

**PRAY**



**MAIN STREET CHURCH 21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING**



**FIRST**



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# PRAY

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# FIRST



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# WHAT IF WHEN YOU GOT UP EVERY MORNING THE FIRST THING YOU DID WAS PRAY?

What if when you faced a decision you prayed first? What if when you were tempted to lash out at your kids you prayed first? What if when you get cut off by the car in front of you, instead of reacting you prayed for them? What if the first thing you did in all situations and circumstances was pray?

That's what we want our focus to be in 2017. We want to commit to be people who pray first then act. But that takes a shift in our thinking which is why we are coming together in the month of January for a focused time of prayer and fasting. Beginning on January 9, 2017 we want to encourage you to PRAY FIRST. We want to take 21 days and focus on feeding our hunger for Jesus and His Kingdom.

Will you join with me in taking the time to pray and fast? This 21 day devotional will help you understand how to fast and why you should fast as well as provide you with a short devotional and some action steps each day for all 21 days. Fasting may be a new spiritual discipline for you but I guarantee that if you step out and practice it your relationship with Jesus will be deeper and your awareness of His presence and voice will be greater.

Many people struggle with living and experiencing the presence of God. God knows that the busyness of life and the strategies of the Devil will keep us from experiencing Him. It's why He gave us the gift of fasting. Fasting helps us put God first and teaches us to PRAY FIRST in all areas of our lives. Fasting clears the clutter from our lives that hinder us from experiencing God. Imagine the blessings God has for you as you develop a greater hunger for Him through fasting.

**Join with me beginning January 9 for a 21 day Prayer and Fast journey.**

**Growing with you,**

**Pastor Shawn**

**LET'S GET STARTED**



# PRAY

MAIN STREET CHURCH 21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

# FIRST

## PRAYER GATHERING SCHEDULE & EVENTS

- **Wednesday Morning “Drop In” Prayer**  
in the Chapel - January 11, 18 and 25 from 7am to 9am
- **All Church Fast – January 16-18**
  - This is a focused 3 day fast within the 21 day fast. We encourage all those who are able to join us in a 3 day food fast from January 16-18 where we will all focus together on praying for our church, families, community, our personal prayer goals and for a fresh experience of God in our lives.
- **Prayer Summit – Sunday, January 29, 2017**
  - This Summit will be the concluding event of the 21 day fast. Join with your church to celebrate what God has done in our lives and church and to anticipate what he is going to do next



# WHAT IS FASTING?

The goal of fasting is to experience God. To learn what it means to practically put Him FIRST in our life. Fasting is to voluntarily abstain from eating/drinking for an extended period of time. “Eating” and “drinking” can represent anything that is holding you back. What you “consume” in terms of social food, intellectual food, spiritual food, and emotional food. Fasting helps you identify the things that distract you from growing in your relationship with God?

Are you relying on things that have nothing to do with God to get you through your day? You may not even realize you have an addiction. For example, if you “have to have” coffee every day, and you are not willing to give it up, you are addicted. Maybe your fast needs to just be about coffee. Ask God and He will show you.

Everyone doing a physical fast should consider consulting a physician first. If you have medical issues, consider fasting TV, media, or social media. The point is that there is something God wants you to separate yourself from for three weeks so that you can see Him more clearly. Don’t cheat yourself by removing yourself from the fast entirely.

There are other benefits to fasting (breaking addictions, losing weight. etc.), however if you make those benefits the reason for fasting you will not experience God in the way He intended. A fast is not for YOUR needs or desires but to see that your life is all about Jesus. A fast gets your eyes off your needs and on to your greatest need – the presence of God.



Here are some examples of fasting in the Bible:

- **Special revelation - Exodus 34:27-28**
- **In times of war - Judges 20:26**
- **Courage and wisdom - Esther 4:3,16**
- **In times of grief - Nehemiah 1:4, 2 Samuel 1:12, Samuel 31:13, 1 Chronicles 10:12**
- **Spiritual recuperation - 1 Kings 19:1-9**
- **Mourning - Daniel 10:1-3**
- **Repentance - Jonah 3:5, Daniel 6:18**
- **Ministry preparation - Matthew 4:2**
- **Spiritual power - Mark 9:29**
- **Ministry commissioning - Acts 14:23**
- **Set aside self for holiness - 1 Corinthians 7:5**
- **Spiritual discipline - 1 Corinthians 11:24-28 (Paul “fasted often”)**



# PREPARING FOR FASTING

**1. Prepare your heart.** In **2 Chronicles 7:14** we read, *“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 I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”* The challenge for us is to open our hearts to Jesus and be willing to do what He says. Take time to confess and repent of your sin. Ask Jesus what he wants you to change in your life. What direction does he want you to walk? How much time does He want you to pray and read His Word. Tell God that you want to be fully surrendered and submitted to Him and His ways.

**2. Check your motives.** **Ephesians 3:1** says, *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”* God’s heart is to assign spiritual blessings to His children. The problem is many of his children never discover those blessings. Fasting prepares you to hear and receive what God has for you. Maybe God wants to bless you with the spiritual blessing of wisdom, a fresh anointing in your life, powerful and effective prayers, a teaching gift or words of discernment and encouragement. His blessings are endless. Fasting helps us eliminate the things in our life that steal our focus on God and helps us see things about ourselves and God that we never knew.

**3. Prepare your body.** There are a lot of different fasts that you can choose to take part in (they are mentioned later in this article). When you choose to fast food be prepared for changes physically. You may initially feel sick or tired – **don't give up**. Press through those initial stages. Remember, this is not a game to see if you can eat less or how long you can resist posting on Facebook. Rather, it is all about experiencing God in a powerful and fresh way in your life. As you continue to fast, you will realize that you don't experience hunger pains as often as you thought you would. Without a preoccupation with food, you will be surprised at your ability to be sustained for a number of days without eating food and how you will take advantage of your time to seek Jesus more diligently

**4. Order your schedule.** As you begin your fast decide when and where you are going to take time to meet with God. As someone once said, *"People who don't make appointments with God end up being disappointed with God."* The question you are going to have to answer and settle is "when you fast will you seek God, listen to Him and give Him the time He deserves? If you are fasting meals use those times to spend praying, reading God's Word and journaling. Don't let yourself become distracted – be intentional about spending scheduled time with God – if you do you can expect to hear Him clearly.



# FASTING GUIDELINES

- Explain to your family in advance what you are doing.
- Request privacy from those who find out what you are doing.
- Ask them not to discuss it with you until your fast is over.
- Never complain or brag about your fast, and avoid talking about it.
- Establish an accountability partner for prayer & encouragement.
- Stay away from negative people.
- Spend as much time as possible alone in solitude and prayer.
- Acknowledge that your flesh cannot be trained, but must be crucified.
- Journal as you pray and meet with the Lord. Write down the miracles God does in your life!



# TYPES OF FASTS

## Complete Fast

- **Drinking only liquids, typically water and/or light juices.**
- **Broth or soup may be included as options.**

## Selective Fast

- **Removing certain elements from your diet.**
- **The Daniel Fast** - abstaining from meat, sweets, or bread; drink water and juice, and eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.

## Partial Fast (a.k.a. The Jewish Fast)

- **Abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon.**
- **Fast during specific times of the day, e.g. 6AM-3PM, or from sunup to sundown.**

## Soul Fast

- **Common for:** anyone new to fasting food; those with health issues that prevent them from fasting food; those wanting to refocus specific areas of life that are out of balance.
- **Suggestions:** abstain from engaging in social media, shopping, watching television, etc.



## DEALING WITH DOUBTS

Fasting is counter intuitive to what your body has come to expect. Your mind and your memory will initially try to convince you that what you are doing is not normal. Your body has been trained to eat at certain times every day and to feed the urges that you have always paid attention to. Your mind and your memory will do everything it can to bring you back into line with what has always been normal. This is what it means when Paul wrote in **Galatians 5:24** that *“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”*

Your “flesh” will encourage you and even beg you to give up and feed it. It is at that point that you will be faced with a decision: Do you give up or keep moving forward? When you feel as though you want to give up, you must ask yourself a few questions. Is the pain you are experiencing worth the prize you are pursuing? Is the prize you are pursuing worth the pain you are enduring? If you do give up, where and to what will you go back to? In **John 6:66**, the disciples were asked by Jesus if they wanted to go back to their old lifestyle. Peter said, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of life.”*



# DEALING WITH PEOPLE

Should you tell people that you are fasting? Since fasting is a discipline of self-denial and consecration unto the Lord, constant discussion about it will be a distraction. Jesus said this about fasting in **Matthew 6:16-18**, *“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*

Those are words worth heeding in order to experience the maximum benefits that come from fasting. Keep it between you and God as best as you can. If your fast lasts only one to seven days, it will be easy to conceal it. As time goes by and you begin to lose a considerable amount of weight, it will become more difficult to avoid questions about your appearance. Do your best to avoid looking dehydrated and keeping yourself well groomed. Eventually there will be those who find out that you are fasting, but you can turn this situation into an edifying one. There is a balance between drawing attention to yourself and giving glory to God. You have to decide when and how to discuss it, because your testimony can be used to encourage others to fast.



# SAMPLE MENUS

## **SAMPLE MENU 1** FRUITS, VEGETABLES, JUICES & WATER

- **Breakfast** - Fruit smoothie with protein powder
- **Mid-morning Snack** - Fresh fruit or fresh vegetables
- **Lunch** - Raw vegetable salad with light dressing and vegetable broth soup
- **Mid-afternoon Snack** - Fresh fruit or fresh vegetables
- **Dinner** - Fresh salad with light dressing and steamed grilled vegetables

## **SAMPLE MENU 2** LIQUIDS ONLY

- **Breakfast** - Fruit smoothie with protein
- **Mid-morning Snack** - Herbal tea or vegetable broth soup
- **Lunch** - Raw juiced vegetables
- **Mid-afternoon Snack** - Fresh fruit juice or fruit smoothie with protein
- **Dinner** - Vegetable juice or vegetable broth soup

## **SAMPLE MENU 3** MODIFIED DANIEL FAST

- **Breakfast** - 1 - 2 servings whole grains with fresh fruit juice
- **Mid-morning Snack** - Fresh fruit or fresh chopped vegetables
- **Lunch** - 1 - 2 servings whole grains; fresh salad with legumes and light dressing
- **Mid-afternoon Snack** - Fresh fruit juice or fruit smoothie with protein
- **Dinner** - 1 - 2 whole grains; fresh salad with legumes and light dressing





# THE DANIEL FAST

The concept of a Daniel fast comes from **Daniel 1:8-14** where it says, *“But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. But he responded, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded.”*

*Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. “Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water,” Daniel said. “At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king’s food. Then make your decision in light of what you see.” The attendant agreed to Daniel’s suggestion and tested them for ten days.*

Because Daniel and his three friends were servants of a pagan King (King Nebuchadnezzar) who ruled Babylon they were expected to follow the rules of the palace. They were to learn the beliefs, customs, laws and practices of the Babylonians which included their eating habits. Being Jewish, much of the dietary menus of the Babylonians were not in agreement with the Mosaic Law and thus labelled “unclean” to them. As a result Daniel asked if they could be excused from eating the meat that was most likely sacrificed to Babylonian false gods and idols.

They were granted permission to do this and in the end were seen as more healthy and fit than the others who ate the Babylonian food. Thus, the Daniel fast is simply a fast that consists of eating only fruits and vegetables and abstaining from meat. It is one example of how to deny yourself in order to grow closer to God. It is not a fast that is commanded in Scripture but rather an example of a fast that can be practiced in your life.

## Foods To Include

**All fruits.** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Fruits include but are not limited to 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, watermelon



# THE DANIEL FAST

**All vegetables.** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned. Vegetables include but are not limited to artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers (an option if you are not allergic to soy).

**All whole grains.** Including, but not limited to, whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes, and popcorn. All nuts and seeds, including, but not limited to, sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also, nut butters, e.g. peanut butter and almond butter.

**All legumes.** These can be canned or dried. Legumes include but are not limited to dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans. All quality oils. Including, but not limited to, olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

**Beverages:** Spring water, distilled water, or other pure waters.

**Other:** Tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs, and spices.

## Foods To Avoid

**All meat and animal products.** Including, but not limited to, beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and fish.

**All dairy products.** Including, but not limited to, milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

**All sweeteners.** Including, but not limited to, sugar, raw sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, and cane juice.

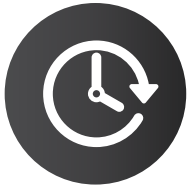
**All leavened bread,** Including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

**All refined and processed food products.** Including, but not limited to, artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

**All deep fried foods.** Including, but not limited to, potato chips, french fries, corn chips.

**All solid fats.** Including shortening, margarine, lard, and foods high in fat.

**Beverages.** Including, but not limited to, coffee, tea, herbal teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.



# AFTER YOU FAST

Ending your fast properly is just as important as beginning your fast properly. Just as you prepared yourself to begin a fast, you must prepare yourself to stop or break your fast. Here are a few questions you can ask yourself as you end your fast:

- **What are the key lessons I learned?**
- **What new habits or disciplines do I want to keep?**
- **What new dietary rules will I follow?**
- **What foods will I begin eating and not eat anymore?**
- **What dreams and visions have I seen pertaining to my personal walk with the Lord or my ministry?**

## **DECIDE TO MAKE FASTING A PART OF YOUR LIFE**

Before you end your fast make a decision to practice this discipline on a regular basis. This is vital if you are going to apply and live out the lessons learned during your fast. **1 Corinthians 11:24-28** says that Paul “*fasted often.*” But why? You must view fasting as a new way of life, not just a vacation from the old way. According to **2 Corinthians 5:17**, “*The old is gone and the new has come.*” Fasting regularly will help you maintain a level of discipline and spirituality that is necessary to hold the ground surrendered by Satan.

Regular fasts will keep the flesh in submission and serve as a reminder as to who is in charge of your life. Choose a regular fasting schedule to follow. There are those who have chosen to fast one twenty-four hour period per week. Others fast sun up to sun down, one day per week. You must pray and design a format that you feel God wants for you, a system that you can be faithful to and consistent with.



## AFTER YOU FAST

### Physically

Controlling your eating habits when you end your fast will be important. Once you begin to eat again, if you are not careful, you will feel uncomfortable. Your stomach will feel bloated and full. Introduce solid food slowly. There is a very good chance you will experience stomachaches and diarrhea from the shock on the digestive system.

### Emotionally

Satan will be working to take back the ground he has surrendered over to the Lord and he will use your emotional vulnerability to accomplish his goals. It could be an intense time of discouragement leading to depression. Remember to be mindful of this and to eat wisely once you break your fast. In **1 Kings 18-19**, when Elijah is challenged by the 450 prophets of Baal who all followed Jezebel in a most vile and immoral religion. God confronts and defeats them through one man, Elijah. But after this great spiritual victory, Elijah finds himself running for his life from one woman, Jezebel. She had threatened his life and he felt all alone. He became incredibly discouraged and asked God to end his life. Elijah experienced a supernatural and spiritual high, followed by an emotional low. You very well could experience this same type of roller coaster ride. Be aware of this and hold firm to the victory you have in Jesus.



## RECOMMENDED **READING**

**A Hunger For God** – by John Piper

**Fasting** – by Jentezen Franklin

**Fasting For Spiritual Breakthrough** – Elmer L. Towns



## RECOMMENDED **TEACHING ON PRAYER**

Pastor Shawn taught a series on prayer called “ALL ACCESS.” You can listen or download this series at <http://subsplash.com/mainstreetchurch/s/58d6fe1/>

Pastor Shawn taught on the power an purpose of fasting last year. You can watch or listen to this message at <http://subsplash.com/mainstreetchurch/v/f7ad13f>



# MY PERSONAL **COMMITMENT** & PRAYER GOALS

Decide how long you will fast and what kind of fast or fasts you will do. Some may do the full 21 days while others may fast for a certain amount of days or split up their fast during the 21 days. Whatever you decide make sure you write it down and then stick to it.

## **WHAT KIND OF FASTS ARE YOU GOING TO DO THIS MONTH?** (Write down when you will do them)

### **FOOD FAST(S)**

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### **MEDIA FAST(S)**

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### **OTHER**

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**MY PERSONAL PRAYER GOALS FOR THE JANUARY 2017**  
**“PRAY FIRST” 21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING** (who or/and  
what will you pray for?)

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# BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS

*But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.*  
*-Galatians 5:22-26*

**Make a list of the specific character issues you want Jesus to work in and on in your life over the next 21 days.**

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# INTRODUCTION TO 21 DAY DEVOTIONALS

## WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BECOME IN 2017?

Notice I didn't say what do you want to do or what goals do you want to reach? Anyone can DO things but not many people put effort into becoming what Jesus wants them to become.

For the next 21 days we are going to walk through the book of 1 John. I believe there are some great blessings that come to those who would read, reflect and do what this book tells us to do. In fact, John penned this book under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to accomplish a number of things in our life that will help us become more like Jesus.

Let me list them for you:

- “We are writing these things so that **you may fully share our joy**” – 1 John 1:4
- “...I am writing this to you so that **you will not sin**” – 1 John 2:1
- “I am writing these things **to warn you about those who want to lead you astray.**” -1 John 2:26
- “I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that **you may know that you have eternal life.**” -1 John 5:13

The book of 1 John is one that will equip you to experience JOY, live in the FREEDOM that Jesus offers, know the TRUTH of who God is and live in the ASSURANCE of His salvation.

**What a great way to start the year.**

Before you begin let's get acquainted with the author and background of this short five chapter book. The book of 1 John was written by the Apostle John at a very old age. He was the only disciple of Jesus who did not die a martyr's death. Even though he died of old age he still suffered greatly. In fact towards the end of his life he was banished by the Emperor Nero to the island of Patmos where he was inspired by the Holy Spirit with the book of Revelation.

After many years imprisoned on that island and a change of leadership in Rome - John was released. He returned to the region of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) where he wrote down the book of Revelation as well as penned 1st, 2nd and 3rd John. John is probably around 100 years old when he writes 1st John. He was the last living Apostle and is known as the Apostle of love. If you read through the Gospels you will see that John wasn't always this way. He didn't always demonstrate love - In fact he could be selfish and competitive. Jesus referred to him and his brothers as the "Sons of Thunder". He didn't always have a "love one another" outlook on life. In Luke 9 we read that Jesus and his disciples were in a certain region in Samaria and the people they were ministering to did not respond very well. They did not receive Jesus, His ministry or His message. This didn't sit well with James and John who suggested to Jesus that "they call down fire from heaven to destroy everyone." This, coming from the one we refer to as the Apostle of love today.

The point is this. John had a transformation. As he spent time with Jesus and ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit he left what he once was and became more and more like Jesus. John was transformed from a competitive, selfish and vengeful person to a "love others, put others first, be like Jesus man of God."

That is the focus for all of us the next 21 days. We, like John want to be transformed by the power and love of Jesus Christ.



# DAY 1

WE PROCLAIM TO YOU THE ONE  
WHO EXISTED FROM THE BEGINNING,  
WHOM WE HAVE HEARD AND SEEN...

**HE IS THE WORD OF LIFE**

**1 JOHN 1:1**

## **READ 1 JOHN 1:1-4 (GALATIANS 5)**

There is a story of a kindergarten age boy coloring at his parent's kitchen table. His dad comes by and asks him what he's is drawing.

"I'm drawing God" the boy responds.

"That's great son, but I need to tell you that no one know what God looks like."

The little boy drops his crayons on the table, looks up at his dad and says, "They will now!"

This is the message that John wants his readers to grasp. He wants them to know that he was with Jesus physically. That Jesus is real and alive. Because he had walked with Jesus he could confirm that He is who He said he was. He knew without a doubt that Jesus was God in the flesh and because Jesus is God everything He said and did could be trusted.

So how do we experience spiritually what John experienced physically? How do we know that Jesus is who he said He is? By receiving His Holy Spirit and living in the power of the Holy Spirit!

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord, where in my life am I doubting that you are who you said you are? What do you want to teach me from your Word today?





# DAY 2

THIS IS THE MESSAGE WE HEARD FROM JESUS  
AND NOW DECLARE TO YOU: **GOD IS LIGHT,  
AND THERE IS NO DARKNESS IN HIM AT ALL.**

## 1 JOHN 1:5

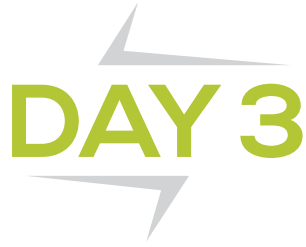
### READ 1 JOHN 1:5-10 (MATTHEW 5:14-16)

If you want to have joy in the midst of your struggles than take hold of this truth: God is light! We often end up walking where we can't see because we forget to turn on the light of God's truth and presence in our lives. John was a man who lived a good part of his life in darkness. He didn't see clearly, even when he walked physically with Jesus. It wasn't until he witnessed the death and resurrection of Jesus that the lights went on for him. He was changed from a man who wanted to call down fire from heaven and BBQ those who wouldn't listen to Jesus (see *John 9:51-54*) to a man who now carried one simple message, "Love one another." Why? Because of Jesus. Jesus changed his life and for the rest of his days he walked in the Light, reflected the Light and stood in amazement of the Light.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus is there any area of darkness in my life that you want to reveal to me? How can I be the "light of the world" to the people you have surrounded me with today?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting. Focus on praying for the salvation of a friend or family member that is on your list.





# DAY 3

...WE CAN BE SURE THAT WE KNOW HIM  
**IF WE OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS**

## 1 JOHN 2:3

### READ 1 JOHN 2:1-6 (JOHN 14:15-31)

Picture yourself driving down Main Street at 100 km per hour. You are pulled over by a police officer and taken to court. Your knees are knocking, your throat is dry and your brow is sweaty – you are nervous. But you immediately relax when you enter the court room. Why? Because sitting behind the bench in the judgment seat is your Dad. You think, great this is going to be a piece of cake. So the prosecutors bring their evidence, you plead guilty and when all is said and done, your Dad looks down at you and says, “Because you are guilty, that will be 5,000 dollars or 5 years in jail.

You can’t believe what you just heard. “What do you mean Dad? I’m your Son, your flesh and blood, how could you do this to me?” Your dad looks down and says, “Sir, in this room I am not only your Dad, I am the justice enforcer and my job dictates that there will be justice in this town.”

You lower your head knowing you don’t have that kind of money. The bailiff makes his way over to handcuff you and take you to prison. But before he gets there the judge says, “Wait.” He stands up, takes off his robe, comes down and looks you in the eye, “A few moments ago I was your judge. Now I have come as your father to stand with you,” and he pulls out his wallet and writes a cheque for \$5,000.

What just happened? Justice was served because the penalty was paid. It wasn’t paid by you, it was paid by your father, who came down off the bench as your Savior, to save you from something you could not handle or pay or get yourself out of. You were incapable of paying your debt.



That is what Jesus did for you. Jesus is your perfect defense attorney. He doesn't try and argue away your sin saying you didn't do it. He doesn't try and create an alibi for you. He doesn't manipulate the evidence or change the situation. Your defense attorney, Jesus bases his entire case for you on the fact that He is your atoning sacrifice. He stepped in and took the hit and the wrath of the Judge. He paid what I owed.

What's your response to this act of God in your life? Are you thankful? Are you grateful? Or has it not sunk in. John tells us how to know if you understand what Jesus did for you. He says that you and I will "obey his commands." That's the sign of a changed heart and life. You live your life with a desire to do what Jesus asks you to do.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord, am I genuinely thankful for what you did for me by dying for my sins? Lord where in my life am I not obeying your commands?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

## NOTES

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# DAY 4

BUT ANYONE WHO HATES ANOTHER BROTHER OR  
SISTER IS STILL LIVING AND WALKING IN DARKNESS.  
**SUCH A PERSON DOES NOT KNOW THE WAY TO GO,  
HAVING BEEN BLINDED BY THE DARKNESS**

**1 JOHN 2:11**

## **READ 1 JOHN 2:7-11 (EPHESIANS 4:17-32)**

When you read this portion of Scripture it may seem that John is suffering from dementia. In verse 7 he tells us that he is reminding of us an old command (to love one another) and then in verse 8 he tells us that it's a new command. So which is it? Is it an old command or a new command?

The Greek language is a very accurate language. The word "*new*" does not mean "*never having heard before.*" Rather it means "*Fresh*". John is telling his readers that they need to be refreshed in the truth of an old command. He wants them to know that this command is still a fresh word for them today.

God knows that we need his refreshing in our life and that we can forget His commands. That's why John doesn't mince words when he tells us that we cannot live with hate in our hearts. He wants us to know that living with offense or bitterness or un-forgiveness will rob us of the joy that love brings. He knows that there are all kinds of destructive attitudes and habits that will work hard to make sure we forget what it means to truly love. So he reminds us of an old command in a fresh new way: Love one another!

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus where in my life do I need to be refreshed with your truth? What old truth do I need to hear and be reminded of in a fresh new way? Is there anyone that I need to extend a fresh word of forgiveness and love towards?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting. Pray for anyone that you hate or would consider your enemy.

## NOTES

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# DAY 5

## I AM WRITING TO YOU WHO ARE GOD'S CHILDREN... WHO ARE MATURE IN THE FAITH... WHO ARE YOUNG IN THE FAITH... 1 JOHN 2:12-13

### READ 1 JOHN 2:12-14 (EPHESIANS 4:1-16)

They say that there are four stages to life: Childhood, youth, adulthood and “Wow, you’re looking good today!” When you hear that final phrase you’ve most likely entered the final stage of your life. What is true physically is also true spiritually. John wants us to understand that there are stages to our spiritual growth and he describes them with the following words: “children, young and mature.”

We all begin as a **child** in the faith with the understanding that our sins have been forgiven (v.12) and we learn that we have a heavenly Father who loves us (v.14a). But we can’t stop there. We need to keep growing. John describes the next phase of spiritual growth as those who are “**young in the faith**” (v.13b). They are those who know they are sinners saved by grace and are loved by the Father but they also know that they can live in freedom from sin because they have been given power over the Devil in their life (v.13b). How do they live with this victory in their life? Because “God’s word lives in their hearts” (v.14b). This means they not only know God’s Word but they submit to God’s Word. They obey what God says.

The final stage is spiritual **maturity**. John says, “I am writing to you who are mature in the faith...(v.13). He focuses on their personal relationship with

Jesus. A mature follower of Jesus knows Jesus personally. A spiritually mature Christian understands that their sins are forgiven, they know the heart of their heavenly Father, they are consistently spending time in the Word of God and they know how to overcome the attacks of the Devil in their life. These steps become the outflow of their life as they feed the one single passion of getting to know Jesus more and more.

You see, your relationship with Jesus begins by learning about Him and who He is. Then you learn how to live in victory and take steps to become more like Jesus through obeying Him. But at some point your relationship moves from knowing about God to actually knowing God.

So where would you place yourself in your spiritual growth? Are you a child? Then continue to keep growing. Are you young in the faith? Then keep hungering and spending time in God's Word and standing against the attacks of the evil one.. Are you mature? Then continue to live your life in a deep awareness of the presence of Jesus encouraging those who are childlike and young in their faith.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus how would you describe my spiritual growth? Am I a child, young in the faith or mature? What specific area do you want to grow me spiritually?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Focus on a specific character trait that you need Jesus to develop more fully in you. Pray that you will become more like Jesus in that area of your life.

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# DAY 6

## DO NOT LOVE THIS WORD NOR THE THINGS IT OFFERS YOU... 1 JOHN 2:15

### READ 1 JOHN 2:15-17 (MATTHEW 4:1-11)

When John tells us not to love the world he isn't talking about people but about the worldly systems and philosophies that compete for our attention. Those systems and philosophies are what the Devil uses to get our eyes off of Jesus which is why we need to be aware of how he works. John reveals to us how the Devil works so that we don't have to wonder. He tells us that Satan has basically three plays in his playbook: the **craving of physical pleasure, craving for the things we see** and **pride in our achievements and possession** (v.16).

Now imagine if the Seattle Seahawks used only three plays in every game they played and what if every team in the league knew those three plays? They would never win the Super bowl would they? The devil has only three plays and John tells us what they are so that he doesn't have to have any control of your life. However, the Devil has won a lot of games with these three plays, they are what he uses to control this world. In fact he tried to take Jesus out with these three plays when Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray for 40 days.

- Play #1 - **Craving for Physical pleasure.** "Hey Jesus, you hungry? Why not turn these stones into bread"
- Play #2 - **Craving for the things we see.** "Hey Jesus, see all those kingdoms? Bow down to me and I'll give them to you."
- Play #3 - **Pride in our achievements and possessions.** "Hey Jesus, jump off this temple and have your angels catch you. That would totally impress people if you did something like that."





# DAY 7

DEAR CHILDREN, THE LAST  
HOUR IS HERE. **YOU HAVE  
HEARD THAT THE ANTICHRIST  
IS COMING...**  
**1 JOHN 2:18**

## READ 1 JOHN 2:18-19 (JOHN 1)

When John uses the phrase antichrist it means, “*in place of Christ*” or “*against Christ.*” The term antichrist has a threefold layer of understanding:

1. **Antichrist is a person** who is talked about in Revelations 13 and 16 and 19. A person is called antichrist, a coming world dictator who is going to be known as the antichrist. Of course that will not be his name, rather it's a description of this prophetic personality who is going to be so cunning, clever, smooth, and gifted, that he will actually take the place of Christ in the minds of many people.
2. Then there is **the spirit of antichrist**. John talks about this in chapter 4 verse 3, “*But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist...*” So we see that the antichrist is not only a person, but it is also a spirit. We see that spirit throughout history as different world leaders sought to destroy the Jewish race.
3. **Teachers who are diminishing and opposing Jesus**. This is what John is referring to here in this passage (v:18). Those Bible teachers, denominations, religious groups or secular humanists, whoever it may be that is reducing the person of Jesus. Anyone who diminishes the deity and persona and nature of the Son is an antichrist.



As John writes this letter he is combatting a heresy in the church known as Gnosticism. Gnostic in the Greek means "to know" or "knowledge." Gnostics claimed to have superior knowledge and taught that anything that is physical is polluted or defiled. Therefore Jesus could not have had a physical body. They taught that he was just a phantom and that he never came in human form. This teaching also led to the belief that because our bodies were defiled it really didn't matter what we did with them and to them. This was the kind of false teaching that John was dealing with.

It's easy to get caught up in false teaching and beliefs by not spending time with Jesus and in His Word. When we do that we protect ourselves from deception and falling prey to the lies of the Devil and position ourselves to become firm in our faith.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus, is there any area of my life where I have been listening and believing false teaching? Are there any lies I have been believing that you want to show me and replace with your truth?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

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# DAY 8

**THE HOLY ONE HAS GIVEN  
YOU HIS SPIRIT, AND ALL OF  
YOU KNOW THE TRUTH.**

**1 JOHN 2:20**

## **READ 1 JOHN 2:20-29 (1 TIMOTHY 4)**

Bank tellers are trained to spot counterfeit bills by making sure they spend most of their time with the real thing. As they get acquainted and familiar with the real thing, when a counterfeit bill comes across their counter they can spot it quickly. John wants his readers to know that the best way to spot a counterfeit teacher or teaching is to spend your time with the truth and in the truth. When he writes, “**...the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth**” that word “*know*” literally means to “*know intuitively.*” Because the Holy Spirit lives in you, you can know when something is wrong. Not necessarily because you have figured it all out but because the Holy Spirit has shown you.

John wants us to know that ultimately we can know the truth as we submit our hearts and minds to Jesus. Although God uses teachers and leaders to guide and direct us he also gives us his Spirit to recognize those who are being used of the Devil to mislead people. By submitting to Jesus you are given His Holy Spirit to discern truth from lies and can live with a confidence that Jesus will lead you and keep you in the truth.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord are there any areas of my life where I am listening or have fallen to a false belief? Have I diminished your deity and power in any area of my life? Listen, confess your sin and invite Jesus to root you in His truth.

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

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# DAY 9

**SEE HOW VERY MUCH OUR  
FATHER LOVES US, FOR HE  
CALLS US HIS CHILDREN...**

**1 JOHN 3:1**

## **READ 1 JOHN 3:1-2 (EPHESIANS 1:3-14)**

John wants his readers to understand the reality of God's love and the fact that you are His child. In his Gospel John wrote, "*But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God*" (John 1:12). This truth blows John's mind. He can barely believe that God in his love adopts us into His family. The word "*adoption*" in the Greek means "*son position.*" The Son, Jesus Christ took our position on the cross and died in our place so that we can take the position of the Son as children of God. Jesus took our position so that we could take His.

It's like the story of the two brothers who were registering for little league. Seeing their birth-dates, the registrar asked them if they were brothers. They replied that they were. He then asked, "How is it that you are only six months apart?" They then said, "Well, one of us is adopted." "Oh, which one of you is adopted?" They then responded, "We keep asking our dad the same question and he always says that he can't remember."

John wants us to know that God the Father loves you and me as much as He loves His Son Jesus. If you are a follower of Jesus that should give you a great deal of security today.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus, what do you want to encourage me in today? Because I am your child what do you want to say to me as your child?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.





# DAY 10

**ANYONE WHO CONTINUES TO LIVE IN HIM WILL NOT SIN. BUT ANYONE WHO KEEPS ON SINNING DOES NOT KNOW HIM OR UNDERSTAND WHO HE IS.**

## 1 JOHN 3:6

### READ 1 JOHN 3:3-6 (ROMANS 7)

Have you ever driven your car past the expiration date of your insurance? If you want to see a cautious and careful driver find someone who just realized they forgot to renew their insurance. That realization impacts how they drive because they have discovered quite abruptly that their time is up. That's the same kind of mindset John wants us to have when it comes to living for Jesus. God wants us to live in the awareness that Jesus is coming again and that could happen in the next few minutes.

No matter what your view on end times theology is the thing that we can all agree on is that we are to live our lives being ready and watching. We are to live today like He is coming back tomorrow. And when we live that way it should impact how we live our life. It should impact how we treat those around us. It should impact how we treat our spouse and how we lead our families. The bottom line is this: if we are living our lives with the anticipation that Jesus could return at any moment we should sin less. Our minds and hearts will be directed towards Him more than anything else which keeps us in tune with God leading us to live a life of purity.

John writes in verse 4, *“Everyone who sins is breaking God’s law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.”* This verse in the Greek carries the idea of a person practicing something. This is speaking about people who practice sin. This is the person who gets up in the morning looking forward to practicing their sin. John calls this kind of person’s commitment to God into question. He tells us that, that kind of person does not know God. So if you find yourself continually and habitually practicing sin then you may

want to do some business with Jesus. John is pointing out that, that kind of person has failed to stand on the fact that Jesus came to take away our sin. Is there any area of your life where you are practicing sinning?

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus, is there any sin that has a consistent hold in my life? Is there any sin that I tend to run to and practice daily? Confess that sin to God and ask Jesus to help you live in the awareness of His presence and to begin to live your life with the anticipation and hope of His return.

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Focus on a specific character trait that you need Jesus to develop more fully in you. Pray that you will become more like Jesus in that area of your life.

## NOTES

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# DAY 11

## THE SON OF GOD CAME TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL. 1 JOHN 3:8B

### READ 1 JOHN 3:7-10 (JOHN 10:1-19)

John confronts us with the prickly truth about our sin in this portion of Scripture. But what he wants us to know is that you've truly been transformed by Jesus when you live in His power to overcome sin in your life. According to John, someone who is continually and habitually practicing their sin is not of God but of the devil!

So John reminds us again as to why Jesus came to this earth. He's taught us so far that Jesus came to take away our sin and now he reminds us that Jesus also came to destroy the power and works of the Devil in our lives. You need to realize that you have an enemy whose goal for your life is to make you miserable and who is committed to doing anything he can to steal, kill and destroy your life. The devil knows that if he can lead you and keep you in sin than your impact for God is weakened.

So how do you combat the work of the Devil and live in the truth and benefits of your salvation? You do what is right (you live righteously) and you love people (v.10). So what does it mean to live righteously? To live righteously is to behave like God. Righteousness is living your life as God is. God is the standard for all human behavior and whatever God does is our standard for righteous living.

Another way of looking at this is to say, *"If you know how God behaves, then you will know that whoever behaves like God is born of him."* John is telling us that a person born of God will bear His mark. Whoever behaves like God is obviously born of God, for it takes God's power to behave like



God. John then clarifies that the person who does not do right things is not of God, but he also stipulates that those who not love others are also not of God. He wants his readers to know that if we are not demonstrating love, then our relationship with God is called into question. You can't love God without loving others and love is the weapon that destroys the works of the Devil in our lives.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus, is there anyone in my life that I'm having a hard time loving? Who do I need to forgive and begin to show love towards?

Carefully read 1 John 3:1-10 a few times and then ask one or all of the following questions. Write down what Jesus speaks to you about and do what He tells you to do.

- a. What Command do you have for me?
- b. What Application do you have for me?
- c. What Message do you have for me?
- d. What Promises to you have for me?
- e. What Warnings to you have for me?
- f. What Sin do you want me to confess?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

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# DAY 12

THIS IS THE MESSAGE YOU HAVE  
HEARD FROM THE BEGINNING:  
**WE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER**  
**1 JOHN 3:11**

## **READ 1 JOHN 3:11-24 (1 CORINTHIANS 13)**

Jesus said, “*All people will know you are my disciples by your love*” (John 13:35). How you love those around you is the key to people knowing who you belong too. What if when people looked at the church (you and me) they got intrigued because we didn’t criticize or gossip or make hurtful remarks about others? Instead all they see is love. And if you want to know if you are truly a Christ follower look at how you love those around you. If you do not have love for others than it’s worth taking a look at your heart and your life. Love for others is a key indicator that your salvation is real. When you have a desire to stand up, care and love those around you, you can know that you have passed from death to life.

If there is going to be community and love in our church, in our relationships, in our acquaintances - the only way that this reconciliation, this community, this love will ever take place is through death! Somebody has got to die. We could not be reconciled to God until Jesus laid down his life. His love for us caused Him to want to be reconciled to us and that could only happen by Him dying for us. It is the same with us and our relationships. Any person that you are at odds with, any person that you feel tension with, any person that you have any problems with - the only way that there can be any reconciliation is if somebody dies. Are you willing to die? To die means to give up, let go and humble yourself. If there is someone you want to be reconciled with then take the plunge and give your life. Love them!





# DAY 13

DEAR FRIENDS, DO NOT BELIEVE EVERYONE WHO CLAIMS TO SPEAK BY THE SPIRIT. YOU MUST TEST THEM TO SEE IF THE SPIRIT THEY HAVE COMES FROM GOD.

## 1 JOHN 4:1

### READ 1 JOHN 4:1-3 (ACTS 8:9-25)

When John tells us to love he is not talking about a mature or perfect love. This kind of love requires discernment which is why we are to test the spirits. Although we are to be a loving community we are to love with maturity which means that when someone comes up to you and says, *“Hey, God just told me to leave my spouse or use all my savings to buy lottery tickets.”* Your response isn’t to embrace them with love and just accept what they are saying – you are to test what they are saying. Love always deals with the truth.

It would be like me going to my doctor and finding out that I have a tumor in my brain. Now if my doctor decided to sit back and think, *“You know I’m going to just love Shawn and not tell him about the tumor. I don’t want to stress him out and cause him to worry. I’ll just love him.”* Of course that would not be love. Love tells the truth.

So how do you *“test the spirits?”* You simply ask, *“Is it from God or is antichrist?”* If what you hear is true it will affirm both the divinity and the humanity of Christ. That Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. Remember, in John’s day there was a heresy being propagated among Christians that said since God is spirit he can have nothing to do with the material world, in fact he didn’t even create it. They were teaching that the material was evil and the way to break free from it was to either beat yourself so that your spirit would seep through and break free from your body or just do

what you want because your body didn't really matter. It had no effect on your spirit.

So one view was to abuse your body while the other was to indulge your body and in doing so your spirit would break free from the material. This belief was coming into the church very rapidly. They were convincing the church that Jesus could not have a body because that would have made him evil. The issue in the early church was not was the divinity or the deity of Christ. The issue in the early church had to do with the humanity of Christ. Church councils would later come together and have battles over this issue because this Gnostic heresy had become so prevalent in the church.

The interesting thing is that in our day, the issue we face isn't so much with Jesus humanity, but with his deity. Historically Jesus humanity was doubted, in the present the divinity of Jesus is doubted. Every cult and strange teaching that comes your way will fail one of these truths. Some will admit his deity and deny his humanity. Others will admit his humanity but renounce His deity. The spirit of antichrist is always diminishing Christ, by either denying his humanity or his deity or both. They diminish the mystery of the incarnation and in doing so they distance people from God and that is the ultimate tragedy.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord, is there any way, action or thought in my life that diminishes who you are? Do I fully believe that your Son Jesus is fully God, fully man and fully sufficient?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

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# DAY 14

**BUT YOU BELONG TO GOD  
MY DEAR CHILDREN.** YOU'VE  
ALREADY WON A VICTORY OVER  
THOSE PEOPLE,  
BECAUSE THE SPIRIT WHO LIVES IN  
YOU IS GREATER THAN THE SPIRIT  
WHO LIVES IN THE WORLD.

## 1 JOHN 4:4

### READ 1 JOHN 4:4 (ACTS 1:8 AND ACTS 2:1-13)

I once read of a National Geographic special where they sent a submarine deep below the surface of the Ocean often diving two miles down and sometimes even more. Now submarines need to be able to withstand enormous amounts of pressure, because the deeper you go the more pressure there is, and if the submarine is not built right, the pressure would crush that submarine like a tin can.

One particular dive they had a camera on the Submarine and as it went deeper it got darker and all you could see is what was in front of you. As they watched their monitor they would come across these bizarre looking fish called Angle fish. These fish are neon in color and they have this little antenna that comes out of their forehead that acts like a light. I read and wondered, "Why are those fish not being crushed by the pressure of the water?" Well the documentary went on to explain that the pressure on the inside of the fish is equal to the pressure on the outside of the water around them and thus created no problem for them.

Those fish are able to survive in the deep water because what's inside of them is able to handle the pressure that is around them. It's the same with the Christian life. Many of us put up walls, thick walls, steel walls in order to hold back the attacks of the enemy. That's the wrong approach. When you do that you will simply find yourself in isolation and frustration. The key is not to build up walls, the key is to realize that the One inside of you is greater than any pressure that comes and attacks you.

It's like walking into a dark room. Do you try and fight the darkness? Do you yell at it to go away? No. You simply turn on the light and the darkness flees. The key is to remember that the Lord is in you and He will direct you in the temptations and pressures of life. Jesus gave us His Holy Spirit who lives in us. Greater is He that is in you than any temptation, problem, pressure, issue, that faces you. Make a commitment to live in the reality of this truth in your life. Because you have the Holy Spirit living in you nothing around you can overcome you. God is your protector and your power. Live in the awareness of that truth today.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus, what outside pressure am I letting overcome me and control me? Where in my life do I need to activate the power of your Holy Spirit in me to overcome the struggles around me?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Focus on a specific character trait that you need Jesus to develop more fully in you. Pray that you will become more like Jesus in that area of your life.

## NOTES

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# DAY 15

## BUT WE BELONG TO GOD...

### 1 JOHN 4:5-6

#### READ 1 JOHN 4:5-6 (JAMES 1:19-27)

If you want to be able to discern between what is right and wrong then spend time in God's Word. John is telling his readers that those who listen to God are those who spend time in His Word. When you spend time in God's Word and listen to what He says through His Word you will live your life in the truth and you will not be easily deceived by false teachings and the works of the Devil.

But it's not enough to only read the Bible you need to do what it says. Many Christians will tell you that they believe the Bible as God's authoritative Word but if their honest have never made it their own personal authority. You see, you can believe something is true while never living the truth. You can know God but never actually belong to God. That's what happens when you only hear God's Word but never DO God's Word. John wants us to know that when you do what God says you actually fall more in love with Jesus. What do you have to do to move from believing in the authority of God's Word to making it your authority for life?

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord, where in my life do I need move from simply believing in you and start obeying You? Do I believe your Word as authoritative or is it my authority for life?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.







# DAY 16

DEAR FRIENDS, LET US CONTINUE TO  
LOVE ONE ANOTHER,  
**FOR LOVE COMES FROM GOD**  
**1 JOHN 4:**

## READ 1 JOHN 4:7-11 (LUKE 22:14-20)

Have you ever wondered why at the beginning of your journey with Jesus it was so simple? You came to the realization that you were a sinner in need of a Savior and you surrendered your heart and life to God. Profound yet simple. Then you started following Jesus and things began to get more complicated. At some point you began to believe that Jesus love and forgiveness wasn't enough, so you looked for ways to add to what He offers.

Why do we do that? Why do we often complicate the simplicity of the Gospel and what Jesus has freely given us? I think it's because we often forget about the depth of God's love for us. His love doesn't cut it anymore and so we try to add things to make our relationship with God relevant again. This is what I call the "*sin of forgetfulness*." Jesus knew we would lose sight of the simplicity of his love so he told us to regularly remind each other of what he did for us.

When you feel like God's love isn't enough may I suggest you go out for dinner with Jesus? Take some time and come to the table of communion and fellowship with Him. Find a quiet place and take the cup and break the bread and remember what Jesus did for you when He died on the cross. Let Him remind you that what He did was enough.

Paul wrote in Colossians 2:6, "*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him...*" Just as you received Him continue to live in him – it's that simple! Do you remember what you did to receive Jesus? Continue with that same attitude, with that same faith, with that same hope and desire, that same love – keep keeping it simple.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord, have I believed that you are not enough? Where in my life have I added things thinking that they will satisfy rather than simply leaning on and into your love for me?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Focus on a specific character trait that you need Jesus to develop more fully in you. Pray that you will become more like Jesus in that area of your life.

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# DAY 17

...LOVE HAS NO FEAR, BECAUSE  
PERFECT LOVE EXPELS ALL FEAR...

## 1 JOHN 4:18

### READ 1 JOHN 4:12-21 (PSALM 23)

Do you think it's possible to live with both fear and love? What is fear? Fear is the absence of love. When I don't feel or experience love the result is a life of fear. However, if I understand that God truly loves me and that I can have absolute confidence that whatever happens to me is going to be the very best for me. No matter what the doctor may say or what the tax man may declare or what happens to my family, or whatever it might be, John wants us to know that perfect love casts out fear.

When you are sure of God's love for you then you don't have to fear. When we fear we are doubting God's love. When we are afraid it means that at that moment I am not trusting in the fact that God is in control and that He has a perspective that I don't. The answer to anxiety and fear is not to face your fears, or to figure out your fears, the answer to fear is to really become soaked and saturated in God's love - because perfect love casts out fear.

So when you face fear be reminded by John to live in the perfect love of God. When people are freaked out and wondering about the issues of life, you can bring them to God's Word and remind them that the perfect love of God casts out fear.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord, what areas of my life am I allowing fear to control me? How can I become more aware of your love in my life?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

**NOTES**

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# DAY 18

**LOVING GOD MEANS KEEPING  
HIS COMMANDMENTS,  
AND HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE  
NOT BURDENSOME.**

**1 JOHN 5:3**

**READ 1 JOHN 5:1-5 (LUKE 10:25-29)**

The gift of life and salvation is free. God gives it to anyone who wants it with no strings attached. You can't pay for it and you can't pay God back for it. The moment you view God's gift of salvation as something you have to earn is the moment you turn his gift into a pay cheque. And when you try to pay God for what He offers for free your relationship with Him becomes burdensome. You actually bring a dose of guilt and shame upon yourself and your view of God becomes skewed. You know He is perfect and so you begin to live your life trying to pay Him back. But you can't. It's impossible and it's offensive.

It would be similar to the response I would give to my wife if when I proposed to her and slipped that ring on her finger, she offered to pay for it. Then after offering to pay she slips me \$20.00 and a thank you. I would be doubly offended. First of all because what she offered to pay for the free gift I sacrificed for to give her and secondly because she gave me way below what it was worth. We do that with Jesus and we turn what he has given us into a burden rather than a joy.

When you love Jesus and when you understand His love for you the gift of life He has given you compels you to want to obey Him. Not so you can pay Him back but because you love Him. You serve Him and honor Him because you know you are loved by Him.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus, are there any areas or actions in my life where I have been trying to pay you for your gift of salvation? What do I need to do to more fully experience your love for me?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

**NOTES**

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# DAY 19

...THIS IS WHAT GOD HAS TESTIFIED: **HE HAS GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON.**

## 1 JOHN 5:11

### READ 1 JOHN 5:6-12 (JOHN 3:1-21)

This passage is one of those tricky ones. There are a few different interpretations dealing with the “water” and the “blood,” however the most common or popular description has the water referring to Jesus baptism, at which He was declared the Son of God and commissioned and empowered for his ministry. The blood refers to His death at which point His work or ministry was finished.

Remember John is dealing with a false teaching in the church from a belief called Gnosticism. The Gnostics taught that Jesus was just a man and that he became God when He was baptized and came up out of the water. They also taught that when Jesus was on the cross and his blood was being shed, that was when he stopped being God. So for the three years between his baptism and the cross, Jesus functioned as deity - for those three years he was God. But before his baptism and after dying on the cross He was no longer God - his deity was taken from him. That’s why the Gnostics would say Jesus cried out, “My God, why have you forsaken me!”

We know that the truth is that the Father poured out all the sin of humanity upon the Son and because God cannot look upon sin he turned his back on the Son and the Son cried out, “*Why have you forsaken me.*” Even the Roman Centurion said, “*This truly is the Son of God*” recognizing Jesus deity.

So John is saying to the church that Jesus is God and has always been God. He was God before He came to earth and still is God after He left this earth. **Jesus is God.** John then says that “*you know this to be true because the Spirit testifies in you and He is the Spirit of truth.*”



You can stand and live in the truth because Jesus is fully God which means He is fully capable. Don't diminish or doubt the deity of Jesus in your life.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Jesus, where in my life have I chosen to not believe you are capable or powerful enough to meet my need or change my circumstances? How do you want me to practically exercise my faith in you?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

## NOTES

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# DAY 20

SINCE WE KNOW THAT HE HEARS US  
WHEN WE MAKE OUR REQUESTS,  
WE ALSO KNOW THAT HE WILL GIVE US  
WHAT WE ASK FOR

## 1 JOHN 5:15

### READ 1 JOHN 5:13-15 (LUKE 11:1-13)

Do these verses teach that God will give us whatever we want? No. What it teaches is that God will give us whatever we ask for according to His will. He hears us clearly when we ask according to His plans and purposes. The truth is, you don't really want everything you ask for. There are things in my life that I am grateful God did not give me. I have prayed for things in the past that today I look back and say, "*Thank you Lord for not answering that prayer.*" You probably can think of some requests you made to God that you are thankful He didn't give you.

But the point is God hears our requests and He longs to give us what we ask for when we ask in His Name and according to His will. What is His will? His will is that all people will come to know Him. His will is to fill us with His Holy Spirit. His will is that we would all make disciples. His will is that we would live in peace with those around us. When was the last time you prayed and asked God for these things? I'm confident as you begin to pray for your friends who don't know Jesus that they will come to know Him. I am confident that if you begin to ask Jesus to fill you with His Holy Spirit you will be surprised about the opportunities that arise around you to share His love with others.

The list goes on and on. Scripture gives us a lot of God's will for our life which gives us a lot of requests we can ask Him for and He will answer. What request can you begin to ask God for in your life that is in accordance with His will? Figure that out and then start asking and praying.

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord, what part of Your will do you want to make me aware of that I have been ignoring? Is there anything I have been asking you that is against your will? What area of my life do you want me to be praying specifically according to your will?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.

## NOTES

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# DAY 21

DEAR CHILDREN, KEEP AWAY FROM  
ANYTHING THAT MIGHT TAKE GOD'S  
PLACE IN YOUR HEARTS

## 1 JOHN 5:21

### READ 1 JOHN 5:16-21 (MATTHEW 15:1-20)

If you love Jesus your desire is to make Him Lord of your life. You want Him to be at the center of everything. However, desire and action don't always go together. I've discovered that if Jesus is going to be my **everything** I need to see Him and cling to Him as my **only thing**. Nothing else can get in the way of my devotion to Jesus.

In his closing words John wants us to be sure that we don't miss out on the fullness of life that Jesus offers by settling for substitutes. He encourages his readers to make sure nothing gets in the way of God being first in your life and heart. As always our relationship comes down to an allegiance issue. A commitment issue. A heart issue!

What competes for your heart? What sin in your life lies to you and makes you believe it will satisfy your heart? What are the things in your life that you need to keep away from so that your heart stays fully devoted to Jesus?

**ASK & JOURNAL:** Lord, during this time of fasting what is one specific area you want to make me aware of that is battling for my heart? What is one thing you want me to do in order to become more like you?

**PERSONAL PRAYERS:** Take time to focus on your personal prayer goals that you wrote down for the 21 days of prayer and fasting.





# PERSONAL PRAYER TARGETS

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

**1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4.**

## PRAY FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY AND THOSE UNDER YOUR AUTHORITY.

### MY GOVERNMENT

**PRIME MINISTER** \_\_\_\_\_

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**NATIONAL LEADERS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PROVINCIAL LEADERS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CITY LEADERS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# MY FAMILY

**SPOUSE** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CHILDREN** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PARENTS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SIBLINGS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**EXTENDED FAMILY** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# MY CHURCH

**LEAD PASTOR** \_\_\_\_\_

**PASTORAL AND CHURCH STAFF** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**MY LIFE GROUP LEADER** \_\_\_\_\_

**MY SMALL GROUP MEMBERS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# PERSONAL PRAYER TARGETS

## MY LIFE

**EMPLOYER** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CO-WORKERS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYEES** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHERS/PROFESSORS** \_\_\_\_\_

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## THOSE I INFLUENCE

**CLOSE FRIENDS** \_\_\_\_\_

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# THOSE WHO NEED GOD

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**1. PRAY THAT THE FATHER WOULD DRAW THEM TO JESUS**

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

**2. BIND THE SPIRIT THAT BLINDS THEIR MINDS**

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

**3. LOOSE THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION (SONSHIP)**

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

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

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

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

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













# OUR VALUES

## **We are whole life, faith filled, all in risk takers**

We'll never insult God with small thinking & safe living

## **We are all about the local church**

The local church is God's "Plan A" to reach the world - He has no "Plan B!"

## **We will do anything short of sin to reach people who don't know Christ**

To reach people no one is reaching, we'll have to do things no one is doing

## **We will contribute more than we consume spiritually**

The church does not exist for us. We are the church and we exist for the world

## **We will keep short accounts**

The greatest weapon we have against the Devil is repentance and confession

## **We will be relentless with truth and grace**

We will teach and model the hard truths of Jesus so that we can experience and model the deep grace of Jesus

## **We will practice irrational generosity**

We truly believe it is more blessed to give than to receive

## **We will intentionally listen to the voice of God**

We recognize that the voice we listen to the most will determine the direction of our life



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CHURCH.CA