

REGAIN YOUR EDGE BY PRAYER & FASTING

Join us for an ALL CHURCH 21 days Daniel Fast

January 16, 2011—February 05, 2012

**Sometimes we lose our energy
and our spiritual sharpness this
causes us to lose our EDGE.**

**What does it really mean to lose
your EDGE?**

**Join us on Wednesdays
January 4 & 11, 2012
&**

Sunday, January 8 & 15, 2012

**We will be teaching on
PRAYER & FASTING.**



Cooley Avenue Church Family,

I pray that this letter finds you celebrating the great things that the Lord did for each of you in 2011. I know that 2011 brought with it challenges and difficulties for many, but I believe 2012 is going to be the year that the Lord takes each of us and the Cooley Avenue Church of God to greater places in Him.

As we leave 2011 behind and we look forward to 2012 I believe the Lord has been speaking to me about our church entering the New Year with a time of fasting and prayer. **We will begin our fast on January 16th and will be ending it on February 5th.** If we will begin this New Year with 21 days of fasting and prayer the Lord will honor that and it will set the table for a year of blessing and favor for your life and for Cooley Avenue.

I want to encourage you to target your prayers during the fast. Pray for the church, leadership, finances, and our future. Pray for those who are lost and need Christ. Pray for your needs. Pray God will give us greater insight and direction as we move into 2012. I love what the word of God says in *2 Chronicles 7:14-15* "**Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. 15 My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place.**" Another great promise, from the book of Isaiah, proclaims that the chosen fast will "undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free." The word of God tells us in *Isaiah 58:6* "**[Is] not this the fast that I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"**

Why fast you might ask? We are living in tough economic times and we know that so many people are under a financial burden, we have many of our church family fighting sickness and disease, we have marriages and homes on the verge of collapse, our children are under attack, and we have loved one who do not know Christ. The enemy is attacking Gods people and the church like never before. This is why we fast. As we come together to fast and pray, we believe that your burdens will be lifted, your body will be healed, your marriage and home will be restored, and that Gods blessings will be released into your life!

Please join us as we come together as a church family to seek the Lord for the New Year. Let me encourage you to please join one of the daily prayer meetings that will be taking place during our 21 day fast. I believe for greater things in 2012!

Pastor Rich and Angel

What Can I Eat?

The Daniel Fast Foods to Eat

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

Daniel 10:3 KJV 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."

Whole Grains: Brown Rice, Barley, Oats, (You may NOT eat pre-packaged oatmeal.)

Legumes: Dried Beans, Pinto Beans, Split Peas, Lentils, and Black-eyed Peas

Fruits: Apples, Apricots, Bananas, Blackberries, Blueberries, Boysenberries, Cantaloupe, Cherries, Cranberries, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Guava, Honeydew Melon, Kiwi, Lemons, Limes, Mangoes, Nectarines, Oranges, Papayas, Peaches, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins, Raspberries, Strawberries, Tangelos, Tangerines, Tomatoes, Watermelon (any fruit not listed) Choose fresh, canned or dried, preferably in its juices with no sugar added.

Vegetables: Artichokes, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chili Peppers, Corn, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Gingerroot, Kale, Leeks, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Okra, Onions, Parsley, Potatoes, Radishes, Rutabagas, Scallions, Spinach, Sprouts, Squashes, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Watercress, Yams, Zucchini (any vegetable not listed) Choose fresh, canned, or frozen. When cooking, do not add meat, or margarine. (See below.)

Seeds, Nuts, Sprouts

Liquids: Spring Water, Distilled Water, 100% All-Natural Fruit Juices, 100% All Natural Vegetable Juices

Foods to Avoid While on the Daniel Fast

Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish

White Rice

Fried Foods

Candy

Sweets

Caffeine

Carbonated Beverages

Foods Containing Preservatives or Additives

Refined Sugar

White Sugar

Sugar Substitutes

White Flour and All White-Flour Products

Margarine, Shortening, High Fat Products Sources **NOTE: Use olive oil and vinegar for salads. (NO ranch or Italian-type salad dressings)

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

Cooley Avenue Church of God

2012 Fasting Covenant

"Liberated, Loving, Learning, and Living"

Before beginning a fast write down a plan and make a verbal commitment to the Lord. When you approach your fast with determination and a clear goal, you will be less likely to waiver in weak moments.

"Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself"
(Daniel 1:8).

My cause or reason for fasting:

I will fast: **Begin Date:** January 16, 2012
End Date: February 5, 2012

By the strength and grace of God I commit to the above fast.

Sign

Date

REGAIN YOUR EDGE BY PRAYER & FASTING

January 16, 2012 – February 5, 2012

We realize that prayer is an important part of our 21 days of fasting. Every day for 21 days the church will be open for a time of prayer. Please make an effort to join us for one of these following times of prayer.

Sunday	8:00 a.m.
Monday	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	10:00 a.m.
Wednesday	6:30 p.m.
Thursday	7:00 p.m.
Friday	7:00 p.m.
Saturday	10 a.m.



21-DAY FASTING GUIDE

A Devotional to help you...

RECOVER. RECAPTURE. RESTORE.

During his last trip to Israel, Jentezen Franklin and the team made stops at key sites throughout the Holy Land to pray in anticipation of our annual fast. We have made each day's brief teaching, filmed on location, available online for you to enjoy as an accompaniment to this daily devotional.

Please visit fastingmovement.org and click on **21-Day Fasting: Daily Video Journal** to enjoy these very special teachings and prayers for everyone taking part in the Fasting Movement this year.

DAY 1: PRESENCE

The Mount of Olives, with its olive-tree-covered slopes, is located just a few hundred yards east of Jerusalem. It is a serene place that Jesus frequently visited to get away from the crowds and be alone to pray and enjoy fellowship with God (Luke 22:39). The Mount of Olives is where Jesus prayed in agony in the Garden before His arrest. It was the last place the Lord's feet touched on this earth before His ascension into Heaven (Acts 1:9-12), and it is where Scripture tells us His feet will one day touch again when He returns (Zechariah 14:3-5)!

I also want you to notice it was on that mountain that Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem. He wept because the people did not recognize or seek the true presence of God that was right in their midst (Luke 19:41).

How often are we guilty of the same thing—of ignoring the Holy Spirit and neglecting to seek the presence of the Lord?

My prayer for you, as you begin the first day of this fast, is that you will start to experience the presence of the Lord like you never have before. Make His presence your highest goal of this, or any fast. Truly, the reward of fasting is not about obtaining material things. Fasting opens the door for blessings but those are merely side benefits. The real reward of fasting is gaining more of Him—more of His presence in your life. I have never gone on a fast that I didn't draw closer to the Lord.

May the presence of God surround you in greater measure now and throughout this year as you break away from the routine of life to fellowship with Jesus through fasting. Lord, may your presence fill these temples as we fast and pray. AMEN!

READING: Luke 19:41-48

Personal Notes:

DAY 2: DESERT

Does it seem abrupt to go from “His presence” on day one to “the desert” on day two? Sometimes our lives can feel just like that—like we are on the mountaintops one day, and down in the valley the next. Remember that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness of Judea where He fasted for 40 days and nights for you and me. He was all alone during that time, with one exception: The devil was there to tempt Him!

It can be difficult to fast for just a few days in the luxuries that you and I enjoy today. Think about it...our homes and workplaces are typically heated and air-conditioned; we have bathrooms and showers; and, at least this time of year, we generally have others around us who are participating in the same season of fasting.

For Jesus, however, the loneliness in the vast emptiness of that harsh, barren desert must have been brutal. In that time of fasting He found strength to endure. He set the example in the wilderness for us to follow.

Perhaps there are times in your life when you feel that brutal loneliness. Hang on! Though Jesus was tempted by the devil during that time, at the end God dispatched angels to tend to Him. That fact is precious to me realizing that as we fast, ministering angels are released and dispatched. We see it throughout the Word of God. When Daniel fasted and prayed, an angel brought him the answer he sought (Daniel 10). When Elijah was in the wilderness, an angel came and cooked for him. The writer of the book of Hebrews calls angels “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation” (Hebrews 1:14).

As you fast, believe God for angelic forces to fight on your behalf to protect and watch over you now and throughout the year.

READING: Luke 4

Personal Notes:

DAY 3: PEACEMAKER

In the Beatitudes, Jesus gave us instructions on how each of us should live as a child of God. For example, He said, “When you give”... “When you pray”... “When you fast” (Matthew 6), Jesus made it clear that fasting, like giving and praying, was a normal part of Christian life. In other words, as much attention should be given to fasting as is given to giving and praying.

He also said, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9). Notice He didn’t say “peacekeepers.” A peacekeeper is someone who is interested in keeping things peaceful for their own benefit, even if it means compromising what is right. A peacemaker has internal peace and invokes that peace, changing the atmosphere wherever he or she goes.

As Jesus promised, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). He didn’t say blessed are the troublemakers, He said blessed are the peacemakers. Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Peace is not “passive” it is “active.” Isaiah 9:6) As Paul said, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). When you submit all things to God in prayer—and fasting—with thanksgiving, His peace will actively guard your heart.

Today I pray a peacemaker anointing on your life; that wherever there’s conflict, God would give you the ability to invoke His peace. I pray that the peace of God comes upon your home, upon your marriage, upon your relationships and upon your mind. Keep hungering and thirsting for righteousness. You shall be filled.

READING: Isaiah 9:6-7

Personal Notes:

DAY 4: STORMS

I wish I could tell you that fasting and praying makes everything go smoothly in your life. The truth is, sometimes a fast will stir up all kinds of storms. So, if you are going through a storm during this fast, don't be surprised—but be encouraged!

Storms are transitional. In other words, storms tend to occur when you are on your way from one place to another. Jesus was on His way across the Sea of Galilee when a bad storm came up. The storm was so fierce that the disciples on the boat with the Lord thought the boat was about to capsize and they would all be drowned. But Jesus was asleep during the whole thing. When they woke Him, Jesus commanded the storm to be still and all was calm (Matthew 8:23-27).

On another occasion, the Bible tells us that Jesus went for a walk across the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee to catch up with the disciples who were already halfway to the other side in their boat (John 6:16-21).

Storms did not hinder Jesus or cause Him to turn back. Storms did not alter His course or His purpose. He still has authority over the storms and speaks peace to the storms of life. Jesus, our peace speaker, has given us His peace. He is Jehovah Shalom, the Lord our Peace.

Are you experiencing storms in this life that shake your faith? Meditate on His Name: Jehovah Shalom, the Lord our Peace.

Spending time in fasting and prayer—regardless of your circumstances—will help you to be rooted and grounded in your faith, ready to weather any storm of the economy, your health, your family or your job. God can cause you to flourish even during transition. Whatever storms may be raging in your life, my prayer for you during this fast is that you would take hold of that peace of God in a fresh and powerful way.

READING: Psalm 107

Personal Notes:

DAY 5: HUMBLING

When Saul was called out from the tribe of Benjamin to be acknowledged before all the people as their new king, he could not be found. God had to tell Samuel to go and find Saul who was hiding among the equipment (1 Samuel 10:22).

Saul started out as a very humble man. Unfortunately, he did not keep pride and selfish ambition in check. As a result, the kingdom was stripped from him. He tried to kill his successor. Saul died on the battlefield and the Philistines hung his remains on a wall at the ancient city of Beit She'an in a final act of mockery.

As the writer of Proverbs wisely stated, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (16:18). When we become arrogant and full of pride God can't use us anymore. Standing in the city of Beit She'an, I was reminded of Jesus' words, "Whoever exalts himself [with haughtiness and empty pride] shall be humbled (brought low), and whoever humbles himself [whoever has a modest opinion of himself and behaves accordingly] shall be raised to honor" (Matthew 23:12 AMP).

How do we humble ourselves? David said he "humbled himself with fasting" (Psalm 35:13). Fasting is a means of humbling ourselves before the Lord. Fasting will help you identify any areas of pride so that you can lay those things down before the Lord.

When you set your heart to fast and humble yourself before Him, God will be faithful to show you the areas in your life that eat away at your soul like a cancer, and keep you from entering the fullness that He has for you. I pray that the Spirit of God will work humility into your life and into my life as we fast and we pray.

READING: James 4

Personal Notes:

DAY 6: VISION

Caesarea is an amazing place for many reasons, but mainly because of a vision given to a hungry man on a rooftop—a vision that changed the world. Peter was staying at Simon the tanner’s house in Caesarea, and went to the roof to pray. While there, he fell into a trance and God showed him foods that, according to the Law of Moses, the Jews were not permitted to eat. But God told him in this vision to eat them. When Peter refused, God said to Peter, “What God has cleansed you must not call common” (Acts 10:15).

Perplexed, Peter heard a knock at the door—the result of another man’s vision. A Gentile man named Cornelius had been crying out to know the God of the Jews. God answered his cry, and told him to send for Peter. When Peter heard why the men had come for him, he understood the vision and went to Cornelius’ house to preach the gospel. This was the first time that the Gentiles received the good news of salvation!

God gave Peter the vision as he prayed to prepare his heart for the purpose he was about to serve—to deliver the news of salvation to the Gentiles.

Are you in a season where you don’t know what the next step is for your life? Maybe you feel that God has given you a particular vision, but circumstances make it seem like it will never come to pass. If God said it—then it is your responsibility to believe, to hold on to your faith and though it tarries ... *wait for it*.

As you fast today, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal more to your heart about the vision, the plan, the purpose, the dream that God has for your life. Pray for things to come into alignment for your assignment.

READING: Acts 10, Habakkuk 2:1-4

Personal Notes:

DAY 7: LAND

In the city of Jerusalem, what is known as the Western Wall is what remains of Solomon's Temple. It is where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, and the glory of the Lord would fill the Temple (2 Chronicles 5:14). After Solomon dedicated the Temple, the Lord said to him, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Do you know what it takes to be God's people? You have to first be God's person. It is up to each of us to follow this command, knowing that God will be faithful to His Word. Fasting is a way to humble ourselves before God. During this fast, let us pray and seek God's face, and turn from wickedness. Let us stop complaining that there is no voice in government that will speak against immorality, against the business of murdering unborn children, against human trafficking, against the homosexual agenda—and raise up a cry to heaven for God to flood our nation with righteousness.

Today, and throughout this fast, pray for your country. Repent for the wickedness that has been committed in the land. Pray for the economy. Pray for your leaders that govern locally and over the nation. Cry out to God to hear, and heal our land.

Notice what He says in 2 Chronicles 7:15: "Now my eyes will be open, and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place." This promise is for all of us, every day: If we will—He will. When you fast and pray in this way, it will affect generations! When you lay a solid foundation of humbling yourself in fasting and in prayer and in turning from wickedness, the impact will be immeasurable.

READING: 2 Chronicles 7

Personal Notes:

DAY 8: PROMOTION

When Satan tries to take you high, you can be certain that his only goal is to bring you low. The enemy uses the “high life” to entice people. He tempts us with offers of the best but ultimately rewards with the worst. It is the opposite with Jesus. Satan wants to take you high and then bring you low—Jesus wants to take you low and then exalt you so that He can use you for His glory.

Jesus is the Son of God, yet He fasted for 40 days in the wilderness before He ever began His ministry. During the fast, the devil tempted Jesus to exalt Himself, but He refused. Our Lord humbled Himself through fasting, and He came out of that fast in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4).

When you fast, you’re saying, “No, I’m not taking myself high. I’m humbling myself and I only want God to promote me according to His will and His purpose and His plan for my life.”

Can God use you? King Saul exalted himself, and had to be removed as King (1 Samuel 15:12). God raised up a humble shepherd boy to take his place. Jesus said, “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt. 23:12). Man cannot hold you down when God exalts you. Your influence for God will spread and push back the darkness. The system cannot keep you back. The people can’t hinder you when God says, “I will exalt.”

As you fast and pray today, may the Spirit of God become more real to you than ever before. As you humble yourself before the mighty hand of God, believe that in due season, He will exalt you. God bless you. Keep on fasting.

READING: 1 Samuel 15

Personal Notes:

DAY 9: CHANGE

Thirty-eight years is a long time to wait for something to change. The Bible tells of a pool in the town of Bethesda in Jerusalem where crippled people would be brought in hopes of being healed when the waters were stirred. One day, on the Sabbath, Jesus walked near the pool and spoke to a man who had been coming to the pool for thirty-eight years but was still not healed. The man was crippled and had no hope. With a word, Jesus healed him (John 5:8-9). In a moment, his circumstances were changed!

The devil would like for us to believe that our troubling circumstances will never change. Please remember that the devil is a liar. Jesus said, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Today as you fast and pray, break the hold of hopelessness off of your life in Jesus' name. Ask the Lord for a breakthrough. Perhaps you are praying for the work of the enemy to cease in an area of your life or in the life of a loved one. Perhaps you are praying for things to change for your son or daughter. I want to encourage you that even if this issue has been going on for a very long time, Jesus has the power to break it. No matter how hopeless the enemy wants you to feel, there is always hope with Jesus. One word from God can change your situation. It's never too late for a miracle!

As Paul said, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

READING: Romans 15

Personal Notes:

DAY 10: FLESH

My mother was with us on a trip to Israel, so when we visited the Garden of Gethsemane, I asked her to pray for everyone taking part in the annual fast. Here is her prayer,

Father, we come in the name of Jesus and we thank you for the thousands of people all over the world that are seeking Your face for Your perfect will. We pray for the next generation, that you will direct their steps, that you will give them that spirit of enablement that comes from the Holy Ghost to withstand trials and temptations, and to be led by you day by day. Lord, you said in Psalms 78, tell it to your children, the next generation, of my wonders, my power, my miracles, so that they can have a hope in you. You give us hope. You give us strength to endure until the end. Direct our every step. We'll praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

When I was growing up, my parents fasted and prayed. They taught me to fast by consistently modeling that lifestyle in our home. It thrills me that my own children have grown up that way, too. They have learned to fast individually. They also join us corporately each year.

The Garden of Gethsemane is where Jesus overcame the flesh and submitted to His Father's will—though it meant suffering a horrific death on a cross and separation from His Father for the first time ever. It is where He spoke the words, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

As you fast and pray, remember that your obedience is affecting generations. Don't settle for anything less than the perfect will of God for your life.

READING: Psalm 78

Personal Notes:

DAY 11: HELL

Hell is real. It is not imaginary. Hell is forever. We don't talk about Hell that much anymore, but Jesus did. He gave an illustrated sermon using the Valley of Gehenna—a dark valley outside of Jerusalem where trash was burned continually.

Once we are born again, we tend to think less and less about Hell—thankful that it is no longer our destination. Jesus came to redeem us from the punishment that our sins earned us—eternity in Hell. But multitudes remain in the valley of decision (Joel 3:14). They are lost. They are far from God and heading for eternity in Hell.

Today as we fast and pray, remember why we are to preach the Gospel and testify. People are perishing. If people don't know Jesus Christ, they are facing the horrors of Hell. Fasting enables us to target the lost in prayer. Who are you praying for that needs to be saved? Make a list of those people today, and cry out to God on their behalf. Ask Him to convict them of sin, causing them to understand their need of forgiveness. Ask Him to pluck them out of the fire. Don't be discouraged. Keep believing God for their salvation.

Father, in the name of Jesus, today as we're fasting, we pray for souls on their way to eternal damnation. We pray that the presence and the power and the blood of Jesus Christ encounter their lives in a mighty way today. I agree in Jesus' Mighty Name—along with thousands of others who are praying and fasting today—for the lost loved ones in our lives. May this be the year, Lord, that the miracle of salvation and redemption from eternal judgment takes place in the lives of my loved ones, so that their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Please continue to pray for this ministry as we do all that God calls us to do in order to preach the Gospel and reach the lost.

READING: Mark 9:42-48

Personal Notes:

DAY 12: THOUGHTS

When Jesus was to be crucified, He was taken to a hill outside of the city known as Golgotha. The name Golgotha means “the place of the Skull” in Aramaic, and translated into Latin we get “Calvary.” I find it interesting that the ultimate victory over sin and death was staged at the place of the skull. That reconfirms to me that we will never be truly victorious in our own lives until we have victory in the place of the skull—our mind and thoughts.

Once we are born-again, Paul warns that we are no longer to submit and conform to this world, but we are to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

We can either submit to God or submit to the world. It is one or the other. Whatever fills our thought life is what will eventually become the reality of our daily life. Are your thoughts on things above (Colossians 3:2)? Or is your mind full of things of this world? Fasting is a choice to break the allure of the world as we put our flesh under submission to the will of God. Especially on an extended fast, you will discover that time spent fasting, praying and meditating on God’s Word cleanses and purifies your heart and focuses your thoughts on things above rather than the stuff of this world.

As you continue to fast and pray, continue to renew your mind in His Word. “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

READING: [Philippians 2](#)

Personal Notes:

DAY 13: ROOSTERS

When you walk around the city of Jerusalem you can hear roosters crowing every morning. As I walked along the path that Jesus would have taken where He would be beaten and stand before Caiaphas, I thought of Peter. Jesus had already told Peter that he would deny Him before the rooster crowed three times. When it happened, the Bible says Peter ran off and wept bitterly (Luke 22:62).

The weight of his guilt and confusion must have been tremendous. Do you sometimes feel as though you have failed the Lord, like you have messed up beyond repair? Day after day, the reminder is there—just like Peter every time he heard a rooster crow. The enemy haunted him with his failure trying to prevent him from following God’s will for his life.

Maybe there is a rooster crowing from your past. It keeps reminding you of a failure that you just can’t shake. Remember: Peter was forgiven and restored! Jesus never intended for him to wallow in that guilt—but to repent and rise up to walk in the full power of his calling. The same goes for you. Jesus calls you to repent, rise up and walk in your calling!

That is why fasting is such a powerful tool. It revives the soul! Fasting helps you sweep out the junk. I am praying that everyone participating in this fast will experience a level of real revival that silences the haunting, crowing voices of the past.

God has a plan for your life. Peter preached and 3,000 people were saved—the same man who denied Jesus and wept bitterly in shame and disgrace was mightily used by God as the voice of Pentecost. It is time to tune out the roosters and allow God to bring you beyond your past into the anointing that He has for your life.

READING: Acts 2

Personal Notes:

DAY 14: BLOOM

Wilderness places are dry, lonely places. David cried out to the Lord in the desert of Judea,

O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
Psalm 63:1

Wilderness seasons can be very hard to endure. Have you been hit hard by the economic woes that are so prevalent? Perhaps you have suffered a tragic loss of a loved one and endured a long season of grief. Sometimes wilderness seasons come where we just don't feel God's presence like we once did.

We all have different wilderness experiences—the key is to never let go of your faith. God has not abandoned you. He will faithfully lead you through as you hold on to Him. He can cause you to bloom in the midst of that desert wilderness!

David says in Psalm 63 that he is in a dry place, without even water to drink. He was running for his life and seemed quite far from his calling and anointing as king. But even in that dry place, his hunger and thirst were not focused on his own lack or discomfort, but on the Lord.

The Lord can take the worst mess of our lives and turn that mess into a message that ministers hope and healing to others. You can endure. You can bloom even in the desert. As you fast today, trust God to encourage your heart and guide you through. He provided a path to victory before you ever entered the wilderness season, and He will lead you on the way you should go as you press in to Him.

READING: Psalm 139

Personal Notes:

DAY 15: PROVISION

Near the Sea of Galilee in Israel stands a church built as a memorial to Jesus' miraculous provision that fed over 5000 people. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all give an account of this miracle. Luke says that Jesus "spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing" (Luke 9:10-16).

What an amazing day that must have been for those who came to listen to the teaching of the Messiah. Men, women and children gathered to hear about the kingdom of God. They were partaking of the "bread of life" and did not fully realize it. Then, the Lord multiplied 5 small loaves of bread and 2 fish, enough to feed the entire crowd with some left over.

Have you ever wondered if some people went home early that day? Perhaps they had other things to do or went home to grab a snack because they were hungry. Imagine what they must have felt like after hearing stories of the multitude being fed by miraculous provision! When you are close to the kingdom of God, there is always enough.

Fasting is such a powerful spiritual discipline because it helps you break through worldly thinking and physical limitations so that you can recognize God's supernatural provision.

As you continue to fast, setting aside these early days of the year to honor the Lord, pray and believe for this to be a year of supernatural provision. You may not have much, like that little boy's lunch. But in the hands of the Lord, it is plenty. As long as the disciples kept what they had in their hands it was useless. But when they put it in the hands of the Master, then suddenly it was increased. May the work of your hands be abundantly blessed and prosperous this year!

READING: Psalm 1

Personal Notes:

DAY 16: TARRY

The night came when Jesus was about to be betrayed and arrested (Matthew 26:36-40). He took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, but He kept finding them sleeping instead of praying. Jesus finally asked, “Could you not tarry with me one hour?”

That is such a sad question. Unfortunately, it is one the Lord could ask many believers every day. If spending at least an hour a day with the Lord is not part of your daily routine, I encourage you to take an hour today and just say, “Lord, today I’m going to read the Word and pray, and wait (tarry) to hear from You.” The only way to learn how to pray is to pray. If you don’t ever start to pray you’ll never learn. Prayer time is not just about you filling the air with words and requests. Prayer is also about waiting—tarrying. It is about quietness before the Lord. Don’t force it if you don’t really know what to pray. Just be quiet and let the Holy Spirit begin to bring things up in your mind to pray about. Sometimes you might have a song of worship. Sing it to the Lord and reflect on His goodness. That will often lead to prayer rising up out of your spirit.

When you seek the Lord through fasting and prayer, you empty yourself so He can bring out those things that He put in you for His purposes. Jesus knew how important it was to “come away” and be with God in prayer. When you fast, it is a season to set yourself apart from the routine of life, business, mindless entertainment and sink deeply into God’s Word. When you are empty, quiet and broken before Him, you can hear His voice more clearly. Don’t quit now. Keep on fasting and praying.

READING: Psalm 141

Personal Notes:

DAY 17: PRAYER

Fasting without prayer is simply a diet. Combining prayer with fasting raises the intensity, like pouring gas on a fire. It's a powerful mix. As you join thousands of others all over the world who are fasting and crying out to God during this fast, you can believe that something powerful is taking place.

God's Word promises, "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). God invites us to seek Him. Intimacy cannot be rushed. It must be worked on day by day. Jesus was frequently surrounded by large crowds of people, but He often withdrew to get alone with God and pray. He knew that He needed to stay tapped into the Source of all things, and so do we. Prayer and fasting were a big part of Jesus' life. Why should it be such a small part of ours?

There is both reward and wisdom to be found when we tune out the noise of the world and come away to hear God's heart through fasting and prayer. Spend extra time in prayer today. Make a prayer list – a "hit list" – of people who are not saved, and pray over their names. Pray for people that you know who are sick or struggling with family or financial issues. Fasting is persistent prayer!

The Bible tells us that Jesus is our High Priest in Heaven who ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). He's been praying for you today. Maybe you are having a tough day. You're hungry. The devil has come against you as he often does on a fast. He's tempting you to give up, to just quit. Remember that when the devil is tempting you—Jesus is praying for you! Keep asking! Keep seeking! Keep knocking!

