. I want to love my neighbor above myself. Let the Holy Spirit show me how I can put on love in my decisions, responses, conversations, and actions. Let your church lead the way in unity: we don’t default to cultural norms; we set the standard. We believe your unity will initiate changes in our families, communities, workplaces, and friendships—and that it is all for your glory.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

DAY NINE

Forgiveness

Because we live in a world full of imperfect humans, there will be times when we collide, and things go south. A snappy word, a misunderstood text, or even a full-on grown-up tantrum. God knew His kids would get into scraps with one another, but He also knew that we need one another to grow, which is why He gave us so much wisdom about forgiveness. Forgiveness is a mutually beneficial act in that it sets both parties free: one from guilt and the other from resentment.

When situations cause hurt or disappointment, it is important to process them: by journaling, talking with a trusted friend or leader, praying, and therapy if necessary. By doing this, we can move through a situation rather than remaining stuck in hurt or stuffing it down to resurface later in unexpected or unintended ways. We can take our next steps accordingly, but keeping forgiveness as a part of that process truly sets our hearts free.

PRAYER

Thank you, God, for Your great gift of forgiveness. You have forgiven me so much, and will continue to do so. Help me to capture Your heart and to also freely forgive those who have wronged me. I welcome the Holy Spirit to show me where I can grow in the area of forgiveness and quickly let go of offenses. This is another way to love others as you have commanded me. Your Word says to bless those who have hurt me; help me to truly love those who have wronged me, following the beautiful example of Jesus.

PROVERBS 17:9

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense,
but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

DAY TEN

Family Relationships

Healthy family environments aren't spontaneous or natural: they're created by intentional effort. Unlike friendships, we don't choose our family, so the success of these relationships requires that we develop and grow, even and especially for those personalities we wouldn't naturally gravitate toward.

Healthy boundaries, honoring behaviors, respectful engagement and consistently modeling Christ are the foundations to thriving relationships—but they can also be the first things to weaken around the people you see every day or at Sunday dinner!

Whatever role you have—as a parent, child, grandparent, aunt, or uncle—we need to take into account how we are engaging with the others in our family. Even a facial expression communicates so much. No family is perfect, but by modeling healthy communication, conflict resolution, and consistent kindness, our homes become a safe place where our family can grow and thrive together.

PRAYER

Father, I come to You speaking life into each one of my family relationships. Healthy dynamics require effort, and I am ready to work. I want to be continually sensitive to your Spirit indicating the areas where I can put my ways aside to better walk in love, grace, forgiveness, and selflessness. Help me honor my family both in words and actions. I believe the best about others, including and especially my family. I pray for restoration and healing where it's needed; help me to let go of things that don't matter, and embrace the things that truly do. Lord, turn your face toward us and bring us peace. The future is bright for my family!

JAMES 3:18

Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

DAY ELEVEN

Patience

Our world is getting increasingly better at convenience. Consider online shopping versus the mall, on-demand versus the video store (remember those?) food delivery versus the grocery store or restaurant. With fast-paced technology and culture, it would be easy to fall into an entitled state of “my way, right away.”

One of the fruits of the Spirit—something produced in our life as a result of our time walking with God—that is easily overlooked is patience. Patience can be a subtle fruit because its presence doesn't announce itself loudly, but WOW, its absence is obvious! One definition of patience explains that patience is “not the ability to wait, but how we behave while we are waiting.” This speaks to not just the action, but the attitude. When things don't go our way or aren't happening in our timeline, or when other people feel like an inconvenience—how do we act? Let's make sure our actions and attitudes glorify God while we wait.

PRAYER

Father, in a world growing obsessed with the instant, I want to find value in the process. God, I am ready to be inconvenienced in the name of growing the fruit of patience. The people and situations around me are not something to be bothered by but are a key to my assignment here on earth. I want to represent You by loving others enough to be interrupted. Help me to replace hurry with the Holy Spirit, and to grow in my faith and patience.

EPHESIANS 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

DAY TWELVE

Direction

Before Jesus left His disciples to ascend into Heaven, they were nervous. What He had asked them to do as His followers was radical, but at least His voice and instructions were clear when He stood in front of them as a man. Jesus sensed their hesitation and promised them that the Holy Spirit would come and be a constant helper and guide, unlike any other.

This promise is extended to us today, and it is to our advantage to follow the Holy Spirit as He gives direction. We have all-time access to help with difficulties, guidance in decision-making, and direction for our future. While we may sometimes want the entire map laid out, more often, what we get is the GPS signal telling us the next right step. Be faithful in each next step, as He is faithful to lead.

PRAYER

Father, I thank You for your presence here, guiding me through your Holy Spirit. I want to learn to trust your voice and your direction. Speak to me through your Word and the wisdom of those around me. Holy Spirit, lead me and guide me into all truth. I ask You to be my guide, teacher, and comforter. I intentionally set aside time to listen to your voice. I thank You that as you continue to lead and I continue to listen, I am on time with your plan for my life.

JOHN 16:13

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

DAY THIRTEEN

Grace

Grace has been described as “the spontaneous, unmerited gift of Divine favor and influence.” This grace has been given to us by God through salvation: something we did not deserve and could not earn on our own. Ephesians says that we should give grace through our words: our words are to be spontaneous and undeserved gifts to others!

