

2013

SEVEN DAYS OF

PRAYER

AND FASTING

We are calling on every member to join our seven-day prayer and fasting. This is the time of year when we corporately consecrate ourselves, our families, and ministries to God. Believe God for victories and breakthroughs in every area of your life this year.

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SEVEN DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

... "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."

Joshua 3:5

Throughout history, God has called on His people to humble themselves through fasting and prayer. Fasting is a spiritual weapon God uses to advance His kingdom, change the destiny of nations, spark revival, and bring victory in people's lives. There is something powerful that happens when we voluntarily humble ourselves, seek God's will, and agree with Him for His purposes to be fulfilled.

As a spiritual family, we begin each new year with seven days of prayer and fasting. It is our way of humbling ourselves before God and consecrating to Him the upcoming year. It is also the time when we corporately come into agreement and believe together for breakthroughs in our personal lives, families, finances, and churches.

Over the years, as a result of this time of prayer, we have seen people receive healing, salvation, promotion, direction, family restoration, miraculous provision, and tremendous growth in their discipleship groups and churches. One of the highlights is always seeing and hearing testimonies of how God answers over and beyond what people ask.

As you begin your fast this year, believe in your heart, by faith, that this is your year of miracles and answered prayers.

WHY FAST?

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.

Joel 1:14

1. Jesus fasted.

¹Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Matthew 4:1,2

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

Luke 4:14

Before He began His ministry, Jesus fasted forty days. He knew He was going to need spiritual strength to fulfill His purposes. Fasting makes us physically weak but spiritually strong and prepares us to do God's work.

2. Fasting is an act of humility and consecration.

... I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. ...

Psalm 35:13

Humility results in the grace of God. When we humble ourselves in prayer, we have instant access to the heart of God. As we deny ourselves as an act of consecration, we are better able to exercise self-control. We can keep our emotions and desires under control.

3. Fasting helps us become sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Acts 13:2

When we deny ourselves of our natural cravings, our spiritual antennas become sharper. We become more sensitive to His voice as we divest ourselves of worldly distractions. We are better able to focus on God and submit to His will. This opens the door for the Holy Spirit into our lives.

4. Fasting brings revival.

²... in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. ³So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

Daniel 9:2,3

Fasting helps us prevail in prayer and intercession. Daniel understood that Israel was headed for destruction. He also knew that in times like these, there is only one recourse—intercession through praying and fasting. Throughout human history, God has brought revival and delivered nations from destruction in response to prayer and fasting.

5. Fasting is healthy.

Fasting cleanses your digestive system from toxins. Doctors consider fasting a cure for certain allergies and diseases. By learning to deny ourselves and exercising discipline, fasting breaks unhealthy addictions in our lives.

When a man is willing to set aside the legitimate appetites of the body to concentrate on the work of praying, he is demonstrating that he means business, that he is seeking with all his heart, and will not let God go unless He answers.

• Arthur Wallis

PREPARING TO FAST

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

Esther 4:16

1. Be in faith!

Prayerfully and thoughtfully fill out the prayer points page of this guide. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. Be clear and specific about your faith goals in your personal life, family, finances, and church. These are what you will believe God for during the fast and the entire year. Expect God to answer. Maintain a thankful heart throughout and after the fast.

2. Commit to a type of fast.

We encourage everyone to commit to a seven-day water only or liquid fast. However, we understand that some are unable to do so because of

Fasting reduces the power of self so that the Holy Spirit can do a more intense work within us.

• Bill Bright

certain circumstances, such as pregnancy, a physically demanding profession, and medical conditions. If you belong to this category, there are alternatives—you may choose to do a combination fast. You may do a liquid fast for three days and then a one-meal-a-day fast for the next four, for example, or any other combination according to your need or situation.

Pray about the kind of fast you will undertake and commit to it. Do not decide on a day-to-day basis. Commit before the fast and be determined. Ask God for grace.

3. Plan your calendar.

Limit your physical and social activities during this period. You need to conserve physical energy and devote more time to prayer and reading the Bible.

4. Prepare spiritually.

More than anything, our annual fast is a time when we believe God for a fresh encounter with Him. Be prepared to have the Holy Spirit put His finger on an area in your life that needs to change. Repentance is the foundation of prayer and fasting. Be ready to repent and change, and be transformed. Surrender everything to Him. Be completely open.

5. Prepare physically.

Be smart as you enter into this fast. Do not go to a buffet restaurant on the eve of the fast, hoping to stock up on food in your body. The key is to gradually prepare your body. Start eating smaller portions and meals seven days before you begin your fast. Avoid food that is high in sugar and fat. Two days prior to the fast, eat raw fruit and vegetables only. Consult a physician if you need to.

DURING THE FAST

¹⁶"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to men 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."

Matthew 6:16-18

1. Seek the Lord.

Commit to prayer and Bible reading the times you usually allocate for meals. Be ready to respond when you hear from God.

This guide also has a devotional that we encourage you to go through during the fast.

2. Commit to change.

Whatever God tells you or puts His finger upon, apply it immediately. If you need to make restitution, immediately contact people you have broken relationships with. If there are habits that need to change, make the adjustment immediately. Ask a trusted friend from your church to hold you accountable.

3. Practical tips

- a. Avoid medical and even natural herbal drugs. However, if you are under medication, these should only be withdrawn upon the advice of your doctor.
- b. Limit your physical activity and exercise. If you have a workout routine, adjust it accordingly. A daily two to five kilometer walk should be your maximum amount of exercise during an extended fast.
- c. Rest as much as you can.
- d. Maintain an attitude of prayer throughout the day. Intercede for your family, pastors, church, nation, our missionaries, world missions, etc.
- e. Drink plenty of clean water.
- f. As your body adjusts, be prepared for temporary bouts of physical weakness as well as mental annoyances like impatience, irritability, and anxiety.

The record of the whole Bible indicates that prayer and fasting combined constitute the strongest weapon committed to God's believers.

• Dr. Mary Ruth Swope

BREAKING THE FAST

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 14:23

1. Reintroduce solid food gradually.

You should break your fast the same way you prepared for it. It will take your body just as many days you fasted to adjust to a normal diet. Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid food immediately after your fast. Start with fruits, juices, and salad. Then, you can begin adding vegetables and boiled potato. Take it slowly from there. Eat small portions spread throughout the day.

2. Continue praying.

Do not let your prayer life end on the day you finish the fast. Build from the momentum you gained during the fast. Let it transform your prayer and devotional life. Carry the newfound passion with you throughout the year.

3. Be expectant.

Be in faith and believe God to answer your prayers soon! Do not give up, persevere in prayer even if you do not see the answers immediately.

Make sure you keep the copy of your prayer points. You can check it at the end of the year and see how God has answered your prayers. It can be your thanksgiving list at the end of the year.

If our fasting is not unto God, we have failed. Physical benefits, success in prayer, the enduring with power, spiritual insights—these must never replace God as the center of our fasting.

• Richard Foster

CONCLUSION

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us . . .

Ephesians 3:20

Our annual seven-day prayer and fasting gives us the opportunity to realign our lives according to His will and consecrate the coming year to Him. As we humble ourselves corporately to Him in prayer, we can expect Him to move mightily in our midst. God's will is for all of us to experience breakthrough and victory in our lives. Be in faith for God to move miraculously in your life this year beyond what you can ask or imagine. You have a fresh mandate. Be ready to accomplish greater things for God this year!

²“...Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.”

Joshua 1:2,3

A new year, a fresh start. New opportunities we can walk into, new challenges we will have to face.

The Book of Joshua is all about new beginnings for God’s people. After being in the wilderness for four decades under the guidance of Moses, the generation of Israelites who grew up wandering in the desert are finally entering Canaan, God’s promised land for them. And they will have to do this with a new leader—Joshua.

As we prepare for the coming year, we will gain much from studying the Book of Joshua. Like the Israelites, we will realize that God has a rich spiritual inheritance for us in Christ that He is fully committed to blessing us with, and we will learn how we are to receive it. And just like Joshua, we will see that we too need to be strong and courageous if we are to enter into and take hold of all that God has prepared for us.

Our Promised Land is ready, and the Promise-Giver is before us. May we boldly march forward as our Lord leads us into a new season of faith and victory.

REFLECT

- What does Numbers 23:19 teach about God’s character? What about Isaiah 55:10,11?

- According to Deuteronomy 7:6-9, why did God bless the Israelites? Was it based on Israel’s greatness, or on God’s?

RESPOND

- Meditate on Ephesians 1:3-14. Write down everything in this passage that the Apostle Paul says we are or have in Christ. Spend time thanking God for all He has done.
- Prayerfully consider and list down specific promises that you feel God is leading you to believe Him for this year. Ask a friend to stand in faith with you as you fast and pray for God to fulfill His promises.

DAY 1

Strength and Courage

READJoshua 1:1-18 • Numbers 13:26-14:9
Acts 4:1-31

⁶“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them... ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:6,9

It has been forty years since the Israelites were delivered from slavery and began their exodus into God’s promised inheritance for them. Moses who led them out of Egypt and through the desert had just died. Joshua, Moses’ former aide and now the incumbent leader of the Israelites, has just been charged by God to lead His people into the Promised Land. To say that Joshua faced a daunting task would be an understatement: before him were fortified cities, “giants in the land,” a flood-level Jordan River, and a generation of Israelites who grew up wandering in the wilderness and watched their parents’ generation die before entering the Promised Land.

It was at this moment that God repeatedly spoke to Joshua, “Be strong and courageous.” Joshua needed to heed God’s instruction if he was to have any chance of entering into the inheritance that God prepared.

Like Joshua, we too need the strength to grab hold of all of the promises available for us in Christ and the courage to do things His way. And even in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, we do not have to be in fear because our faithful God assures us that He will be with us every step of the way to help us overcome any difficulty we may face.

REFLECT

- Study Joshua 1:5-9. Notice how God repeatedly says that He will be with Joshua. Why do you think God would emphasize this? What is the relationship between God’s Word and entering God’s promise according to verses 7 and 8?

- Compare the responses of Joshua and Caleb with the other ten spies in Numbers 13:26-14:9. What insights can you glean from the different perspectives? What was Joshua and Caleb’s basis for their stance?

RESPOND

- Has God asked you to do something that you find terrifying or discouraging? Pray with a friend that God would help you see your situation from His perspective.
- Read Acts 4:1-31. Pray for the same boldness to share about God’s goodness in your life to your family and friends.

DAY 2

Distinctly God's

READ

Joshua 3:1-17 • Leviticus 10:10,11
Romans 12:1,2 • 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
Colossians 3:1-14 • 1 Peter 2:1-12

Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."

Joshua 3:5

What does it mean to "consecrate yourself," and why was it an integral part of the preparation process to enter the Promised Land? To be "consecrated" is to be set apart, to be dedicated for a special purpose, and to be sanctified from any impurities. To the Israelites, this involved taking a bath and changing their clothes, a luxury for nomadic people with very limited access to water. This act represented a sober awareness of their uncleanness before a holy God, and washing symbolized a fresh beginning in relating with God.

This was significant because the Lord God Almighty, the Holy One, was "among" them. What distinguished Israel from other nations was the presence of God. As His people, they were to reflect His nature and live by His laws to show others the benefits of having Him as King. Consecrating oneself was an external act that displayed an internal readiness for the plan and will of God.

Are you ready for all the amazing things God will do among you?

REFLECT

- Read Colossians 3:1-14. Why are we to "set our hearts on things above?" As believers, what are we to rid ourselves of, and what are we to clothe ourselves with?

- Study 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. Why is God calling us to be set apart? What kind of separation does the Apostle Paul talk about?

RESPOND

- Read Leviticus 10:10,11 and Romans 12:1,2. Pray for wisdom to discern what is pleasing to God, and in what area we need to renew our minds.
- Talk to a friend about 1 Peter 2:9-12 and how the Apostle Peter describes who we are in Christ. Ask for pointers on how to better live out verse 12.

¹³Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" ¹⁴"Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

Joshua 5:13,14

All the preparations were finished. As Joshua faced Israel's first major obstacle, the fortified city of Jericho, we can assume him nervously going over his battle strategy, considering every situation. Joshua was most probably also dealing with the stress of his new leadership role. "Where was Moses when you needed him? Will this really work? Why am I in charge?"

But Joshua was not alone. To his surprise, he saw an armed man standing before him. "Are you for us or against us?" he asked. The stranger's reply caused Joshua to fall facedown to the floor. "I am not for you or against you. I am in charge. And I am here."

What an amazing moment in Joshua's life and leadership! God promised him that His presence would be with him, and now Joshua was experiencing the fulfillment of that promise firsthand. God revealed Himself at Joshua's great moment of need in the way that he needed. To David, God is a shepherd. To Abraham, a friend. To Jacob, He was a wrestler who cannot be defeated. And to Joshua, who had battles to face, God revealed Himself as the commander of the army of the Lord. Joshua's encounter with God reminded him that it was God who was really in charge.

Like Joshua, may we have a fresh awareness of God's presence in our midst and a transforming revelation of His rule in our lives.

REFLECT

- Read Exodus 33:12-17. Why did Moses not want to enter the Promised Land without God?

- Study Romans 8:31-39. Why does the Apostle Paul consider us "more than conquerors?"

RESPOND

- How can you apply John 15:1-17 and remain in Him? Discuss your plans with a friend.
- Meditate on God's exploits according to Exodus 15:1-18. Ask God for a greater revelation of His power and might.

DAY 4

Conquering Faith

READ

Joshua 6:1-27 • 1 Samuel 17:34-37,45-50
2 Corinthians 10:3-5
Hebrews 11:1,6,30 • James 2:14-26

'Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.²Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men."

Joshua 6:1,2

The first city that stood in the way of Israel's conquest of Canaan was Jericho, a walled military fortress. Victory over Jericho was significant in many ways. It had a very strategic geographical location in relation to their military campaign for the region. It was also Israel's first official battle in their bid to possess the Promised Land. But most importantly, the way Jericho was conquered sent a loud message—to Joshua, to the Israelites, to the nations in Canaan, and even now to us—that the God of Israel is the One, True, and Mighty God.

The walls of Jericho did not come down because of man's ability—they fell because of God's power. In the same way, no matter how huge the obstacle or impossible the situation before us may be, we can trust God to fulfill His promise and give us the victory. As we face the inevitable "walls of Jericho" to our spiritual inheritance in Christ, like Israel, our part is to believe in His goodness and obey His instructions. Through Christ, we can confront every challenge with boldness and strength. And by faith, we will see our walls tumble down.

"See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands..." May we have eyes of faith to see the fullness of all that God has done, is doing, and still intends to do.

REFLECT

- Read the account of David's battle with Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. What was the basis for David's boldness? To whom did he attribute his victory?

- Study 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. How does the Apostle Paul describe the "weapons we fight with?"

RESPOND

- Do you have a "Jericho" standing between you and God's plan? With a friend, ask God for specific steps to do to overcome this and act on what He says.
- Compare the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 and James 2:26. Share with a friend the importance of translating your faith into action.

But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things... So the LORD'S anger burned against Israel.

Joshua 7:1

Shortly after their victory at Jericho, the Israelites experienced a demoralizing defeat at Ai. Joshua, in despair and self-pity, pointed an accusing finger to God: "Why did you do this to us?"

How quickly we forget God's goodness and faithfulness when things do not seem to go our way. But as Scripture and even experience confirms, God's nature is unchanging and His Word sure. He remains faithful even when we are faithless.

The account at Ai gives two specific reasons for Israel's defeat. First, there was sin in the camp. Achan of the tribe of Judah stole from the spoils of Jericho despite Joshua's clear instructions that it was to be a tithe, devoted to God, a form of firstfruits of their conquest in Canaan. Achan's covetous desire for material wealth resulted in national tragedy. Sin is never an isolated event.

Second, we see that in verse 3, Joshua listened to the advice of the spies and did not consult with God on how to proceed with Ai. They were defeated because they moved forward without God. Success can cloud our heads and hearts way too easily. We think we are the reason for our success and forget about God until things go wrong.

Yet despite Israel's shortcomings, God in His mercy helped Israel to repent. When we surrender to the Lord's discipline, He is able to restore us into right standing with Him. May we heed the hard lessons Israel learned at Ai.

REFLECT

- According to James 1:13-15, how does temptation work? What is its ultimate result?

- Read Psalm 51. How did David see his sin? What did he ask from God?

RESPOND

- Read Hebrews 12:1-11. Is there anything in your life that is currently hindering you from pursuing God that you need to throw off? Ask a friend to hold you accountable to your decisions.
- Study Ephesians 6:10-18. How can we stand against the enemy's schemes?

So Joshua said to the Israelites: "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you?"

Joshua 18:3

Israel was finally in control of the land of Canaan. All major opposition had been dealt with. Joshua had begun allocating territory for the different tribes of Israel so they could take possession of the land and settle into the fullness of their inheritance from God. However, seven of the twelve tribes of Israel had yet to respond and claim their inheritance, causing Joshua to stop the allotment process and rebuke the seven tribes: "How long will you wait before you take what God has given you?"

Why did the seven tribes slack from claiming what God has already given to them? Was it because they were afraid of getting into a fight for the land? Was it because they did not agree about Joshua's portioning of the inheritance? Was it because they lacked faith and were not sure that God would help them? Were they just lazy to do their part? Maybe they expected things to simply "fall into place if it is really meant to be?"

Whatever the reason, one thing is clear—they would have missed out on all that God had prepared for them because they were not moving in faith to boldly take hold of what God was readily giving them.

What would stop you from moving forward with God, from receiving what He has already confirmed to give? Do not settle for anything less than what God has prepared for you.

REFLECT

- Read Hebrews 10:35-39. Why should we not throw away our confidence and shrink back?

- Study Mark 6:1-6. What was Jesus amazed at? How did that situation affect His ministry?

RESPOND

- Compare Joshua 14:6-14 with 18:1-3. Are there areas in your life where you have settled for less than God's plan for you? How can you pursue God's best for you?
- James 1:2-8 exhorts us to face trials with pure joy. Pray with a friend for strength and wisdom to persevere until God's will is accomplished in your situation.

¹⁴"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness.... ¹⁵But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua 24:14,15

If you had the chance to give only one message to the people you dearly love before you permanently part ways, what would you say? At the Book of Joshua's conclusion, we see Joshua in this very situation. He knew his time was up. And before the Israelites settled into their respective territories, he gathered and addressed them for the last time.

Joshua recounted Israel's history and emphasized God's role behind all the victories they experienced as a nation. He reminded them that their achievements were in no way due to their military prowess but a direct result of God being in their midst and fighting on their behalf. Israel's history was really HIS story. Then Joshua challenged the Israelites to continue to serve God wholeheartedly because any future success that they were to have would be dependent on whether they would continue to trust and obey God, for it is God who enables them to overcome.

As we end our fast, let us heed Joshua's parting words. Receiving answers to our prayers and entering into our "Promised Land" can actually distract us from maintaining a close relationship with the Promise-Giver. Jesus is our ultimate Promised Land. May we, like Joshua, have the strength and courage to daily choose to love, follow, and serve our Lord.

REFLECT

- Study Joshua 23:1-16. What three things did Joshua admonish us to do in verses 6, 8, 10? What are the consequences mentioned in verses 12 to 16 if we choose to live apart from God?

- Read the Apostle Paul's parting words in 2 Timothy 4:1-8. What was Paul's charge to Timothy in verses 2 and 5? What was he looking forward to according to verse 8?

RESPOND

- Are there things in your life that you know could distract you from growing in your relationship with God? What can you do to eliminate these hindrances?
- Meditate on 1 John 5:3-5. Pray for grace to overcome any trial or circumstance you are currently facing.

This year, I am believing God for . . .

PERSONAL FAITH GOALS

Spiritual Revival • Physical Healing • Prosperity and Abundance • Rich Generosity

MY FAMILY

Restoration of Relationships • Household Salvation

MY SCHOOL/CAREER

Excellence • Promotion

MY MINISTRY

Small Group Growth • Salvation of Colleagues, Classmates, Bosses, Employees

“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.”

Matthew 18:19

PRAYER PARTNER

SCHEDULE

DAY 1 FASTING OPTIONS

- Water fast
- Liquid fast
- Eat one meal only
- Others: _____

Prayer meeting to attend:

DAY 3 FASTING OPTIONS

- Water fast
- Liquid fast
- Eat one meal only
- Others: _____

Prayer meeting to attend:

DAY 5 FASTING OPTIONS

- Water fast
- Liquid fast
- Eat one meal only
- Others: _____

Prayer meeting to attend:

DAY 7 FASTING OPTIONS

- Water fast
- Liquid fast
- Eat one meal only
- Others: _____

Prayer meeting to attend:

DAY 2 FASTING OPTIONS

- Water fast
- Liquid fast
- Eat one meal only
- Others: _____

Prayer meeting to attend:

DAY 4 FASTING OPTIONS

- Water fast
- Liquid fast
- Eat one meal only
- Others: _____

Prayer meeting to attend:

DAY 6 FASTING OPTIONS

- Water fast
- Liquid fast
- Eat one meal only
- Others: _____

Prayer meeting to attend:

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