

21 days of prayer & fasting

prayer & study guide

Isaiah 58:6-9 (MSG)

“This is the kind of fast day I’m after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I’m interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families. Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once. Your righteousness will pave your way. The God of glory will secure your passage. Then when you pray, God will answer. You’ll call out for help and I’ll say, “Here I Am.”

Why Everyone Should Fast

If you've never fasted, now is the best time, as this is a joint venture! In the New Testament, Jesus made mention of "when we fast" (not "if"), telling us that this should be a regular discipline in our lives.

TYPES OF FASTS

You may choose a "Daniel Fast" – a diet consisting of fruits and vegetables – or you can participate in a total fast consisting of water only, or a liquid fast of fresh juices. Other ways to participate include fasting from television, radio, internet or anything that you recognize as having control over your life. Fasting is something the entire family can participate in to varying degrees – each person in his/her own way.

ABOUT FASTING

It is much easier to fast while active. Fasting will cause hunger pangs initially, but you will get the energy you need from stored fat in the body. If you are under the care of a physician, please seek his/her advice regarding the level of participation that is best suited to your physical condition.

WHY FAST?

Fasting is the most powerful spiritual discipline of all those discussed in the Bible. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life and produce incredible results. Prayer alone is mighty, but when combined with fasting, it produces a powerful force against which Hell cannot prevail.

FILLING OURSELVES DURING A FAST

The secret to being filled with the Spirit of God is first to empty ourselves. Through fasting, we empty ourselves of food so that He can fill us. Food is man's greatest carnal impulse. Fasting helps you "master" this appetite. When you can control the strongest appetite, you can gain control of the other carnal appetites as well. Your appetite acts as a prayer alarm. Instead of eating to satisfy your cravings, you pray. This keeps you focused all day long. We replace pleasures of the flesh with spiritual pleasure. Psalm 34:8 says, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (NKJ) Taste is a trigger, which sets off certain physical and mental reactions or connections. When you taste the Lord through fasting and prayer, it triggers various reactions in your heart.

Best Ways to Prepare for the Fast

While hunger pangs and weakness can be an expected part of many fasts, you need not dehydrate, faint or get sick while fasting. There are several ways to prepare yourself physically for a healthy fast.

Days Before the Fast

- Stop eating foods that are high in caffeine and sugar
- Begin drinking more water than usual

Day Before the Fast

- Eat something small every two hours
- Avoid foods with caffeine, sugar and salt
- Drink plenty of water

Final Meal Before the Fast

- Plan the final meal early enough in the afternoon so that there's no rush to finish before your fast begins
- Plan the menu of this final meal so that it contains high carbohydrates and low salts
- Do not eat too much in the meal before the fast, but drink plenty of water

Good Advice for Ending Your Fast

After 21 days of fasting you may be tempted to "jump right back in" and eat some of the foods you've missed. However, it's much better to ease back into your normal eating habits rather than suffer from an upset stomach by loading it with foods it's not ready to digest. Here are some healthy ideas for ending your fast:

- Begin with the simple B.R.A.T diet recommended for upset stomachs – Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Toast
- Begin with brothy soups and avoid heavy carbs and proteins
- Eat something small and light every two hours and drink plenty of water

Health Benefits of a Fast

In addition to the countless spiritual benefits a person experiences through fasting, there are also many valuable health benefits:

- The body goes through a natural detoxification process, allowing the release of poisons and toxins from the system
- Energy is diverted away from the digestive system due to its lack of use, and instead is routed to the metabolism and immune system
- You become rejuvenated due to an improved immune system, as well as the increased production of hormones
- The body begins to use its fat stores as an energy source, which positively affects your cholesterol levels, blood pressure and weight

What to Expect from a Fast

Excerpt from, *You Are Not What You Weigh*, by Lisa Bevere

1) Fasting Creates a New Hunger

“So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.” ~Ezra 8:23 (NIV)

When you fast... you become hungry. At first it may be hunger for food or whatever you are fasting from, but as the initial hunger pangs or longings cease, a new desire is formed. Fasting causes you to hunger in the midst of abundance.

2) Fasting Increases Sensitivity to God

“There was also a prophetess, Anna... she never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.” ~Luke 2:36-38 (NIV)

From this account of the widow woman, Anna, we can see that fasting and prayer had developed such a keen sensitivity in her that she perceived the Christ child at only a few days old. She could hear clearly what God was saying.

3) Fasting Works Humility

“Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered.” ~Psalm 35:13 (NIV)

When we fast, we deny ourselves food; we often feel our natural strength waning. In our weakness, we find ourselves more dependent upon God. It is a confrontation with the flesh; a time when we deny it satisfaction and provision. It is a time of turning aside from what we can provide, and turning toward what God alone can give. This is often the setting for a confrontation between the spirit and the flesh. After forty days in the wilderness, Jesus was hungry physically; Satan came to tempt Him – to use his position as the Son of God to create bread from stone. But, instead, Jesus humbled Himself and answered, *“It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” ~Matthew 4:4 (NIV)*

4) Fasting Chastens or Disciplines

“When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting that became my reproach.” ~Psalm 69:10 (NKJ)

David maintained his spiritual life by means of bringing his body into subjection. Through self-inflicted chastening, we steady and strengthen our spiritual walk.

5) Fasting Changes Our Appetite

“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” ~Acts 13:2 (NIV)

While fasting, you may find that God reveals a “change of plans” from what you are currently doing or even feel “called” to do. God often uses times of fasting and prayer to speak to the desires of our hearts, and to reveal his purpose and destiny for our lives.

6) Fasting Increases Our Capacity

“Go, gather together all of the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” ~Esther 4:16 (NIV)

This fast prepared Esther to overcome the fear of man – and even greater, her fear of death. This fast increased her capacity for self sacrifice while it imparted wisdom. The survival of a nation depended on her willingness to lay down her life. She knew it was more than she could face in her present condition with her present information, so she drew on God’s strength.

7) Fasting Brings Answers to Prayer

“Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: Here am I.” ~Isaiah 58:9 (NIV)

A godly fast will bring answered prayer. It is the atmosphere for answers to questions, direction, help, and the revelation of God. It is a time when He says, “Here I am...I’m over here. Come to me.” This revelation may come through his Word, or as a still small voice, or by a strong confirmation of what He has previously shown us.

8) Fasting Leads to Quick Healing

“Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear.” ~Isaiah 58:8 (NIV)

God set up the fast as a manner of healing His people – a time when the darkness of oppression, depression or infirmity is dispelled by light, such as the dawn. When this light breaks forth, healing soon follows. This could mean many things. It could be a revelation of sin, which, when repented of, allows healing to spring forth. It could mean a revelation of His will or Word, which brings healing and freedom where there once was darkness or ignorance. This healing could be physical, mental or spiritual.

Even natural medicine supports this – many illnesses occur in the digestive system. A short fast gives your body a chance to refocus its energies on healing instead of eating. (Please consult a physician before undertaking a fast if you are ill.)

9) Fasting Opens the Door to God’s Protection & Provision

“Then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.” ~Isaiah 58:8 (NIV)

God promised to be a guard before us and behind us. A fast renews your righteousness and sends it on before you. Then, as you give God the glory, He returns righteousness as your rear guard.

10) Fasting Looses the Chains of Injustice

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke.” ~Isaiah 58:6 (NIV)

The kind of fast God leads us into has the power to loose any unjust chains that bind us. It also unties the cords tethering us to any yoke. This application is not limited merely to a personal liberation for us – it represents God’s desire to see us reach out and loose the ties that bind others, and remove the chains of oppression.

11) Fasting Frees the Oppressed & Breaks Every Yoke

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke." ~Isaiah 58:6 (NIV)

A fast is a time when we take our eyes off of ourselves and our own needs; and look around at the oppression and pain of others. In response, we learn to reach out in compassion and help – becoming agents of healing.

Jesus said that His yoke was easy and His burden was light. When we are carrying a burden other than His; it is cumbersome, awkward and heavy. There is nothing more frustrating than feeling responsible for something over which you have no authority. It will weigh you down with hopelessness and frustration. During a fast, God checks these areas in our lives and exposes the yokes of fear, worry, stress and turmoil. He removes them and readjusts His yoke for our life, the one that keeps us dependent upon him. If you're feeling weighed down perhaps you are carrying too much.

12) Fasting Motivates Us to Provide Food for the Needy

"Is it not to share your food with the hungry..." ~Isaiah 58:7 (NIV)

The benefit is obvious – you are not eating because of a fast, then you are free to share your portion with those less fortunate. Maybe you should give away any food lingering in your refrigerator or pantry that has a significant pull on you. Share with someone else, but don't proclaim or herald your fast ... just give it to them.

Fasting is Not a Burden – It's a Privilege

Fasting is intimate and private. It originates in the secret place between you and God. He waits in the secret place for you to join Him. After we visit Him in secret, He will reward us openly. Inward transformation brings about an outward anointing, blessing and provision. Inward transformation positions us for the promotion of the Lord.

***"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."***

~ Psalm 23:5-6 (NIV)

This passage describes the open reward of the Lord. It is a feast of provision; it brings an assurance of his presence. Even in the midst of opposition, the believer who fasts as an act of separation from the world receives the rewards of God.

Bible Reading & Prayer Focus

During the fast, set aside one to two hours per day for worship, devotion and prayer. The Word of God will feed your spirit and bring fresh conviction to your heart. Spend time reading and meditating on Scripture, and then praying for conviction and freedom in the specific areas revealed to you by God. It is also recommended that you keep a journal of all that He illuminates to your heart.

Week One – Personal Renewal

In days 1-7 of the fast, you will be standing in the gap for yourself. You will be confessing your sins, asking God to bring cleansing, guidance and strength for change. During these seven days you will be evaluating your life and relationship with Christ.

Day 1: Lovelessness

Day 2: Compromise

Day 3: Worldliness

Day 4: Complacency

Day 5: Faithfulness

Day 6: Lukewarmness

Day 7: Endurance

Week Two – Renewal in the Body of Christ

In days 8-14 of the fast, you will be standing in the gap for the Body of Christ. You will be confessing the sins of God's people – asking God to bring healing, boldness and a new outpouring of His Spirit to His Church.

Day 8: Preparation

Day 9: Holiness

Day 10: New Wineskins

Day 11: Revival

Day 12: Worship

Day 13: Restoration

Day 14: Participation

Week Three – Renewal in our Nation & World

In days 15-21 of the fast, you will be standing in the gap for our nation, and for the world. Like Daniel, Nehemiah and others, you will be confessing the sins of our land; asking God to bring cleansing. When a nation turns away from God, it is a serious thing. The church is the only body in the earth that can stand before God and appeal to His mercy.

Day 15: Leadership

Day 16: Unity

Day 17: Mercy

Day 18: Idolatry

Day 19: The Airwaves

Day 20: Israel

Day 21: Missionaries & Laborers



Lovelessness

Scripture:

Revelation 2:4-5 (NLT) “But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first! Look how far you’ve fallen. Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don’t repent, I will come and remove your lamp stand from its place among the churches.”

Personal Reflection:

We all remember the first moments of our first love; we were captivated by every thought of the one to whom our affections flowed – putting on our best behavior, doing everything to get and stay in their attentive focus, talking, dreaming and thinking about them all day, every day. But something happens after a while; the wonder and amazement of those first moments begin to fade and we take the one we love for granted instead, turning our attention to other pursuits – our job, new friends, kids, etc. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any area in your life where you’ve turned from your initial passion and love of God so that you can receive cleansing and forgiveness and set your focus completely upon Jesus Christ and seeking His kingdom.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Psalm 51:10; Isaiah 1; Isaiah 40:28-31; Romans 12:2-3; Colossians 3:8-10; Titus 3:3-7*

Praying Through Scripture:

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (MSG)
Father, I know that it doesn’t matter if I speak with all intelligence, or the appearance of angelic authority – if my speech isn’t first from a place of love, it’s nothing but a creaking gate. It doesn’t matter if I speak God’s word with power, revealing mysteries and making everything as plain as day; or if I have faith that says to this mountain “jump,” and it jumps, if I don’t have love, I am nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and give my very life as a martyr, but don’t love – I’ve gotten nowhere. I know that no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, without love I am bankrupt. Forgive me for those times that I’ve forgotten You, my first love. Amen.



Compromise

Scripture:

Revelation 2:14-15 (NLT) “But I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel. He taught them to sin by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin. In a similar way, you have some Nicoaitans among you who follow the same teaching.”

Personal Reflection:

Jesus and the writers of both our Old & New Testaments warned us that there would be teachers, philosophies, ideas and arguments that present themselves against the Word of God. Where we sometimes go wrong is in thinking that these things will be blatant in their attempts to lead us astray. However, the devil is much more clever than that; rather than blatantly opposing God’s Word, he will entice us into compromise with widely accepted ideas which cause us to relax our moral views on issues in which the Bible takes a clear stand. Invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart for any area of compromise, any way of thinking and any unbelief that you may have that is contrary to God’s Word. Allow His cleansing power to burn away your imperfections causing His light to shine even more clearly through you.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 3:3-4; Galatians 1:7-8; Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 2 Peter 2:13-21*

Praying Through Scripture:

Matthew 5:13-16 (MSG)
Lord, I know that You came not to diminish the Word or the law, but to be its complete fulfillment. Help me to be the true salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors on this earth. Forgive me for the areas that I’ve lost my saltiness and help me to become useful. I commit to no longer hiding my light under a bucket, rather I’m setting it out so that it may shine brightly and bring out the God-colors in this world. You are not a secret to be kept but a promise that should shine brightly as a city on a hill. Now that I’ve placed You there, give me the strength to shine; to be open with my life, generous and prompting others to open up to You, our generous Father in heaven. Amen.



Worldliness

Scripture:

Revelation 2:20-21 (NLT) “But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman – that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet – to lead my servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality.”

Personal Reflection:

We must always be careful about those things that come into our lives to deceive us and divide our thinking. For most, the word “worldliness” brings to mind images of sex, drugs and rock & roll. While these things can certainly be an outward reflection of an inward heart turned toward the world, perhaps the most subtle and damaging form of worldliness comes when we allow our culture to define our values – when money, power and status cloud our definition of success; when we think our job is our security; when we seek first a career, a mate or material object rather than seeking first the kingdom of heaven. Ask the Holy Spirit to cleanse you of the idols in your life. You can tell whether or not something has taken priority over God in your life by how much time you spend with it, or thinking about it.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: Deuteronomy 7:26; Deuteronomy 8:18; Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:16-20; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Galatians 5:19-24; Colossians 2:8

Praying Through Scripture:

1 Corinthians 1:19-23 (MSG)

Father, I would rather the world call me a fool for following You than to conform to what the world calls smart – for those things that the world considers smart, You see as foolishness. You see through the smoke screens of those who think themselves wise. Forgive me where I have bragged in my own conceit and forgotten that I am privileged to call You my Savior, my Lord and my King. Amen.



Complacency

Scripture:

Revelation 3:1b-3 (NLT) “...I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive – but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God. Go back to what you first heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don’t, I will come to you suddenly, as an unexpected thief.”