Sometimes words come so quickly and easily that we don't pay attention to their weight, but our words contain life and death. They are a means to release the life of God into the lives of others. Each conversation is an opportunity to give the gifts of encouragement, growth, support, and understanding. Our words impact beyond what we see: let yours be gracious and full of life.

PRAYER

God, my desire is to be an extension of your grace to others. I don't want to be quick to judge or assume; I want to believe the best in others. I pray I am continually transformed into your likeness by understanding your grace for me so I can extend grace to others. Help me think before I speak and listen before I respond. May the words I speak build others up. Increase my awareness so others can feel grace, kindness, and Christ-like love. I pray You would help me grow daily in freely giving grace.

EPHESIANS 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

DAY FOURTEEN

Peace

Power is influence over external events. Peace is influence over internal events. God has given us a gift that goes beyond what makes sense: an internal calm that isn't dependent on the situation or circumstances. When the world is going crazy around us, we can remain calm and composed, not because of some security the world offers but because of an internal knowing that God is in control.

Moreover, God's peace is a guardrail, guiding us away from wrong choices and danger and keeping us on track. If we are sensing a loss of peace, that's an indicator of something being out of alignment. The good news is God is faithful to His Word, and He offers us His courageous peace when we yield to Him.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for your gift of peace. Help me see how I've been trying to find security in the external world rather than turning to You. Nothing can replace the peace that only You can provide—it is consistent and amazing! I pray your peace will guard my heart and my mind. Guide me in your ways of perfect peace, so that I live a life in harmony with those around me.

JOHN 14:27

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

DAY FIFTEEN

Freedom From Temptation

For anything that we say “yes” to, we are saying “no” to something else. Saying yes to volunteering on Sunday means we are saying no to sleeping in. Saying yes to spending online means we are saying no to growing our savings. When we are struggling with a temptation, it can feel as though we’ve already blown it. Please remember, just because you’ve been tempted, you haven’t yet given that temptation your “yes.” Even Jesus faced temptation, but His encounter shows us how we can resist even the greatest temptations: by speaking back to it with the Word of God.

When we feel weak, God’s strength is there to make up the difference. He promises a way of escape when we put ourselves and our desires second in priority to Him. This requires that we say no to the temptation, and yes to the Spirit of God—repeated as often as needed, and out loud as necessary! Keep standing and know that being tempted doesn’t mean you’ve lost: it’s a chance for you to surrender to God and WIN.

PRAYER

Thank you Father that nothing on this earth has more power than the name of Jesus. There is no temptation that comes my way that takes You by surprise. Your Word has promised that when I put You first and resist, the temptation has to go. You’ve provided strength beyond what I alone can, and a new life that replaces my old habits. Thank you, Lord, for the freedom when I surrender my ways to You.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

DAY SIXTEEN

Boldness

“Boldness” in church culture can get a bad reputation. Those who misunderstand the word think that means being aggressive and loud with your message, mistaking having confidence in your message with not caring about the one hearing it. Boldness is actually defined as “willing to take risks and act innovatively; confidence or courage.” A life changed by Jesus should ignite us to blaze new paths into the culture and reach those who don’t know Him. We lead the way to the heart of God by bravely reflecting His image as Creator. Our speech should be innovative, and our methods should be inventive to create something new. This requires leaving our safety nets behind, but what an amazing hope we’ve been given to know that He goes with us every step of the way.

PRAYER

Father, let your church be a bold representation of You. We want to be sensitive to your Spirit, listening for innovative ideas and looking for creative ways to reach others. Open our eyes to the unseen in the world around us, revealing to us what can be, and fill us with the courage to go after it. Our confidence isn’t in ourselves but in You alone. I want my heart to be tender and to not fear the cost of serving you. Thank You for this amazing hope that lives within me.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:12

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

DAY SEVENTEEN

Obedience

Jesus radicalized culture when He took the ten commandments of the Hebrew law and summed them up in two: love the Lord your God, and love others as yourself. At a quick glance, this seems simple enough, but Jesus was actually raising the standard. While before the command was to love God and not sin against your neighbor, now the directive is to level up and actually love our neighbor as well. Obedience to God is no longer a matter of do's and don'ts with external conformity, but is now an internal matter of the heart. It isn't enough to do the right thing, our attitude and thoughts must also be in alignment with a posture that elevates others. With love as the command, Christ-followers are constantly faced with the choice of obedience. But really, God is setting us up for success, because His commands come with promises. A life built on love is one that flourishes, producing blessings, joy, and peace.

PRAYER

Father, I want to honor your directions with my obedience. I submit my heart and its attitude completely to You. Holy Spirit I am listening for ways I can live in obedience to You and love your people more. I desire to see love as not merely an action, but an attitude. When I am loving my friends, family, and neighbors, it's not only with actions and words but with a heart postured to put them and their needs before my own. Help me to represent You with every part of my life. Thank You for Your promised blessings when I choose to walk in love.

