

AWESOME GOD

PRAYER, FASTING —
& CONSECRATION —
JANUARY 11–16, 2021 —



AWESOME GOD



EVERY NATION



EVERY NATION

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EveryNation.org/Fasting #ENfast2021

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יהוה
יהוה שלום
אל הועי
אל הועי
יהוה ג' ירה
אל שדי
ישוע

PREPARATION FOR THE FAST

WHY FAST?

Fasting is a spiritual tool God uses to advance his kingdom, change the destiny of nations, spark revival, and bring victory in people's lives. Every Nation churches and campus ministries begin each new year with five days of prayer and fasting to humble ourselves before God, consecrate ourselves to him for the upcoming year, and corporately agree for breakthroughs.

Jesus fasted.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. MATTHEW 4:1-2

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. LUKE 4:14

Jesus knew he was going to need spiritual strength to fulfill his purposes. Fasting makes us spiritually strong and prepares us to do God's work.

Fasting is an act of humility and consecration.

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. EZRA 8:21

As we humble ourselves through prayer and fasting, we receive God's grace and have access to his heart.

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 natural cravings and worldly distractions, we become more sensitive to God's voice. Then we are better able to focus on God and submit to his will.

Fasting brings revival.

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

Throughout history, God has brought revival and delivered nations from destruction in response to prayer and fasting. Fasting helps us prevail in prayer and intercession.

Fasting is healthy.

Fasting cleanses your digestive system from toxins. Doctors consider fasting a cure for certain allergies and diseases. The discipline of fasting helps break unhealthy addictions in our lives.

PLANNING YOUR FAST

Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." JOSHUA 3:5

Pray—Spend time reading the Bible before the fast. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in your prayers. On pages 7–9, write down your faith goals and specific prayer requests for your family, friends, church, and nation.

Commit—Pray about the kind of fast you will undertake and commit to it ahead of time. Record your plan on page 5. Ask God for grace to help you follow through with your decisions.

Act—Start eating smaller portions a few days before the fast. Avoid food high in sugar and fat. Plan to limit physical and social activities for the week of the fast. Ask someone to be your prayer partner throughout the fast and have that person sign page 7.

NOTE: Consult a physician, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, or taking medication. If your situation does not allow you to do a full fast, determine what will work best for you.

WHILE FASTING

[Jesus] answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” MATTHEW 4:4

Focus—Set aside time to work through the devotionals. Be ready to respond to God’s Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Pray—Join at least one prayer meeting in your local church. Intercede for your family, church, pastors, nation, campuses, and missions throughout the week.

Replenish—During mealtime, read the Bible and pray. Drink plenty of water and rest as much as you can. Be ready for temporary bouts of physical weakness and mental annoyances like impatience and irritability.

BREAKING THE FAST

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. 1 JOHN 5:14–15

Eat—Reintroduce solid food gradually. Your body will need time to adjust to a normal diet. Start with fruits, juices, and salad, then add more vegetables. Eat small portions throughout the day.

Pray—Don’t stop praying! Trust God’s faithfulness and timing. Carry your newfound passion for God throughout the year. Be in faith for God to answer your prayers.

MY PLAN

Day 1

FASTING OPTIONS:

- ☐ Water only
- ☐ Liquid only
- ☐ One meal only
- ☐ Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

Day 3

FASTING OPTIONS:

- ☐ Water only
- ☐ Liquid only
- ☐ One meal only
- ☐ Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

Day 5

FASTING OPTIONS:

- ☐ Water only
- ☐ Liquid only
- ☐ One meal only
- ☐ Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

Day 2

FASTING OPTIONS:

- ☐ Water only
- ☐ Liquid only
- ☐ One meal only
- ☐ Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

Day 4

FASTING OPTIONS:

- ☐ Water only
- ☐ Liquid only
- ☐ One meal only
- ☐ Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

I AM THANKFUL TO GOD FOR...

ANSWERED PRAYERS

List highlights, answered prayers, and lessons learned in 2020.

IN 2021, 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 EDUCATION/CAREER

Excellence • Promotion ...

MY MINISTRY

Small Group Growth • Salvation of Colleagues and Classmates ...

*“If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done
for them by my Father in heaven.”* MATTHEW 18:19

My Prayer Partner: _____

I AM COMMITTING TO PRAY FOR...

NAME

REQUEST(S)

I AM COMMITTING TO PRAY FOR...

MY CHURCH

Church Leadership • Provision • Discipleship Ministry...

MY COMMUNITY

Campuses and Educational Institutions • