



21 days of
prayer &
fasting

January 7, 2019 - January 27, 2019

21-DAY FASTING DEVOTIONAL

ANTIOCH
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Building People to Reflect Jesus

Daily Devotional Day 1 - "Fasting without the Word is Just a Diet"

Matthew 4:4, "Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Welcome to Day 1 of our 21 days of prayer and fasting. It is important during this time of seeking the Lord that you spend time reading the Word of God and establishing a daily devotional. When we spend time in the Word of God, we spend time with God. He and His Word are One and His Word is living and active. As we read the Word, we learn more about Him and His ways.

Each day we will have a devotional along with a scripture for reading. Set aside time to read and meditate upon the devotionals and of course read your Bible. It is good to do this first thing in the morning before you begin your day so that you will be able to focus on God first. As you do that, He will help you organize the rest of your day. We also suggest you read before you go to bed at night so that you will have the Word in your mind before you go to sleep.

When reading your daily devotionals, pray about how you can apply to your life what you are reading. The Word of God is for us to live not just read. If there are things you need to change, change them. If there is an attitude you need to correct, correct it. Do not just read and/or hear the Word but actually become a doer of it.

It is said that anything you do for 21 days becomes a habit. A habit is a pattern of behavior that becomes woven into our brain. We encourage you to create a new habit of reading the Word and spending time with the Lord by committing to each day for these next 21 days. As you set aside time to draw closer to the Lord, He will come closer to you.

Scripture: James 4:7-8 ESV, "[7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

Questions for you to consider:

1. How often do you "eat" God's Word? Are you spiritually malnourished?
2. How do you respond when the enemy tries to come against your mind with lies over and over again?
3. Do you know you have authority based on the Word of God to command him to leave by believing and confessing God's Word?

Activating the Word:

Take a moment to find scriptures to help you defeat any lies the enemy has whispered to you. Identify scriptures from the Word of God to believe and then confess so you can be set free. Journal whatever the Lord speaks to your heart.

Daily Devotional Day 2 - "Got Fruit?"

Matthew 7:20, "Therefore by their fruits you will know them"

Our mission statement at Antioch is to **Build People to Reflect Jesus**. Our aim is to preach and teach the Word of God so that disciples will be made. A disciple is not just one who believes in Jesus but one who actually acts like him. **Acts 11:26, "and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."**

In order to look like Jesus, we must follow in His way. **Luke 9:23, "And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."**

When we examine the text, Jesus declares that if we will come after Him, it will require self-denial. The Greek Word for **come** in this verse is **erchomai**, it is a verb and means to appear from one place to another publicly. Following Jesus is not a task that can be accomplished in private or in secret. This definition also denotes moving from one place to another. No one follows and remains in the same place. In order to follow Jesus, we must be willing to lay aside our agenda and do exactly what He wants us to do. Our eyes must stay focused on Him.

Let's examine the word **follow**, it derives from the Greek word **akoloutheo** which means to follow one who precedes, to join him as his attendant, to accompany him. We must be careful to follow Him and not go before Him. When we go ahead of Him, we make critical mistakes. We must not go first then ask God to come along and bless what we are doing. This is out of order and will never work in the Kingdom of God. We must follow Him at all times.

Once you begin to truly follow Jesus, prepare yourself mentally for the journey. We must be prepared to go through whatever is necessary to follow Jesus. We must remember to rejoice "in through", not wait until while we are "out of through". There may be pain, heartache, discomfort, persecution, tests, trials and/or tribulation; however, we must continue to follow.

Questions for you to consider:

1. Are there areas in your life that you are leading rather than following the Lord?
2. If you were someone else looking at your own life, what fruit could you identify that proves you are a disciple of Christ?
3. Are you ever tempted to stop following Jesus? If so when are those times?

Activating the Word:

Spend some time asking the Lord to point out areas in your life that you need to surrender to Him. Find scriptures you can stand on to assist you in your journey. Journal whatever the Lord speaks to your heart.

Daily Devotional Day 3 - Return to Jesus

Joel 2:12 NIV “Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.

God is calling us to return to Him with all of our heart. There are times in our walk with the Lord that we may allow distractions to draw us away from Jesus but thank God for grace. Grace means that we have another opportunity to return to Him. We must make a decision every day to lay aside every weight and focus our hearts first and foremost on the Lord. Matthew 6:33 tells us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto us. Seek Him first – before we seek anything else, we must seek the Lord.

Thank God for the covenant of Grace that we live under. Under the Old Covenant, man had to rely on his works and his sacrifices to be right with God. Under the New Covenant, we have every wrong that we have done or will do forgiven at the Cross because of Jesus.

As you spend time in prayer and fasting today, you can establish a strong passionate connection with the Lord as He becomes the object of your affection. Do not allow your love or passion for God to become lukewarm and certainly not cold. To keep your relationship with the Father passionate, spend time studying God’s Word and in prayer and worship before the Father focusing on who He is. Do not worry about what problems you have, what prayer requests you want to talk to the Father about, just focus on honoring Him and celebrating Him for His goodness, His mercy, His unconditional love, His sovereignty. Focus on who God is, seek Him first, return to Him and receive all that He has for you. Make today a day where your passion will be reignited and grow from day to day during the next 21 days of fasting and prayer.

Questions for you to consider:

1. What have been some distractions that have deterred you from your walk with the Lord?
2. Would you describe your relationship with the Lord as strong and passionate? Lukewarm? Cold?
3. What are some practical things you can do to cultivate a passionate strong relationship with the Lord?

Activating the Word:

Be intentional today about hearing from the Lord and obeying what He speaks. Before you speak or act, take a moment to pray and ask the Lord how you should respond. At the end of the day, journal your results.

Daily Devotional Day 4 - "He Produces the Fruit"

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The Holy Spirit is the One who produces fruit in the life of the Believer. The flesh produces works and the Holy Spirit produces fruit. Another way of saying this is when we are led by the flesh we will produce bad fruit; however, when we are led by the Spirit, we will produce good fruit. During this fast, we hope that you will become led by the Spirit and controlled by the Spirit so good fruit (fruit of the Spirit) and not bad fruit (works) will manifest in your life.

Apples always produce apples; oranges always produce oranges; dogs always produce dogs; fish always produce fish. The seed always produces after its kind. The moment you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, His Spirit now lives in you and He will produce Himself in you. The fruit of the Spirit is an outward manifestation of an inner working.

As we focus upon sowing to the Spirit, we can expect to receive fruit back from the Spirit. The fruit that the Spirit produces is wonderful, godly fruit that blesses not only your life but all those you come in contact with. Surrender to the Lord and allow the work of the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit in you that will draw others to Christ.

Questions for you to consider:

1. What does being led by the Spirit versus being led by the flesh mean? When you evaluate your daily responses, what leads you the most?
2. If you were to ask others what kind of fruit they see in your life, how do you think they would answer?
3. What steps do you need to take so that the Holy Spirit can produce His fruit in your life?

Activating the Word:

Spend some time asking the Lord to point out good and bad fruit in your life. Be willing to be open for the Lord to speak. Surrender the bad fruit to the Lord and ask Him to cultivate good fruit. Journal whatever the Lord speaks to your heart.

Daily Devotional Day 5 - "The Fruit of Love"

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

When the New Testament was being written, there were four primary Greek words to describe the concept of "love".

1. Eros which is the Greek term for sexual love.
2. Phileo which describes affection
3. Agape which is the word chiefly used in the New Testament to depict the love of God. This is the Word that Paul uses in Galatians 5:22.

Agape occurs when an individual sees, recognizes, understands or appreciates the value of an object or a person, causing the viewer to behold this object or person in great esteems, awe, admiration, wonder and sincere appreciation. Agape is a love that loves so profoundly that it knows no limits or boundaries. Agape is the highest form of love – a self-sacrificial type of love that moves the lover to action.

Agape love seeks the highest good of others. It is a love that has no strings attached. This love is not based on emotions or feelings. It is a decision to be committed to the well-being of others without any conditions or circumstances. When God's Word has been sown into our hearts, the potential to love like this is within us all the time. We must allow the Spirit of God to release this love from our hearts through the fruit of the Spirit called love.

Questions for you to consider:

1. Do you believe it's possible for agape love to flow through you?
2. Would people around you say that agape love operates in you or would they say your love is conditional?
3. Have you ever experienced agape love for anyone in your life? How did that make you feel?

Activating the Word:

Spend some time asking the Lord to give you revelation on agape love. Think about how that love can flow into you and out of you. Write down your thoughts in your journal.

Daily Devotional Day 6 - "The Fruits of Joy and Peace"

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Joy is gladness that is not based on circumstances. Joy is more than happiness. It is not based on anything external. When we believe God, obey His will, receive His forgiveness, fellowship with the Saints, minister to others and share the Gospel then we will experience joy. The world can offer temporary happiness based on situations and circumstances. The fruit of joy will sustain you despite situations or the most difficult of times.

Peace is contentment, unity between people. Peace is a state of assurance, lack of fear, and a sense of contentment. It is fellowship, harmony, and unity between individuals. It is freedom from worry, disturbance, and oppressive thoughts. One definition of this word suggests the rule of order in place of chaos. No matter what chaos may be going on around you, the fruit of peace is in you and can keep you at rest.

Both of these are produced as all the fruit are supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. Regardless of whatever situations come up in your life, you can maintain your joy and peace if you will submit to the working of the Holy Spirit. Why not ask the Holy Spirit to produce the supernatural fruit of joy and peace in you?

Questions for you to consider:

1. Can you think of a time in your life when situations were against you and you did not have joy and/or peace yet somehow you found yourself experiencing joy/peace?
2. Has the joy of the Lord ever replaced sadness in your life?
3. Has peace ever replaced fear in your life?

Activating the Word:

When is it difficult for you to remain joyful and peaceful? During these times are there things you think you can do to receive the fruits of the Spirit? Write down your thoughts in your journal.

Daily Devotional Day 7 - "The Fruits of Longsuffering and Gentleness"

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The word longsuffering comes from the Greek word makrothumia. The word is a compound word comprised of **makros** (long) and **thumos** (anger). The word gives a picture of patience or forbearance; slow to speak and slow to anger. Longsuffering should be slowness in avenging wrongs. The quality of restraint that prevents believers from speaking or acting hastily in the face of disagreement, opposition or persecution. It is also bearing pain or problems without complaining. We should not only be longsuffering with others; we should also be longsuffering with ourselves. Longsuffering has a key role in our lives if we are going to look like Jesus.

Gentleness is being merciful, sweet and tender. It is also an eagerness to put others at rest; a sweet and attractive temperament that shows friendly regard. Gentleness moves you to be a bigger blessing to others in your life; to serve them and meet their needs. When Jesus came to the earth He denied His own comfort, His own best interests and served us so that we may be reconciled to God.

Do you find yourself thinking about how you can serve others? Do you think of ways you can bless others? If you struggle to answer these questions in the affirmative, ask the Holy Spirit to cultivate this fruit in your life.

Questions for you to consider:

1. Is there any one person whom you are constantly angry, impatient and frustrated with? How have you responded to them?
2. Have you asked that person to forgive you for being unkind?
3. In what ways do you need to change to be more accepting of others?

Activating the Word:

Are people comfortable in your presence? Do they feel they can disagree with your opinion and you still like them? Do you find it difficult to embrace other people who are different from you. Spend some time evaluating these questions before the Lord and ask Him to help you with longsuffering and gentleness. Journal your thoughts.

Daily Devotional Day 8 - "The Fruits of Goodness and Faith"

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The greek word for goodness is ***agathusune*** which comes from the word ***agathos*** which means good. ***Agathusune means goodness; the sense of being good to someone; to be generous and open hearted.*** It is the selfless desire to be open hearted and generous to others above what they deserve. Goodness is a feature of the nature of God. When a believer is walking in the Spirit, their focus is not on them rather the needs of those who are around them. There is a desire to be open hearted and generous to others above what they deserve. Jesus cared for the poor; He helped the needy; He was concerned about those who others forgot about. If we are going to reflect Jesus, we must allow the Holy Spirit to work in us so that we also show genuine care for those less fortunate than we are.

The Greek word for faith is ***pistis***. In Galatians 5, faith conveys the idea of ***a person who is faithful, dependable, reliable, loyal, steadfast, full of trust.*** When the Holy Spirit produces this fruit in our lives, we have a firm devotion to God, loyalty to friends, and dependability to carry out responsibilities. **Hebrews 13:8 declares that Jesus Himself is the same yesterday, today, and forever.** This same character that Jesus has now becomes part of who we are because of the inner working of the Holy Spirit producing the fruit of faith in our lives.

Questions for you to consider:

1. When is the last time you gave sacrificially to help people who are in need? Are you aware of anyone in need?
2. What are some things you can do to help others in need?
3. Would other people describe you as dependable, reliable and trustworthy?

Activating the Word:

Evaluate your life and look for fruit of goodness and faithfulness in your life. Are there hindrances to these fruit being produced in your life? Are you selfish and self-seeking consuming all your resources on yourself? Do others know you to finish the assignments you've been giving or do you quit? Journal your thoughts as the Holy Spirit reveals.

Daily Devotional Day 9 - "The Fruits of Meekness and Temperance"

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Meekness depicts the attitude or demeanor of a person who is forbearing, patient, humble, calm, non-threatening and slow to respond in anger. Meekness describes one who remains in control of himself in the face of insults or injuries. It is a humble non-threatening demeanor that derives from a position of strength and authority, and is useful in calming another's anger. Meekness is NOT A QUALITY THAT IS WEAK AND PASSIVE; meekness is actually power under control. When the Holy Spirit is producing meekness in your life, you are controlled even in difficult circumstances. The flesh loves to rage out of control; however, when the Holy Spirit is producing the fruit of meekness in you, you will become controlled and careful in your responses. You will respond instead of react.

Temperance means in control; power over one's self; behaving well. It is often translated as self-control as it means also to restrain one's emotions, actions, and desires, and to be in harmony with the Will of God. A person with temperance maintains a life of moderation and control (restraint, discipline, balance). Temperance is doing God's Will not living for one's self rather being led by the Spirit.

Questions for you to consider:

1. When things are irritating or upsetting to you, would you say that you are calm and collected or angry and out of control?
2. Honestly look at your life – do you have power over yourself?
3. Do you submit to the Spirit or does the flesh have control? When your flesh desires something, do you allow it to have its way?

Activating the Word:

Are there areas you think you need more self-control? Think about this question and make a list of those areas in your life that need to be more controlled by the Holy Spirit. Journal your results.

Daily Devotional Day 10 - "Answer the Call"

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

There is nothing more frustrating for a parent to call their child's name and the child does not answer. The parent continues to call until the child finally responds and acknowledge the call of their parent.

God, our Father, is calling us. His desire is that we hear His call and answer by obeying His Word (following Him). Fasting enables us to block out the distractions of the world and tune in to voice of the Father. As we fast, we deny our flesh and when we deny our flesh we become more sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit and can hear His voice more clearly. If you open your heart and your spiritual ears, you will hear what the Holy Spirit is saying so that you can follow His leading and obtain His best for your life.

If you desire to intimately know Him, seek Him first and deny yourself (disregard, lose sight of and forget yourself and your own interests) so that you can follow Him. You must have ears that are open and willing to receive, a heart to obey His instructions and a willingness to yield to His instructions. The more we discipline our flesh and feed our spirit, the stronger our spiritual discernment will become so that we will hear the voice of our Father, know Him and ultimately follow Him (***Proverbs 3:5-7***).

Continue to prepare yourself to hear the Lord by denying your flesh, fasting from the distractions of the world so you can answer His call.

Questions for you to consider:

1. Were you obedient to your parents?
2. If someone asked you, "do you know how to hear the voice of God?" – What would your response be?
3. When you hear God's voice, how do you respond?

Activating the Word:

God desires to speak to us and direct us; the issue at times is our inability to stop and hear Him. As you are fasting, your ability to hear God should become clearer as you deny your flesh, fasting from the distractions of the world so you can answer His call. Spend some time today asking the Lord to speak to you and journal what He says.

Daily Devotional Day 11 - "From Unbelief to Belief"

Matthew 17:18-21 "And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, that if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Prayer and fasting changes us and our hearts as well as our ability to believe God and rest in what He has said. When we come into agreement with the Word of God and deny our flesh and strengthen our spirit man, boldness, confidence and faith increases. Our doubts and fears are replaced with the assurance that the Word of God is true and nothing will be impossible to them that believe.

During this time of fasting and prayer, ask God to strengthen your heart to fully believe Him and believe His Word. Place your doubts before the cross and renew your mind – replace the doubts with the Word. As your heart becomes full of God's Word, your trust in God will develop and you will grow in your faith and be able to stand in the evil day.

It is amazing how our spirit man will grow when we drown out all the outside interference and concentrate primarily on growing in our relationship with Him who increases our faith and our dependency upon Him.

Questions for you to consider:

1. Are there areas you struggle to believe God's promises?
2. Are there things the Lord has spoken to you before that have not come to pass? Do you believe it's too late?
3. Have you ever struggled with unbelief?

Activating the Word:

Be honest with yourself and with God as it relates to your belief in His Word. If there are promises that you struggle to believe, speak those to the Lord and ask Him to help your unbelief. Journal your thoughts.

Daily Devotional Day 12 - "Be Careful of Distractions"

Luke 10:38-42, "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Did you know it is possible to be in the presence of the Lord and still be distracted? Mary and Martha were both in the presence of the Lord yet Martha was distracted with much serving. A distraction is a well-conceived, well thought out plan designed to draw you off your present course. In analyzing the word distraction, we must look at the root word tract. God sends us into the world with purpose and a course we must follow (tract). However, the enemy's goal is to dis tract us from our purpose; take us off track. Any train that is not on the track causes a great deal of chaos and disorder.

God does not send distractions, Satan does. God would never distract us or take us off the course that He preordained for us before the foundation of the world. During this time of fasting, separate from all of the convenient tools that so easily distract us from quality time with the Lord. It is okay to not surf the internet or utilize social media for a time of consecration before the Lord. It is okay to not spend hours chatting online or talking on the telephone about things that do not propel you forward rather become obstacles in your journey.

Martha believed that her serving was necessary; she was tending to details to host the Master. However, the most important thing was to spend time sitting at the feet of Jesus receiving strength and edification from being in His presence. Do not allow distractions today to take you off course, stay tracked up!

Questions for you to consider:

1. Has there been a time you were walking with the Lord and "something" happened to change your walk? How did you respond?
2. Has your excitement or commitment to being with the Lord changed at all? In what way?
3. What are some distractions you've had to deal with?

Activating the Word:

Distractions are plans the enemy comes up with to take us off track. Spend some time asking the Lord to identify any distractions that may have been sent to take you off track that you weren't aware of. Ask the Holy Spirit to forgive you, cleanse you and lead you back on track. Journal your thoughts.

Daily Devotional Day 13 - "Winning the War Within"

Romans 7:18-20 NLT, "And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is a sin living in me that does it."

Did you know there is an internal war going on inside of a believer each and every day? This war is between our spirit which is born again and our flesh which contains sin. Paul describes this so well in this passage – we desire to do the right thing, but in our own efforts, we don't have the power to and we mess up.

Thank God that we do not have to rely on our own strengths to help us make right decisions and do the right thing. We don't have to be controlled by our sinful nature and end up doing the things that we don't want to do. But the only way we can be successful and win the war within is to yield to the Holy Spirit and rely on the strength of the greater One within.

When we are facing trials and temptations, we must rely on God's power working within to guide us to do the right things. When we are Born Again, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our hearts and gives us a desire to do what is pleasing to the Lord. The Holy Spirit always wants to do what is right and pleasing to the Lord. He always wants to be in fellowship with the Father. Instead of leaning to your own understanding, trust the Holy Spirit and allow Him to direct your path so that you will win the war within.

Questions for you to consider:

1. Are there areas you have struggled with that you just can't seem to overcome?
2. What does yielding to the Spirit mean to you?
3. What are some key strategies for winning a battle?

Activating the Word:

In reviewing some of the key strategies you identified in question 3, think about how you can implement them in your spiritual battle. What did Paul mean in Romans 7:25? How can you activate this in your own life?

Daily Devotional Day 14 - "Listen to Jesus"

Matthew 17:5b, 8 NLT, "This is My dearly loved Son, who brings Me great joy, Listen to Him" ...And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.

Jesus took Peter, James and John up to the mountain where He was transfigured into His glorified state. These three disciples were privy to what was to come because of Jesus. Prior to this moment, God's people related to God through the law (Moses) or through the prophets (Elijah). After this, Peter wanted to build three tabernacles – one for Moses, one for Elijah and one for Jesus. This was not the plan God had, when they looked up they only saw Jesus.

It is clear that God has a new plan; a plan that no longer would His children have to go through anyone other than Jesus to get to Him. He is the One that we are to hear, He is the One that we are to listen to. God's grace is freely given to those who have received new life in Christ. There is nothing we can do to earn God's grace; it is a free gift that we must simply receive. Seek God today and ask Him to give you a greater revelation of Jesus and the grace of God so that your heart will be fixed on who you are – a child of the Most High God.

Questions for you to consider:

1. What does the grace of God mean to you?
2. Do you believe there are things you must do to receive God's grace?
3. Do you believe there are things you can do for God's grace to be taken away from you?

Activating the Word:

Do you believe God's grace is really enough for you? When we believe His grace is enough, we believe that every situation, every circumstance, every trial, every test that we face, we will overcome. Why? Because His grace is enough. Spend some time with the Lord and evaluate times (situations, circumstances, tests) that caused you to feel discouragement/doubt. Ask God "Is your grace enough for me in this situation?" Journal your thoughts.

Daily Devotional Day 15 - "Yes Jesus Loves You"

1 John 4:19, "We love him, because he first loved us."

Yes, God loves YOU just the way you are. Every person has a desire to be loved and the enemy does not want you to know that God loves you. The devil has deceived so many people into thinking that God could not possibly love them. The truth is you are loved and special to your Heavenly Father.

During this time of fasting and consecration, ask the Lord to fill your heart with His love. As you ask Him, make a decision to open your heart and receive His love. He loved us first, when we were yet in sin. He loved us first when we were still disobedient and stubborn. Because He loved us when we were "unlovely", it should be easy for us to love Him.

Certainly, a Perfect Father will take care of His children. Seeing that we have a Father in the heavens that has His eye on the sparrow, we should walk in confidence knowing that no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper. When this kind of truth is known and accepted it makes our Christian journey much more tolerable.

We should sing with joy and with a loud voice:

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me for the Bible tells me so!

Questions for you to consider:

1. Do you believe there is anything you can do for God not to love you?
2. Can you think of one person who has loved you with real love at some point in your life?
3. What kind of impact did that real "no-strings-attached" kind of love have on you?

Activating the Word:

Ask the Lord to speak to you regarding His love towards you. Ask Him to guide you as you write a love letter from Him to you. Write down the things God speaks to your heart about His love for you. Make your love letter personal by writing the letter to yourself from the Lord.

Daily Devotional Day 16 - "Firm Faith"

James 1:6, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering..."

When you pray, do you expect God to answer? When we pray according to the Word of God, we should have an earnest expectation that God will do what He said He would do (**1 John 5:14-15**).