READING: Hebrews 7

Personal Notes:

DAY 18: PROMISE

Have you ever taken time to search God's Word and mark down some of His promises to His people? It is a very encouraging way to study God's Word. In Jeremiah 29:11-13 we find, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

The Apostle Paul writes, "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Meditate on Scriptures like Isaiah 53, where Isaiah describes the punishment that the Lord endured so that we could be healed. Scripture reveals that on several occasions God instructs His people to do one thing and promises that He will do something in response. You see this in Isaiah 58, where the Lord is explaining the goal of genuine fasting to His people. Even in that chapter, the Lord promises:

Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before you;
The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'
(Isaiah 58:8-9)

In these final days of the fast—continue to set your heart and mind on things above. Cling to the promises of God, as Paul tells us, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

READING: Isaiah 58

Personal Notes:

DAY 19: FORSAKEN

Have you felt like giving up and just throwing in the towel? Maybe you have grown tired of all the battles and struggles because all the disappointments have caused your hope to fade. I understand that. What is more important is the fact that Jesus understands, too. Don't forget that He was tempted to take short cuts and quit when He was fasting in the desert for 40 days. But He pressed on. He did not quit. The number one thing the enemy would like to get us to do is to quit. It may be quitting your marriage, quitting your dream or even quitting your walk with the Lord.

There are times when we all go through the pit of life and we all go through times when it feels like we've hit bottom. But Deuteronomy 33:27 says, "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." No matter how low you feel—you are still in His arms, never out of His reach.

I have had prayers answered and I have had prayers go unanswered. I have had miracles happen and I have endured huge disappointments. I have had high mountains where God gave me things, showed me beautiful insights into His Word and in specific situations, amused me in amazing ways. I have also had low, low valleys where I felt God had forsaken me. But I am not in this for what I can get out of Jesus. I'm in this because He loved me first and gave Himself for me. Scripture 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" (Hebrews 4:16).

He will not forsake you. He will never leave you (Deuteronomy 31:6). As you're drawing close to Him, He's drawing close to you. Be encouraged as you are fasting and praying for more of His presence.

READING: Psalm 23

Personal Notes:

DAY 20: POWER

No trip to Israel is complete without a visit to the Garden Tomb, the location believed to be the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea where they laid the body of Jesus after He was crucified. When you go inside, you can see a little sign that reads, “He is not here, He is risen.” Jesus only borrowed that tomb for a few days. He rose from death to life—so that we may live in Him.

Resurrection power! We are dead to sin and alive in Christ by the same power that raised Him from the dead. The book of Romans tells us, “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (8:10-11).

As you approach the end of your fast, reflect upon the power of God to bring life—to resurrect those things in our lives that are dead. It could be your marriage, your job, your passion for God. The Lord can raise to life what the enemy has tried to destroy. Hold fast to His promises.

When you fast and pray in alignment with God’s will, He hears. You can rest assured that you have set something in motion in the supernatural even if you are not able to discern them in the natural. Sometimes you can pray for something but you don’t see the answer right away. Keep praying. Don’t let go of your faith and do not cast aside your confidence! It may be that the thing you are praying for is just not ready or in God’s timing yet. Your prayers will not be ignored or discarded. Prayers don’t have an expiration date!

READING: Romans 8

Personal Notes:

DAY 21: PURPOSE

One of my favorite scriptures on fasting is found in Acts 13:2-3, “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”

The Holy Spirit will begin to speak to you about your purpose and your destiny when you fast and pray. God has a specific destiny planned for you, one that your choices and your response to Him will unlock. Fasting is an intentional choice to press into the depths of God’s heart to hear His plans and move forward in your divine destiny in the power of His Spirit.

I never cease to be amazed by how God can connect people to accomplish His purposes. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God gives men and women talents, gifts, discernment and insight that—when brought together with what has been given to someone else—can change the world.

That is what the fast that God has chosen accomplishes. It breaks the bondages and limitations off of your life so that God can release His power through you to help others. God chooses a fast that loosens bonds of wickedness, lifts heavy burdens, frees those who are oppressed and breaks every yoke.

There is a list of ordinary people in the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews who did extraordinary things for God because they never lost the vision, and they refused to turn back even in the worst of times. When you follow God, not everybody will go with you. Go with God when He is calling you out of your comfort zone. Continue to trust Him to lead and guide you into the purposes and plans that He has for your life.

READING: Hebrews 11

Personal Notes:
