



Prayer & Fasting Devotional Guide

Compiled & curated by several Chapel Pointe members



Prayer, Fasting, and Worship Overview

Goals

- Spiritual: deepen the roots of prayer and connection to God
- Personal: learn about fasting and prayer; integrate this spiritual practice more fully
- Community: engage in a shared experience around a spiritual discipline

Expectations and Structure

- Fasting one day a week
- Suggested time frame: Wednesday dinner to Thursday dinner (choose your own day if needed)
- Follow the once-a-week reading and prayer plan provided
- Break the fast with communion at special “Just Worship” events (Oct 19 and Nov 16)
- Runs from October – December 2017

Benefits

- More fervent prayer life and enhanced spiritual connection to God
- Serves as a talking point for outreach (ex. share the reasons for skipping meals)
- Develop a spiritual discipline so it is easier to re-engage this practice in the future or to continue on now
- Numerous health benefits including detoxifying body, weight loss, mental clarity, increased self-control

Fasting Scripture Passages

- Nehemiah 1, 9:1–3 | Crisis and confession
- Psalms 35:13, Ezra 8:21–23 | Humility and prayer
- Joel 2:12–15 | Heart condition
- Matthew 6:16–18 | Discretion and reward
- Acts 13:2–3, 14:23 | Leadership

Fasting Key

Instructions and recommendations

Building Up to Fasting

- 1st week—skip one meal and consume fruit juice or sports drinks
- 2nd week—skip two meals and replace with fruit juices and/or sports drinks
- 3rd week—go from dinner to dinner with no snacks or meals; consume only water

General Notes

- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and for extra energy
- If you feel light-headed or dizzy, eat fresh fruit or a small meal
- Headaches are normal when beginning fasting; your body will adjust and this could be caused by a sudden absence of a chemical your body is used to getting (i.e. caffeine)
- Your last meal before the fasting period and first meal afterward should be lighter than normal; we suggest that you have non-processed food and fresh fruit as a part of these meals
- Any time you are skipping a meal, replace it with a prayer and devotion time (spiritual nourishment in place of physical nourishment)
- It is not advisable to fast for people with diabetes, advanced stages of cancer, cardiac arrhythmia, irregular heart beat or pregnant/nursing women; you can still engage with the prayer and devotional component



Introduction

How many times have you sat down to pray and your mind drifts? Prayer seems like a one-sided conversation and checklist. It seems to be a chore some days. How do we find the time for dedicated prayer? Isn't there more to prayer?

A pastor writes, "Prayer is our greatest weapon. Not only does it draw us closer to God; it unleashes his power into our world. Through prayer we learn the heart of the Father in all the matters of our world and through spending time in his presence we begin to be conformed more and more into his image. Through discipline, prayer changes from being a duty to a delight. Simply said, the more you pray, the more you want to pray and the greater its impact" (21 Day Devotional).

Then add another dimension: prayer *and* fasting. What is fasting? Why would God ask us to fast?

Tony Evans writes that "fasting is the deliberate abstinence from some form of physical gratification, for a period of time, in order to achieve a greater spiritual goal ... The idea is to devote the time we would ordinarily spend on these activities to prayer and waiting before the Lord. Fasting calls us to renounce the natural in order to invoke the supernatural" (p. 7).

Both are powerful tools of beseeching God and aligning ourselves with Him. May we learn what it is to know God, be still before Him, and take our understanding of Him deeper! It's a privilege to be able to fast and see God work. If you cannot fast, for some reason, please consider reading through the devotional and joining in prayer.

This is what we look at then as we begin this journey of prayer and fasting. Our hope is that this devotional will instruct, challenge, and set in place a new "normal" in your spiritual walk with Christ. May we be more and know God more!

Week 1 (Oct. 11–12)
The Importance of Fasting
Scripture Reading: Ezra 8:21–23

The story is told of a young lumberjack who had become quite proud of his speed at cutting down trees. He got to the point that he felt he was ready to challenge an older lumberjack, who was also known for his ability, to a tree-cutting contest.

So they began chopping. The younger man went at it with all his vigor. He chopped down one tree after another without stopping the whole day. He thought things looked pretty good for him because he noticed that the older lumberjack took about a fifteen-minute break every hour.

But at the end of the day, the older lumberjack had chopped down one-third more trees than the younger man. Puzzled and somewhat miffed, the younger man went to the old master of forestry and asked, “How in the world could you cut down more trees than me taking fifteen-minute breaks every hour?”

The wise old lumberjack looked at him and said, “Because when I stopped cutting, I took time to sharpen my ax.”

That’s a good parable of many Christians’ spiritual lives. A lot of us chop away all the time, and then wonder why the trees aren’t falling. We look at other people who don’t seem to be working half as hard as we are, yet they seem to be making a lot more progress spiritually. Just maybe the difference is they have taken the time out to sharpen their axes.

That’s what the spiritual discipline of fasting is all about—sharpening the “ax” of our inner person so we can achieve spiritual victory.

Most of us have heard a lot about prayer, but I wonder how much we have been taught about the importance and the purpose of fasting. Follow the subject through the Bible and you’ll discover that it’s everywhere. Fasting is not just an aside to the Christian life, but essential to the life that pleases God.

Prayer

Dear Father, teach us about prayer and fasting. Let us understand what it means to sharpen our inner person so we can achieve spiritual victory. Ezra noted that you listened to their entreaty. Give us confidence in You and Your power! Listen to our prayer, and help us to wait in expectation of what You will do when we humble ourselves while fasting and praying. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Pray for Chapel Pointe’s pastors and directors and families
- Pray for Chapel Pointe’s administrators and volunteers
- Search a concordance or Google “fasting in the Bible” to see how much fasting is mentioned. Choose one or two more passages to prayerfully read

*This story and excerpt is taken from Tony Evans, *Speaks Out on Fasting* (Chicago: Moody, 2000), pp. 5–6.*

Week 2 (Oct. 18–19)

A Pure Heart

Scripture Reading: Joel 2:12–15; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 5:8

It takes a pure heart to see God (Matt. 5:8). You can attend church services, read your Bible, and pray; but if sin fills your heart, you will not see God. You will know when you have encountered God because your life will no longer be the same.

Isaiah was concerned with the death of King Uzziah, the able king of Judah, but was disoriented to his heavenly King. Then something happened that forever changed Isaiah's life. God, in all His awesome majesty, appeared to him in the temple, surrounded by heavenly creatures. Instantly, God's presence made Isaiah aware of his sinfulness. One of the seraphim came to him with a burning coal and cleansed Isaiah of his sin. Immediately, Isaiah began to hear things he had never heard before. Now he was aware of a conversation in heaven concerning who might be worthy to be God's messenger to the people. This prompted Isaiah's eager response: "Here am I! Send me." Now that God had cleansed Isaiah, he was aware of heavenly concerns and prepared to offer himself in God's service. Whereas Isaiah had been preoccupied with earthly matters, now his only concern was the activity of God.

If you have become estranged from God and His activity, you need to experience His cleansing. Sanctification prepares you to see and hear God. It enables you to serve Him. Only God can purify your heart. Allow Him to remove any impurities that hinder your relationship with Him, and then your service to Him will have meaning as you offer Him your consecrated life.

Prayer

Dear Father, allow me to encounter You during this time of prayer and fasting. Let it be a time when You make us aware of what is not pleasing to You in our lives. May we be grieved by the things that grieve You. Forgive us of our sin. Your Word says that if we confess our sins, You are faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Thank You for this assurance and promise. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Pray for Chapel Pointe's ministries for men, women, youth, and children
- Pray for our nation's leaders
- Read Psalm 130 and note what the Lord does with confessed sin (iniquities)

Devotional taken from Henry T. Blackaby & Richard Blackaby, Experiencing God Day by Day (Nashville: B&H, 2016), p. 264.

Week 3 (Oct. 25–26)

A Right Attitude

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 58; Zechariah 7:5; Psalm 35:13

As we pray and fast, we must do so in the right attitude. We may be joining in just to be part of the group. Perhaps we are still learning about this whole “prayer and fasting thing”! So, let’s make sure that we are not boasting about it. Let’s make sure we understand as well that just because we are sacrificing, we are not demanding that God do something in return. Come to God with a humble attitude that says, “God, I am willing to sacrifice and spend extra time in prayer for this concern. It means this much to me, and I beg that you hear me.” Fasting takes humbleness (Isa. 58:5). Listen to these thoughts from Tony Evans:

- But when we fast, we should do so with God in mind, for His pleasure.
- Just as food satisfies us, fasting satisfies God because we are saying to Him, “The cry of my soul for You is greater than the cry of my stomach for food or anything else.” That’s why fasting gets God’s attention like nothing else.
- According to Isaiah 58:4, the purpose of fasting is “to make your voice heard on high.” When we fast with the proper motivation, our voice is heard in heaven. That is, we come into God’s presence in a powerful way.
- It is a humbling experience to say no to something you crave, to bow low before God and admit there is a need in your life. Fasting demands humility, and humility means self-denial.

Line up your attitudes and thoughts with God in mind. Check your motivation: is your focus on what you can gain? Or is your focus on God and His pleasure? Are you seeking to understand and know the heart of God?

Prayer

Dear God, we come before You in humbleness. Direct our hearts toward You (1 Chron. 29:18). We pray that You would hear our voices as we bow low and place needs before You. Give us wisdom, faith, and steadfastness as we seek You. We know that every good and perfect gift is from above (James 1:17). We praise You and thank you for being the Father of light and that You do not change (James 1:17). Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Pray for Chapel Pointe’s building project, that God would use the facility to bring more people to Him
- Pray for the elderly in our church and community
- Read a commentary on Isaiah 58

Quoted from Tony Evans, Speaks Out on Fasting (Chicago: Moody, 2000), pp. 8–10.

Week 4 (Nov. 1–2)
What's the Big Deal?
Scripture Reading: Psalm 63

Haven't you wondered what the big deal is? Why and how does fasting "speak" to God? Fasting is to do without food for a time so that we can spend time in prayer and seeking God. Tony Evans points out that "when you fast, you say no to yourself so you can hear yes from God in a time of need or crisis." How badly do we want an answer to a specific problem? If we haven't fasted and prayed about the issue, we have not done everything we can do. We have one more option, Tony Evans points out: "to throw yourself on the mercy of God in humility while giving up a craving of the flesh for a greater need of the spirit" (p. 16).

John Piper, another great man of God, says it this way: "God responds to prayer because when we look away from ourselves to Christ as our only hope, that gives the Father an occasion to magnify the glory of his grace in the all-providing work of his Son. Similarly, fasting is peculiarly suited to glorify God in this way. It is fundamentally an offering of emptiness to God in hope. It is a sacrifice of need and hunger. It says, by its very nature, 'Father, I am empty, but you are full. I am hungry, but you are the Bread of Heaven. I am thirsty, but you are the Fountain of Life. I am weak, but you are strong. I am poor, but you are rich. I am foolish, but you are wise. I am broken, but you are whole. I am dying, but your steadfast love is better than life (Psalm 63:3).'

"When God sees this confession of need and this expression of trust, he acts, because the glory of his all-sufficient grace is at stake. The final answer is that God rewards fasting because fasting expresses the cry of the heart that nothing on the earth can satisfy our souls besides God. God must reward this cry because God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him."

So, fasting and praying to God in humbleness and all honesty expresses the cry of our hearts that we need God. Our hope is in God and His power to move mountains and provide an answer to the issue that is threatening to overcome us.

Prayer

Yahweh Yireh, we pray to you as the God who sees the situation beforehand and is able to provide for our needs. Just as you provided for your people in ages past, we pray that you provide for us. We know that you are able to do far more than we can even imagine, so we trust you for the perfect solutions. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Pray for yourself and the people of Chapel Pointe to share with friends and neighbors what God is teaching us
- Read and reflect on God's interaction with Abraham in Genesis 22

Tony Evans, Speaks Out on Fasting (Chicago: Moody, 2000), p. 7.

John Piper, A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1997), pp. 180–181.

Week 5 (Nov. 8–9)
Make Room for God
Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 14:1–23

During Saul's reign, the Israelites were in constant and continued conflict with the Philistines. It almost seemed to be a stalemate. So, Jonathan decided to go to the Philistine outpost and took only his armor-bearer along. He said, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few" (1 Sam. 14:6). They received their sign that the Lord would give the Philistines into their hands. Many Philistines were killed that day. The account ends with this observation: "So the LORD saved Israel that day" (1 Sam. 14:23).

One devotional points out that "Jonathan and his armor bearer made room for God to act on their behalf. They had the perspective that God was bigger than them and able to do more than they could. They also understood that God did not have the same limitations or hindrances that they were subject to."

"In this season, we should make room for God in our lives through every means available: praying, fasting, giving, devotions. When we make room for God to operate in our lives, He can do much more to fix our situations than we can. When we submit areas of our lives to God, He can remove the hindrances and push past our personal limitations."

As you pray and fast this day, ask God to act on your behalf. Make room for God and understand that He can and will do more for us than we can. Submit to His plan and put your full trust in Him. Focus not on your troubles and limitations; focus and meditate instead on God.

Prayer

Dear Father, we pray that You would help us to get out of Your way. We make room for You to work. Let the morning bring me word of Your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in You. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul (Psalm 143:8). Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

1. Write a prayer and fasting journal
2. Be very specific in what you are asking of the Lord
3. Pray specifically and write down the answers to these prayers
4. Read Psalm 143

"Awakening: 21 Days of Prayer, Fasting and Personal Devotion," accessed September 21, 2017, <http://storage.cloversites.com/destinycenter/documents/fasting-devotional.pdf>

Week 6 (Nov. 15–16)

Giving Ourselves Too Much Credit

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 4:14–16

Paul Tripp in his *New Morning Mercies* makes an interesting observation. He says, “We tend to give ourselves far too much credit:

- We tend to think we have more wisdom than we do
- We tend to pride ourselves on having the ‘right’ character
- We simply tend to see ourselves as more godly than we are

“Here’s the problem with this tendency: when you name yourself as righteous, when you attribute to yourself more maturity than you actually have, you don’t seek the grace that is your only hope. We don’t think we devalue grace, but that’s exactly what many of us do. Because we look at ourselves and conclude that we are spiritually okay, we don’t tend to have a deep esteem and appreciation for the grace that is our only hope in life and in death. You see, only people who acknowledge how deep their need is and who admit that they have no ability whatsoever to meet that need on their own get excited about the grace that meets every one of their spiritual needs.”

We are all in need of God’s help and grace. As we fast and pray, remember that when we were without God we had no hope. With God, we have hope, grace, and purpose. As Hebrews 4:16 says, now we can approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Prayer

Dear gracious God, we come humbly to You, understanding again that You have given us everything. Give us perspective and understanding of who we are. We need You. Let us approach Your throne in confidence due to Your grace and goodness. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Go on an intentional prayer walk (or prayer drive) to pray for those who are without hope
- Pray through your neighborhood
- Read and meditate on Ephesians 2:8–9

Paul David Tripp, New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), September 20 entry.

Week 7 (Nov. 22–23; Thanksgiving)

Too Easily Satisfied

Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:1–18

What is your calling? Tony Evans asks these questions: “In what ways is the kingdom of God benefiting from your service? Do you know what your calling is? Do you have a clear sense that God has His hand on your life for eternal purposes, or would you define your ministry in terms of your career aspirations only? Are you living out a kingdom agenda?” As you pray and fast for this day, pray for God to reveal His calling in your life.

Paul Tripp notices this: “Most of us are just too easily satisfied. It’s not that we ask too much from our Savior. We have the polar opposite problem—we are willing to settle for far too little. Our personal goals, wishes, and dreams fall far short of God’s plans and purposes for us. God will settle for nothing less than each of us being completely conformed to the likeness of his Son.”

Do not be discouraged by these questions and observations; be encouraged that God has a role for you, a purpose that you can fulfill for His kingdom! Do not ask yourself if you are doing enough for God; ask God instead what *more* you can do for Him. Can you begin fasting regularly to seek His presence in your life?

As a final observation, Tony Evans says, “Let me tell you something about the calling God gives you. It will always be something bigger than what you could do on your own ... but when God calls you, it will be to a ministry that first teaches you how much you need Him, and then produces something significant for His kingdom.”

Prayer

Dear Father, let us be encouraged that You want us to impact Your kingdom! Thank You that You work through us. We acknowledge our need for You. Let us not be easily satisfied, but let us through prayer and fasting seek our calling from You. Help us to live in the joy of the abundant life You give. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection:

- Read a Christian biography, reflecting upon what God has for you
- Pray for Chapel Pointe’s building program: the CP team, the architects, and eventual builders

Paul David Tripp, New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), September 21 entry.

Tony Evans, Speaks Out on Fasting (Chicago: Moody, 2000), pp. 43, 51.

Week 8 (Nov. 29–30)

Leadership

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:1–3; 14:23; 1 Peter 2:5–9

Every Christian is equipped for ministry, and every Christian is called to serve God full-time, even if ministry isn't your occupation. Tony Evans says, "My concern is that too many Christians are not functioning the way God has designed them, called them, and gifted them to function."

"If you're searching for maximum effectiveness and joy in your Christian service, you need to know you're not the first Christian to do so. The apostles and other leaders in the early church had to search out God's will for their specific service."

"In Acts 13:1–3, we find another example of the early church needing the Lord's guidance in ministry. One way those involved addressed this need was through fasting."

"Acts 13:1 locates this story in the church at Antioch, a city in what is now Syria, about three hundred miles north of Jerusalem. The church there was blessed with some great leaders, including Barnabas and Paul, and became a strong missionary-sending church. Fasting is connected with the discovery of God's will and His appointment to ministry."

1 Peter 2:5–9 also confirms that believers are called to be "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Believers are called to lead through their word and deed.

Three activities were regularly occurring in the leadership at the early church—worshiping, praying, and fasting. These activities were led by men seeking God and wanting to change their world. And they sure did so! This was the birth of world missions which continues today. Whether you are in leadership or following those in leadership, we can worship, pray, and fast in a unified manner through the church.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for Godly leadership that encourages us to pray and fast for the pressing needs in our world. Thank You for the example of Paul and Barnabas and how You led the early church through worship, prayer, and fasting. May we expect great things as we lay concerns at Your feet. Let us be intentional in fasting and faithful in prayer. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Pray for those in leadership at our church—pastors, directors, elders, and deacons
- Pray for our missionaries by name (use the missionary directory available at the Connection Pointe or visit www.chapel-pointe.org/missionaries)

Tony Evans, Speaks Out on Fasting (Chicago: Moody, 2000), pp. 41, 43–44.

Week 9 (Dec. 6–7)

Crisis and Confession

Scripture Reading: Mark 9; Nehemiah 1; 9:1–3

“Awakening,” a devotional on prayer and fasting, looks at Mark 9 on one of the days. This chapter shares Jesus’ transfiguration and His time alone. Then they encounter a boy with an evil spirit, and only Jesus can cast out the evil spirit. “The disciples found themselves unprepared to deal with this particular situation. Because Jesus led a lifestyle of prayer and fasting, He was prepared to deal with the issue when the time came. He didn’t wait until the problem arose to prepare—a lifestyle of prayer and fasting had prepared Him for it.

“Prayer and fasting prepares us for what lies ahead. We don’t have to wait for an emergency to arise before we prepare. Let us prepare ahead of time so that when confronted with adversity or challenges, we can face them head on.”

Similarly, in Nehemiah, we read about a man of God who learned that the walls of Jerusalem had been in ruin far too long. When he faced this reality, he sat down, wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed. This continued to affect him for four months. He confessed the sins of Israel and his own. Eventually this led to his leading the Israelites in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.

His sensitivity and immediate reaction of prayer and fasting led to God using Nehemiah for great things in the nation of Israel.

Prayer

Dear Father, thank You for showing us Jesus’ lifestyle of prayer and fasting. He had complete dependence and trust in You. Let us be like Jesus, coming to You so that we are prepared for what lies ahead. Like Nehemiah, let us be affected and see the things that are not pleasing to You. We confess our sin to You. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection:

- Read further about prayer and fasting by checking out the resources listed at the end of this devotional guide
- Spend time praying about concerns that are heavy on your heart today

“Awakening: 21 Days of Prayer, Fasting and Personal Devotion,” accessed September 21, 2017, <http://storage.cloversites.com/destinycenter/documents/fasting-devotional.pdf>

Week 10 (Dec. 13–14)

Discretion and Reward

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:16–18

And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

How can we have a corporate fast (as shown in Acts) and yet our “fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret”? John Piper says, “So the question is raised whether corporate fasting contradicts the teaching of Jesus ... it does not. And that is confirmed here by the practice of the apostle and church teachers. Saul and Barnabas evidently do not take Jesus to mean that corporate fasting is evil. The critical issue is not whether people know you are fasting but whether you want them to know so that you can bask in their admiration.”

How are we coming before Jesus? Are we patting ourselves on our backs for not eating? Fasting with a focus on prayer is an act of worship to our Lord. We are not fasting together so that others will notice and lift up our misery. We are not fasting just to complete a duty. We fast so that we can come before God in humbleness, ask for forgiveness, and pray for His hand in our lives.

Prayer

Dear Father, set our hearts right so that we will be discrete while fasting and praying. Help us to know that our rewards are with You. We do not need man's approval or attention. We seek Your face and ask that You work on our behalf. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Memorize Matthew 6:16–18
- Pray for revival in our church, schools, and community

John Piper, A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1997), p. 106.

Week 11 (Dec. 20–21)

Waiting on God

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 8:6–18; Psalm 75:6–7

“As children of God we often find it hard to wait on God to answer our prayers. For some reason, we think God needs our help in answering our prayers so we might tend to do things our own way instead of waiting on God. God’s Word tells us that His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts. So why is it hard for us to wait on God? Maybe it is because of our impatience, immaturity, or lack of trust that will cause us to jump ahead of God instead of waiting and listening for His voice. Do we really trust God to answer us when we call on Him? Are you willing to wait on the Lord to answer all your prayers, even if it takes longer than expected?”

Blackaby adds to the devotional thought, “Much of the frustration we experience as Christians has nothing to do with what God does or doesn’t do. It has everything to do, rather, with the false assumptions we make about how we think God will and should act. . . . As you look back on God’s activity in your life, you will recognize the supreme wisdom in how He has led you. As you look forward to what God may do, be careful you do not try to predict what He will do next. You may find yourself completely off the mark.”

Prayer

Dear Father, help us wait for You and Your answers to our problems. Let us not become frustrated because You are not answering the way we would like You to. Help us to remember that Your ways are higher; You see all aspects of life. Renew our trust in You as we reflect on Your Word and spend time in Your presence. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Read and memorize Isaiah 55:8–9
- Pray for financial blessing, integrity, and wisdom for the CP addition

“21 Day Devotional, Fasting and Prayer Guide,” accessed September 21, 2017, <http://abundantlifechurches.org/daniel-fast/>, Day Eleven.

Henry T. Blackaby & Richard Blackaby, Experiencing God Day by Day (Nashville: B&H, 2016), p. 72.

Week 12 (Dec. 27–28)

Praise and Victories

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:2; Ephesians 6:10–18

In Acts we see that the church participated in worship and fasting. They were ministering to the Lord. Tony Evans says, “To minister to the Lord is to get your praise going. To minister to the Lord is to be in His presence, so God-conscious and God-focused it’s as if He is the only person in the room. In other words, praise should be an integral part of our fasting experience.”

Let this illustration from Tony Evans be an encouragement to you as you seek victory in hardships: “Let me tell you what to expect when you start taking seriously the discipline of fasting.

“Let me explain it by way of an illustration. Since about 1937, airplanes have been pressurized so they can fly above the clouds. Before then, they had to fly low so they could stay in the atmosphere.

“As soon as you start fasting and praying, Satan and his demons are going to line up at cloud level. And they are going to try to keep you below the clouds so you don’t fly high and reach the throne of God.

“But if you fast and throw yourself on the mercy of God, you are going to break through the clouds because God will ‘pressurize’ your soul so you can breathe up there in the heavenly places where God’s blessings and power are.

“So don’t let Satan keep you on the ground. It is time to fly. It is time to get the flesh under control so you are not under its control.”

Prayer

Dear Father, we praise You and thank You for allowing us victory rather than defeat. We pray for breakthroughs in the trials before us. Give us strength and courage as we seek to obey You. We put on Your armor and that we would be strong in You. Amen.

Further Prayer and Reflection

- Choose songs of praise to worship and listen to; reflect on the words as you join in praise
- Read through Tony Evans’ booklet *Speaks Out on Fasting*

Tony Evans, Speaks Out on Fasting (Chicago: Moody, 2000), pp. 47; 19–20.

Resources for Further Reading and Study

"21 Day Devotional, Fasting and Prayer Guide," accessed September 21, 2017, <http://abundantlifechurches.org/daniel-fast/>

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