The enemy will come to persuade you that what you are praying for is impossible or will not happen for you. We must determine to pray in confidence and trust the promises of God will come to pass in our lives. James reminds us that when we waver, we do not have faith. When we are not stable in our faith then we will receive nothing from God. God never wavers in His commitment nor His love for us, He is sure and firm. We can trust Him completely and always. Whatever has caused you to doubt, cast down those thoughts and make a decision that you will be firm in your faith. You will not doubt but trust that Your Father can and will come through.

Questions for you to consider:

1. Has there ever been a time in your life when you were so filled with fear that you couldn't pray in faith even though you said all the right words?
2. How important is it for you to pray with an earnest expectation?
3. What are some things that causes you to not remain stable in faith?

Activating the Word:

When you read today's devotional, can you list two things you have learned regarding firm faith? Does anyone come to mind that you can share these truths with in order to encourage him or her in their faith? Why not share it with them? Journal your responses.

Daily Devotional Day 17 - "Endure the Process"

John 15:1-2, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Branches that are not fruitful are removed because God is not wasteful. There is nothing that He created that does not give. The sun, the moon, the water, fire, grass, birds, bees, etc they all give. When we as people stop giving, we cease to function in our created role and stand in jeopardy of being removed by God.

During this time of fasting, you are being prepared to be more fruitful for the Lord. Don't succumb to temptation and quit. This process is one that may be challenging but will prove to be of great benefit if you would endure the process and overcome the challenge. It is human nature to take the path of least resistance. We have a natural inclination to always look for the easy way out. There is nothing easy about denying your flesh, your flesh will cry out for what it wants. Even though it is not easy, it can be done with a made up mind. After you make up your mind, you must then control your flesh.

Endure the process, you will be better later!

Questions for you to consider:

1. What does it mean to abide in Jesus?
2. What are some ways you "give"?
3. What are some ways you can give more?

Activating the Word:

Have you ever struggled with being patient waiting on the Lord to bring you into a season of fruitfulness? When you finally arrived at that season, did you believe that was it? If you haven't arrived at that season, do you believe it is coming? Have you given up? Reflect on these questions then write down your observations.

Daily Devotional Day 18 - "Reasons to Endure Pruning"

John 15:1-2, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Jesus states that when we bear fruit for God that we are pruned so that we can bear even more fruit. This is the pruning process that every believer must endure. As humans, we prefer to take the path of least resistance; we look for the easy way out. Pruning is very painful. The Greek word **purgeth** used in the text is **kathairo** which means to cleanse from filth and impurities which is often done by fire and by cutting.

The Word of God cuts both ways and sometimes we are being cut in order to bear more fruit and it may not feel good but it will work for our good. This is why it is important to attend a good local church where the Word of God is preached without compromise.

Here are four reasons for pruning:

1. **Pruning trains the believer.** Discipline is accomplished through pruning. You cannot be a disciple without discipline.
2. **Pruning maintains the health of the believer.** Things that are not kept clean become dirty and contaminated and eventually become sick so they wither away and die.
3. **Pruning improves the productivity of the believer.** The healthier you are, the more productive you will be.
4. **Pruning restricts the wrong growth.** Cancer grows but its not good growth. Your head should never outgrow your heart. When this happens, it is the wrong kind of growth. Pruning will keep your head small and your heart large.

Questions for you to consider:

1. Can you think of a time you have been pruned by the Lord?
2. What was your attitude like during the process?
4. What are some ways you overcame your flesh crying out during the process? What can you do differently next time to overcome even more?

Activating the Word:

Think back on a difficult time in your life. Now that you understand the process, can you see the Lord at work? How was He working? What can you point to that proves He was with you? Journal your thoughts.

Daily Devotional Day 19 - "Heart Surgery"

Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me."

David, the writer of this psalm, is crying out to God for a clean heart. Something has happened to the heart he had when God called him a man after His own heart. David found himself guilty of adultery and murder thus having a contaminated heart.

Just as the heart is critical to our natural body's survival and health, so it is even more critical for our spiritual life. Success with God lies in the condition of the heart. Healthy hearts function and produce a life of peace, productivity and prosperity.

David is asking God to create in him a clean heart. He wants a changed heart, the one that he has now is not right. The Hebrew word clean is **tahowr** it means to be without contaminates, to be pure both morally and ethically. David knows that the only way he could carry out such things against God is that he has allowed his heart to be contaminated by lust. He is asking God to do open heart surgery and take out all contaminates.

During this time of prayer and fasting, give your heart to the Master Surgeon for examination and whatever surgery is needed so that you can keep your heart clean.

Questions for you to consider:

1. What are you doing on a daily basis to keep your heart clean before the Lord?
2. What are some things that contaminate your heart?
3. What things are filling your heart right now?

Activating the Word:

Spend some time allowing the Lord to reveal contaminates that may be in your heart. Are there areas the Lord has performed surgery on your heart since the beginning of this fast? Journal your thoughts.

Daily Devotional Day 20 - "Heart Maintenance"

Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me."

There things that we must do to keep our hearts clean and free from contaminants.

7 Ways to Maintain a Clean Heart:

1. Abide in Truth (stay in the presence of the Lord). It is difficult to leave God's presence with an unclean heart.
2. Take a bath every day. We must bathe in the Word of God. How would we smell in the natural if we went a week without bathing in natural water? It would be difficult for people to stay around us. When our hearts are not clean, we smell bad and no one can stay around us for long.
3. Count the costs before you make the choice. What is this decision going to do to my heart and my relationship with God? Will it strengthen or weaken?
4. Resist temptation. Submit to God, resist the devil and he **WILL** flee from you. David got into trouble because he did not first submit then resist.
5. Stay focused on your assignment. Distractions are not from God. Distractions are well thought out, well-conceived plans designed to draw you out and steal your heart from God.
6. Guard your heart as if your life depended on it because it does. The issues of life flow out of your heart.
7. Give. Giving is a test of your heart. The rich young ruler's heart was tested in Mark 10:17; he could not follow Jesus because his heart had been corrupted by what he possessed. He chose his possessions over Jesus. Our hearts will always follow our treasure. Giving keeps a clean heart rejoicing.

Questions for you to consider:

1. In reviewing the list above, which one(s) speak most to you?
2. What is God saying to you about these areas?
3. How will you respond?

Activating the Word:

Heart maintenance is not something we do once a year or even once a week on Sundays. It is something we should do every day. Spend time today asking the Lord to perform maintenance on your heart focusing on these 7 areas in this devotional. Journal your thoughts.

Daily Devotional Day 21 - "What's Next"

Luke 4:1-2, 14-15 NIV, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry... Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised Him."

Fasting and prayer are essential to receiving a clear vision for God's calling and assignment for our lives. Usually at the end of a time of fasting and prayer, a person becomes aware of instructions from the Lord and confident in what He has spoken. We have spent 20 days seeking the Lord through fasting and prayer, we believe God has revealed to you the answer to the question – What's Next. Follow in obedience to what He said, do not worry about the details. The Holy Spirit will reveal to you on a need to know basis all that is required for you to accomplish your assignment. Follow Him with your whole heart and decide that you will not turn around but will continue to follow the Lord every day of your life.

The Holy Spirit will empower you and give you the ability to accomplish His plans and His purposes for your life. Do not get ahead of Him, follow Him wherever He leads. When we are full of the Holy Spirit, we are led by the Spirit. We must always remember, it is He that does the work within us. Without Him, we can do nothing.

Get busy serving. ***Matthew 20:25-28, "But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."***

Everything that God created was created to give. We have been gifted by God to serve. The above scripture was spoken by Jesus because two of his disciples wanted to occupy a high position in His Kingdom. His response to them speaks volumes to us today concerning God's attitude and position related to serving others. The greatest of us in God's eyes are those who are the greatest servers. You do not have to have the gift of service in order to serve great. We have all been gifted to serve.

Our service is not limited to the four walls of the local church, find your purpose and make a decision to serve God with your gift and make an impact for the Glory of God!

Congratulations – You completed the 21 day time of prayer and fasting! Don't stop seeking the Lord just because the 21 days of prayer and fasting are over. Make seeking the Lord a lifestyle!