DEUTERONOMY 30:16

For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

DAY EIGHTEEN

Power

If we think that choosing to follow Christ means a ticket to an easy, comfortable life, we are sadly mistaken. In fact, it's quite the opposite: Jesus told his followers that in following Him, they were choosing a life of troubles and opposition. Following Jesus puts a target on your back for an enemy who does not want to see your influence and impact others.

However, there's great news! Our enemy fights a losing battle—we've already been given the strategies to win. Our battle plan includes truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God: armor in our arsenal to protect ourselves from attack. Moreover, it's been proven that a life of ease doesn't cause anything to grow: it stagnates and suffocates energy. When we face challenges or difficulties, these are opportunities for us to use our armor and develop our strength of character. Each battle we face is the chance to utilize the wisdom we've learned and apply it for power.

PRAYER

Father, let me not be caught without my armor on. May I consistently cultivate in my life the joy of your salvation. Let me seek your truth in all situations. I desire to walk in righteousness in ways pleasing to You and carry peace to all I come in contact with. By reading your Word and listening to your Spirit, my faith grows and is strengthened. Holy Spirit, speak to me daily for strategies to use this power You've skillfully provided me to win.

EPHESIANS 6:13

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.

DAY NINETEEN

Wisdom

Proverbs provide a fascinating contrast between the earthly and the Heavenly perspective of wisdom. Humans think wisdom comes from knowledge, authority, strength, and success. What we need to remember is that those things are a result of a life lived from wisdom, and not the other way around.

True wisdom originates in a surprising place: the humility of the heart. Over and over again in Proverbs people cry for wisdom, and God says humble your heart before me. People look for wisdom in the loud and powerful wind; God says to listen to my still small voice. We want all the answers so we can be right; God says I want your heart in worship. There's a footnote to Proverbs 2:6 that says the fountain of understanding within us is "found in His presence." If you desire wisdom for your life—direction, plans, and strategies—don't plead for wisdom, humble your heart and worship God.

PRAYER

I worship you, my amazing Father! Today I humble my heart before You, submitting my ways and actions for your inspection. If there are ways I am going, thoughts I am thinking or behaviors I'm adopting that don't please You, reveal them by your spirit. Your wisdom is such a generous gift. By familiarizing myself with your word, I grow more acquainted with your way of doing things. I seek you first and keep worship as the condition of my heart. In doing this, I know I will see your wisdom in my life as a result, and I will choose to trust and follow you boldly.

PROVERBS 2:6

For the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

DAY TWENTY

Discipline

It happens every year. Resolutions for living a better life declared on December 31st are all but forgotten within a month. Stats show that gym memberships surge 30-50% in January, while attendance plummets 80% in February. Much of the difference between our life and the life we want can be found in our habits and discipline. Hebrews says that discipline “seems to be painful at the time” and most would likely agree. But when we think about it, it’s not a choice of pain versus no pain, but the choice of hard now versus pain later. Exercise is hard now; feeling rundown and easily winded is pain later. Saying no to a Netflix binge is hard now; being exhausted all day because of poor sleep is pain later. Holding our tongue in humility is hard now; loneliness from broken relationships is pain later.

Discipline is absolutely necessary for any Christ-follower who desires growth. A healthy and thriving relationship with God requires that we say “yes” to things such as prayer, Bible study, and hearing sound teaching, which will mean we say “no” to other things that could occupy that time. However, discipline gives us the power to choose: what we want now or most. When we choose what we want most over what is in front of us, that temporary “pain” changes us and grows our character.

PRAYER

Father, I desire to give you all my YES. When I stick to disciplines in my life, those yesses are seeds that produce a great reward. I ask the Holy Spirit to remind me of what I desire to see most in my life over what I want in the moment. Temporary things will pass; Your goodness and love remain forever. I want to align my values with yours so that my choices line up accordingly. As your Spirit shows me the areas of my life that require discipline, I want to humble myself to adjust and obey. I submit every area of my life to You, knowing that when I walk in your way, it leads to righteousness and peace.

HEBREWS 12:11

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

DAY TWENTY-ONE

Worship

Worship is “the expression of reverence and adoration.” Adoration requires deep love, which means that our worship of God isn’t merely an activity but an expression of the condition of our hearts. To worship Him in Truth takes the focus off of me and my situations and sets my thoughts fully on God. The authors of the Psalms are so human and relatable: we can read the cycle they go through of praising God and processing emotions. What we read is a heart that struggles, but then reminds itself of the goodness of God, returning to a heart of worship.

It is essential to remind ourselves of the goodness of God, in our own lives and contained all throughout Scripture. It is human to deal with emotions and feelings, frustrated from not understanding what is happening around us. Remembering, recalling, and recounting God’s goodness will keep our hearts in a place of gratitude and adoration for all He has done.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your faithfulness to me. There is no one like You! When I look at nature, I see Your creativity. When I look at my life, I see Your love. Even when it doesn’t feel like it, You are near. I will always remember all that You’ve done and praise You for who You are. I will daily worship You and will tell others about what You’ve done and who You are.

Note: Many of the Psalms make excellent prayers. Read and find one that resonates with you.

PSALMS 100:2-4

2Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

3Know that the Lord is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.



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