Personal Reflection:

Complacency is a sickness in today’s world, especially in America; too often we become comfortable and self-satisfied because everything seems fine in our life and we’re happy and comfortable. It’s this very comfort that puts us at the greatest risk. When we are in need, we take God seriously and seek Him for guidance, strength and wisdom. But when we are fed, comfortable and prosperous, it’s easy to become complacent about God. It’s a wise person who remembers that no matter what our circumstances in this life, God is with us daily, both in times of need and in prosperity. Seek the Holy Spirit’s revelation of areas in your life in which you’ve become complacent.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: 1 Kings 11:1-4; Hosea 13:5-6; Amos 6:1; Zephaniah 1:12; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; James 4:17; 1 Peter 5:8

Praying Through Scripture:

2 Timothy 4:3-7 (MSG)

Father, I know that there are going to be times when people, maybe even myself, have no stomach for solid teaching, but will fill up on spiritual junk food – catchy opinions that tickle their fancy. Help me not to turn my back on truth to chase mirages, but instead to keep my eye on what I’m doing, accepting the hard times along with the good; keeping Your Word alive; doing a good job as your servant. I hand my life over to You; die to myself so that my life can be a sacrifice to You. This is the only race worth running - thank You for the strength to run hard right to the finish, believing Your truth all the way. Amen.



Faithfulness

Scripture:

Revelation 3:10-11 (NLT) “Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to the world. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown.”

Personal Reflection:

The type of faithfulness that God measures each of us by is simple: do we believe Him and keep His Word? This faithfulness says, “I’m willing to lose it all for your sake,” and, “I believe your Word and promises above what my current circumstances look like.” As simple as that sounds, our faithful confidence in God will be tested; as our trials increase and the battle grows more intense, our flesh can become weary. When we’re weary, we allow fear, anger and doubt to creep in causing us to lose our childlike faith in God and instead, turn to questioning and caution when it comes to His promises. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas that you have let go of your faithfulness to God and relied on your own strength and understanding. Repent in these areas and return to a childlike faith in God, your faithful Father.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Joshua 24:14; 2 Kings 20:3; Psalm 26:3; Psalm 85:10; Psalm 119:30; Matthew 25:1-13; Luke 16:10; Galatians 5:22; 1 Timothy 1:12*

Praying Through Scripture:

Hebrews 13:7 (MSG)
Lord, help us to notice the faithfulness of the leaders in our lives, and let their faithfulness instruct us, as well as their truthfulness. I want to be consistent in everything that I do. For Jesus doesn’t change—yesterday, today, tomorrow, He’s always totally Himself. Help me to draw from Your example, that I may continually strive to be faithful, and not waver or change. Amen.



Lukewarmness

Scripture:

Revelation 3:15-17 (NLT) “I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot or cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot or cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! You say, ‘I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing!’ And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”

Personal Reflection:

If you’re a coffee drinker you understand that coffee is either good really hot or really cold, but if you drink it lukewarm, it tastes terrible. The greatest danger facing each of us is being lukewarm in our faith – choosing to be indifferent to the commands of Christ, yet remaining in the church pew. In America, we suffer from a great malady, those who call themselves Christians based on “going to church,” “being raised in a Christian home,” or “being baptized at a young age.” A lukewarm Christian is very hard to distinguish from the world, often passing off pop-psychology or positive thinking for real relationship with Christ Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the condition of your heart and guide you out of “middle-of-the-road” Christianity toward a burning passion for serving Him.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Proverbs 13:7; Matthew 5:3; Mark 10:24; Luke 1:53; Luke 6:24; Romans 6; Philippians 3:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:6-8*

Praying Through Scripture:

2 Corinthians 13:5; Romans 12:3 (MSG)
Test me, Lord, and teach me to test myself to make sure that I am solid in the faith. Show me anywhere that I may be drifting along and taking things for granted. Holy Spirit, remind me to give myself regular checkups and give me first-hand insight into the condition of my heart. If I fail in any area, reveal it to me so that I can do something about it. I want to continually walk in a deep gratitude for all that Christ has given me and especially my responsibilities as His representative. I want to live in pure grace and not misrepresent myself as someone who is bringing goodness to God but remember that He brings all goodness to me. I commit to accurately understanding myself by what God is and what He does for me, not by who I see myself as and what I can do. Amen.



Endurance

Scripture:

Hebrews 12:1 (NLT) "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us."

Personal Reflection:

It's easy to run a race when you're energized, well trained and have just the right clothing and shoes. What about when you're tired, don't feel like you've trained enough, and have to run in heavy clothing and boots? The difference is you'd probably finish the first race, but you'd give up – exhausted – on the second. In this verse, Paul is warning us that the trials and testing of life will slow us down if we don't spend time energizing ourselves through faith. Additionally, if we carry sin around it will easily trip us up and weigh us down. Ask the Holy Spirit to help guide you in renewing your strength through the Word and in prayer. Also ask Him to reveal any sin in your life so that those weights can be removed.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Psalms 37:9; Luke 8:15; Romans 5:1-5; Romans 8:18-25; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 1 Timothy 6:11-12; James 1:2-4; James 5:10-11; 2 Peter 1:2-8*

Praying Through Scripture:

Isaiah 40:28-31 (MSG)
Father, I know that You don't come and go – You Last. You are the creator of all that I can see or imagine. You don't get tired, don't pause to catch Your breath and You know everything, inside and out. Thank You that You energize me when I get tired and give me fresh strength when I feel like dropping out. It doesn't matter my age, we are all prone to getting tired, stumbling and falling. But, I know if I wait on You, You will give me a fresh strength. I will spread my wings and soar like an eagle. I will run and not get tired and I will walk and not lag behind. Amen.



Preparation

Scripture:

Matthew 25:1-13 (NLT) "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of the virgins were foolish, and five were wise.... Therefore, stay alert, because you do not know the day or the hour."

Personal Reflection:

The warning of the ten virgins came after Jesus' disciples requested to know what sign would signal our Lord's coming at the end of the age. Jesus spoke to them about the last days. He made it clear that the end would not come immediately, but only after a considerable time and troubles. Our Lord issued various warnings because during these troubled times there would be many who would seek to turn men's attentions and affections away from Jesus, the true Messiah. It is with this understanding that we are instructed to always keep watch, in continual preparation for our Lord's coming. Jesus is warning us to not be like the unwise virgins who had no oil for their lamps at the Bridegroom's arrival. Ask God to strengthen His Church during the times of trouble, and that we would stand strong and be ready, even in the midst of persecution.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Proverbs 6:6-11; Proverbs 22:3; Mark 13:18-20, 37; 1 Thessalonians 5:3; James 1:22-24; James 4:13-17; James 5:1; 1 Peter 1:17-19*

Praying Through Scripture:

Matthew 24:42-50 (MSG)
Father, I pray for the Body of Christ, Your bride, that we would stay awake and alert because we have no idea when You will show up. But we do know that we should be as vigilant as a homeowner would be if he knew his house was going to be broken into. Holy Spirit, our great helper, I ask that You help the Church be a dependable worker that is trusted and whom the Lord can drop in on at anytime and find doing a good job. We know You are going to show up when we least expect it, and I ask for the strength to stand strong until the very end. Amen.



Holiness

Scripture:

Leviticus 20:26 (NLT) “You must be holy because I, the Lord, am holy. I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own.”

Personal Reflection:

In a time when the very foundations of our nation are being shaken, it is essential for the Body of Christ to walk in holiness. Holiness is a “setting apart” or “consecration” of God’s people from the world. However, in many cases, the Church in America is difficult to distinguish from the world around it – living by the standards of culture rather than by the standards of the Word. Pray for the Body of Christ that we might return to holiness before God. Not simply pious outward activity, rather, the imprint of God’s holy love expressed through unwavering faith, the truthfulness of the Word, kindness, justice, mercy and generosity.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Isaiah 6:3; Jeremiah 1:5; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Timothy 2:20-22; Hebrews 12:14; Revelation 4:8*

Praying Through Scripture:

Deuteronomy 7:6-21 (MSG)

Father, I pray for the church to be holy because we recognize that we are people set apart as holy to You, our God. You chose us out of all the people on the Earth for Yourself as a cherished, personal treasure. You weren’t attracted to us and didn’t choose us because of our own importance – the fact is, we’re nothing. You did it out of sheer love, keeping the promise You made from the beginning. You’ve stepped in and mightily brought us out of slavery to sin and freed us from the oppression of the enemy. We know that we can depend on You. You keep Your promise of loyal love to those who love You and obey Your Word for a thousand generations. Holy Spirit, help Your church to keep Your Word. When the church does its part, obeying Your Word, keeping and following it, You will do Your part. You will keep the promise You made to love, bless and increase Your people beyond all other people, to get rid of sickness and all oppression from our midst. God, You are holy, present, majestic and awesome. Amen.



New Wineskins

Scripture:

Matthew 9:17 (NLT) “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved.”

Personal Reflection:

An old wineskin is hardened and cracks easily when new wine is put into it. As the new wine ferments and expands, it runs out of room due to the old wineskin’s inability to be flexible. The Body of Christ must be willing to be flexible as the pressure of our changing world demands that we expand to include new ways of thinking and reaching those who are lost. In a rapidly changing global environment, our old ways are not going to be as effective as they once were. We must learn how to be Spirit-led and Spirit-formed so that we don’t camp out in any one way of doing ministry. Ask God to release a new wind of the Spirit upon the Church to guide His Church in the right direction. Pray that the Church has an open ear and willing heart to understand and take action on the Spirit’s direction.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Psalms 32:8; Psalm 37:5-6, 23-24; Psalm 48:14; Proverbs 1:33; Proverbs 3:5; Isaiah 48:17; Isaiah 58:11; Jeremiah 1:7; Jeremiah 10:23; Jeremiah 29:11; Philippians 4:11-13*

Praying Through Scripture:

1 Corinthians 2:10-16 (MSG)

Lord, we know Your spirit isn’t content to hover around on the surface, but instead You dive into the depths of God and bring out His plans to us. Only You know what You’re thinking and planning – but You let us in on it, giving us a full report. We don’t have to rely on the world’s guesses and opinions. We don’t have to learn by reading books or going to school – instead we can learn person-to-person through You and pass it on in a personal, firsthand way. As Your Church, if we are spiritually alive, we can have access to everything You are doing. We don’t have to wonder ‘what You’re doing’ – You know and we have Your spirit within us. Let us be open to each new direction and instruction, moving fluidly with You to be Spirit-led and Spirit-formed. Amen.



Revival

Scripture:

Psalm 85:6-7 (NLT) “Won’t you revive us again, so your people can rejoice with you? Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.”

Personal Reflection:

Revival is an awakening of our relationship with God that motivates us to place Him first – first in our thoughts, time, activities and in the way we spend our money. Out of love, we make Him a priority in our lives. However, much of the American Church has become anesthetized to its need for revival, so distracted by the demands of ‘doing’ ministry that our ears are often tuned more to the voices of those around us than to the Spirit within us. Although our faith is in Jesus, we’ve grown complacent and cold toward the disciplines required for a church to be alive in Christ, with a heart for the gospel and a love for a lost and dying world. Ask God to remove any obstacles that would hinder the Body of Christ from experiencing genuine revival and a renewed spirit of evangelism.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Psalms 19:12-14; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 9:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:10; James 1:22-24; 1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 4:1-3*

Praying Through Scripture:

Psalm 139:23; 1 John 1:6, 8-9; Psalm 85:6; Psalm 67:2 (MSG)
Investigate Your church, Lord. Find out everything about it; cross-examine and test it to get a clear picture of what it’s about. See for Yourself if we have done anything wrong and then guide us along the road of eternal life. If we claim that we experience a shared life with You and continue to stumble around in the dark, we’re obviously lying through our teeth – we’re not living what we claim. If we claim that we’re free of sin, we’re only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins – walk away from them – You won’t let us down, You will be true and will forgive us and purge us of all wrongdoing. Help us make a fresh start – a resurrection life. Then Your people will laugh and sing! Then the whole country will see how You work, all the godless nations will see how You save. Amen.



Worship

Scripture:

John 4:23-24 (NLT) “But the time is coming – indeed it’s here now – when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him in that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Personal Reflection:

The purpose of our worship is to glorify, honor, praise, exalt and please God. Worship demonstrates our adoration and loyalty to God for His grace in providing us a way to escape the bondage of sin, so we can have the salvation He so much wants to give us. True worship is an act of humility that must be done from the heart and according to God’s Word. As we worship God in spirit and in truth, we acknowledge His holiness and our own unworthiness. This type of worship not only honors God, but it edifies and strengthens us. We become more like the object of our admiration; developing the traits of a holy God. Ask the Holy Spirit to unleash a new wind of worship upon His church; piercing our hearts with a fresh understanding of holiness and humility that we might be true worshipers.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Psalm 89:7; Jeremiah 10:23; Mark 7:6; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Philippians 2:5; Colossians 3:2; Hebrews 12:28-29; James 4:6-8; 1 Peter 1:15-16*

Praying Through Scripture:

Acts 17:24-29 (MSG)
Lord, we worship You because You made the world and everything in it and, You, the Master of the sky and land, don’t live in houses made by man or need us to run Your errands; as if You couldn’t do it Yourself. You made us, we didn’t make You; starting from scratch, You made the entire human race and made the earth livable, with plenty of time and space for everything so we could seek after You, not just grope around in the dark, but actually find You. You are not far away, You are near – we live and move in You; can’t get away from You. Give Your church a fresh understanding of Your majesty and pour out a new wind of worship that honors and magnifies You because You are worthy. Amen.



Restoration

Scripture:

Acts 3:19-20 (NLT) *“Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. For he must remain in heaven until the time of final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets.”*

Personal Reflection:

The Body of Christ today is not healthy. But there is much room for hope; God’s Word reveals His plans for a complete spiritual restoration of His Church. Throughout the Word, we find God’s plans to bring His followers to a place of renewal and recovery so that His work can continue on the earth until He returns. It’s time to stand together and believe for a widespread, heartfelt repentance in the Body of Christ and a renewed hunger for righteousness and personal holiness. God promises that the latter will be greater than the former, so let’s believe Him for a restoration of His Spirit and manifestation of His miraculous power that far exceeds that of the church of Acts – because that’s what HE promises us! Ask that God would restore the fivefold ministry in these latter days so that the Body of Christ may be built up and prepared for the works of service.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Isaiah 59:11-12; Matthew 3:11; Matthew 5:6; Matthew 19:27; Acts 2:37-38, 42; Ephesians 4:11-12; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 3:2; Hebrews 13:8*

Praying Through Scripture:

Psalm 51:10-18 (MSG)

Father, create a fresh start in Your church; shape a Genesis week from the chaos. Don’t throw us out with the trash, or fail to breathe holiness. Bring us back from a gray exile; put a fresh wind in our sails. Give us the job of teaching Your ways to the rebellious so that the lost can find their way home. Commute our death sentence, God, our saving God, and we will sing anthems to Your life-giving ways. Unbutton our lips, dear God; we’ll let loose with Your praise. Going through the motions doesn’t please You; a flawless performance is nothing to You. We learn God-worship when our pride is shattered. Heart-shattered lives ready for love don’t for a moment escape Your notice. Make Your church a place You delight in; repair our broken down walls. Amen.



Participation

Scripture:

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NLT) *“Instead, we speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of the body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.”*

Personal Reflection:

Too often, we treat Christianity as a spectator sport with a few players doing all of the work, while everyone else stands on the sidelines cheering them on. But our faith is not a football game; it’s the hope of the world for salvation and every one of us is needed so that the “other parts grow” and the whole body is healthy. As believers, we’ve all been given the gift of the Holy Spirit so that we can complete the work of the ministry. When everyone isn’t doing their part, the whole body suffers. But with each one doing our part the whole body grows up and reflects the righteous character of Jesus Christ. This is the goal of our Christian life and what God has in mind for His church in the last days. Ask God to reveal where we aren’t participating and to make us one so that the earth can be enlightened with His glory.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Romans 12:1-2, 11-13; Colossians 3:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Titus 2:1; James 1:27; 1 Peter 1:13*

Praying Through Scripture:

Philippians 2:12-17 (MSG)

Lord, help Your church to redouble its efforts, to be energetic in our life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before You. Our energy comes from You and is deep within us because You are willing and working at what will bring You the most pleasure. Help us to do everything readily and cheerfully – no bickering and no second-guessing – so that Your church can go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. You need all of us to provide people with a glimpse of good living and of You, the living God. We are living proof that You didn’t come for nothing, let us carry the light-giving message of Your love into the night so that when You return You will be proud of us. Amen.



Leadership

Scripture:

1 Timothy 2:1-3 (NLT) "I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior."

Personal Reflection:

God gives us clear instructions in the Word to pray for our leaders and those in authority over us. We never want our leaders to fail because they aren't properly covered in prayer and protection. Often we spend more time complaining about what our leaders have been doing/not doing than we spend in prayer regarding them. In America, we have the right to question the decisions of our leaders, but, as Christians, that should never be done in a disrespectful manner or while neglecting our call to prayer. Everyone in authority over us – in our government, our church, our community and our family – needs our prayers for strength and wisdom so that we might have peace and salvation as a nation.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: Psalm 20; Proverbs 21:1; Jeremiah 29:7; Matthew 18:19-20; Romans 13:1-6

Praying Through Scripture:

Proverbs 4:5; Proverbs 10:9; Proverbs 24:6; Psalm 46:1-3 (MSG)
Father, I thank You for those You've placed in authority over me, my leaders. I ask that You lead them to wisdom and developing good judgment. Help them to not forget Your Word or deviate an inch from it. I ask that You help them live in honesty and have carefree, confident lives. But if there's anything shifty, I trust You to expose it. I pray that You help them to make the right strategic plans and surround themselves with good counsel. Be a safe place for them and their families, ready to help them when they need it so that they can stand fearless because they know You are fighting for them and protecting them. Amen.



Unity

Scripture:

John 17:21 (NLT) "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one – as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me."

Personal Reflection:

It is no small thing for believers to be one in heart, mind and ambition. Unity is based on love, grace, patience and humility – maturing as individuals so that we can esteem others as greater than ourselves. No small task, for sure, but we have to remember what Jesus did for us to bring us all together because He knew we would need one another. The whole body working together in unity regardless of religious differences, cultural differences or economic differences glorifies God and builds the kingdom. We need each other, and this is why we are instructed to be patient, speak the truth in love, bear with one another, think of ourselves in humility and understand that grace has been poured out in Christ. We do this so that the world will believe in Jesus – because we look like Him. If we truly desire unity, love is the place we must start.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: Romans 6:4-5; Romans 15:5-6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Ephesians 4:1-3, 10-13; Philippians 2:1-2; Colossians 2:2

Praying Through Scripture:

Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians. 3:13-14 (MSG)
Father, it is wonderful and beautiful when brothers and sisters get along. Help us to get along with one another, Lord, learning to be considerate of each other, cultivating a life in common. Working within Your body, the Church, we are all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to You, as fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive in You. So, because we are chosen for this new life, let us wear compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength and discipline – being even-tempered, content with second place, and quick to forgive offenses as quickly and completely as You've forgiven us. And above all else, let us wear love – it's Your basic all-purpose garment and we should never be without it. Amen.



Mercy

Scripture:

Isaiah 65:1-2 (NLT) “The Lord says, ‘I was ready to respond, but no one asked for help. I was ready to be found, but no one was looking for me. I said, ‘Here I am, Here I am!’ to a nation that did not call on my name. All day long I opened my arms to a rebellious people. But they follow their own evil paths and their own crooked schemes.”

Personal Reflection:

Our society and world has greatly degenerated with each passing year – removing the traditional acknowledgement of God from public places and public forums, demeaning those who hold to the precepts of God, redefining the meaning of family, tolerating the corruption of morality even among its leaders, and ignoring the consequences, the judgment of God as seen in natural disasters, and in the removal of His sovereign hand of protection. We have polluted the land with the blood of the unborn. Morally, America has never sunk so low. Only the mercy of an almighty God can save us from ourselves. The time is critical. We must cry out to God for mercy on our nation and our world; we cannot be guilty of not calling upon His name and asking for help.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: Exodus 33:19; Psalm 103:13, 17; Psalm 111:4; Isaiah 60:10; Daniel 2:21; Hosea 2:23; Romans 2:4; Ephesians 2:4

Praying Through Scripture:

Daniel 9:16-19 (MSG)

Lord, following the lines of what You have always done in setting things right and setting people right, please look kindly upon us - Your nation, Your world, Your holy mountain. We know it's our fault that these things are happening, all because of our sins and our parents' sins, and now we're an embarrassment to everyone around us. So listen, God, to this determined prayer of Your servant. Have mercy on Your ruined Sanctuary. Act out of who You are, not out of what we are. Turn your ears away, God, and listen. We know that we don't deserve a hearing from You. Our appeal is to Your compassion, listen to us, forgive us, don't put us out – this nation and this world are Yours and You have a stake in us. Amen.



Idolatry

Scripture:

2 Timothy 3:1-4 (NLT) “In the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God.”

Personal Reflection:

Idolatry comes in many forms and isn't only a statue or image that we worship as a 'god.' Idolatry is anything that we place above God as a priority in our lives and minds such as money, success, entertainment, pleasure or pride. There's certainly nothing wrong with having a favorite hobby or sports team. The sin occurs when those things come before God in our lives. Far too many people in our country and in the world have no room for God in their lives because their focus is on the things of this world instead of the things of God. Ask God to reveal the idols in your life and to tear down the idols that prevent His people from honoring Him first.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: Exodus 20:3; Exodus 32:4; Deuteronomy 8:19; 1 Samuel 15:23; Daniel 5:23; Colossians 3:5; 1 John 5:21

Praying Through Scripture:

Matthew 6:24, 26, 31-33 (MSG)

Lord, we know that we can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, we'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. We cannot worship both God and money. There is far more to life than the food we put in our stomachs, more to our outer appearance than the clothes we hang on our body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, careless to the care of God and You count us far more valuable than the birds. Help us to relax and not be so preoccupied with getting so that we can respond to Your giving. People who don't know You and the way You work worry over these things, but we know You and trust You. Help us fill our lives with God-reality, God-initiative, God-provision and not worry about what we might be missing out on – then we'll find all of our everyday concerns will be met. Amen.



The Airwaves

Scripture:

Ephesians 2:2 (NKJ) "In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."

Personal Reflection:

It's easy to forget, even as believers, that although we serve a mighty God who has defeated Satan through the Cross, the devil is still roaming about seeking whom he may destroy until Jesus returns to claim the final victory. Satan is the prince of the power of the air and is, in many ways, still very much in control on planet Earth, and he uses a very effective and powerful weapon – the world's chosen medium of entertainment – to deceive and control. Ask God to protect His people from the lies of the enemy as he seeks to tempt us out of relationship with God by appealing to our fleshly desires and attitudes.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: Mark 13:33, 37; Luke 21:36; John 8:44; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 4:7; Revelation 12:9

Praying Through Scripture:

1 Peter 5:8-11 (MSG)

Father, You instruct us in Your Word to keep a cool head and stay alert because the devil is poised to pounce and would like nothing better than to catch us napping. Help Your people to keep their guard up. We in America aren't the only ones plunged into these hard times. It's the same with Christians all over the world. So, help us keep a firm grip on faith. The suffering won't last forever. It won't be long before You, our generous God who has great plans for us – eternal and glorious plans – will have us on our feet for good because we know You get the last word. Thank You for laying down Your life on the cross so that we might have victory over the enemy and his schemes and live eternally with You in heaven. Amen.



Israel

Scripture:

Psalms 122:6 (NLT) "Pray for peace in Jerusalem. May all who love this city prosper."

Personal Reflection:

As we see many of today's news events pointing toward the Middle East, and specifically, the Holy Land of Israel, we must fix our eyes even more upon Jesus. The Bible is full of prophecy surrounding Jerusalem and the entire Holy Land. The church must come together in faith and love against the forces of destruction. It is our responsibility as God's children to surrender ourselves before the Lord in prayer, asking Him for peace and revival in Israel, and praying for Israel's safety and security against the forces which threaten to destroy her. Lift up our leaders and ask God to guide them in their decisions concerning Israel, and that He will have His way in that land.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: Psalm 25:22; Proverbs 16:7; Jeremiah 33:9; Ezekiel 34:25-27; Joel 3:16; Ephesians 1:18

Praying Through Scripture:

Isaiah 45:3-4, 13, 17; Isaiah 48:1-15; Jeremiah 33:8-9; Zechariah 12:14; Isaiah 61:6-7 (MSG)

Father, You are the God of Israel, and they are Your people; You named them though they did not know You. Lord, cleanse them from their iniquities and pardon all their sins. Raise them up in righteousness, direct all their ways and save them with an everlasting salvation. I pray for peace in the walls of Jerusalem and prosperity in her palaces. God, Your Word tells us that You will cause Jerusalem to be at the center of a great world conflict, out of which You will deliver Your people. It's with this knowledge that we understand the current intensity of Israel's conflict. But You also tell us that You have posted watchmen on the walls who won't be silent day or night. We are those watchmen, God. Let us call on You without rest until You establish Your kingdom in Jerusalem and make her the peace of the earth. Amen.



Missionaries & Laborers

Missionaries & Laborers

Scripture:

Matthew 9:37-38 (NLT) "He said to the disciples, 'The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.'"

Personal Reflection:

Jesus taught us to plead with God that He might call, equip and send laborers into the harvest. There is a lost and dying world waiting to hear the gospel. Yet, it can only happen if there are people who are willing to go out and proclaim the gospel to the nations. It is our responsibility to ask God to raise up new laborers and to pray for those who are already laying down their lives to evangelize the world. Ask God to raise up those who have a deep, intimate relationship with Him, mold them into powerful witnesses of Christ and remove anything that would hinder them in their service of Him. Ask Him to also burden believers to support those who are called to missions; move upon their hearts to give generously, joyously and sacrificially to the cause of the gospel across the world.

I want to commit to...

Additional Scripture Support: *Proverbs 3:5-7; Proverbs 21:1; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 21:37-22:21; Acts 26:28;*

Praying Through Scripture:

Matthew 28:19-20; Ezra 7:10 (MSG)

Father, Your last instruction to us, Your Church, was to go out and train everyone we meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all You have commanded us. We know that You will be with us as we do this, day after day after day, right up until the end of the age. We pray that as we do this, Your Word will prosper and the number of disciples will increase dramatically. Help us to raise up teachers who commit themselves to studying the revelations of Your Word, living it and teaching it to others so that they can live its truths and ways. Amen.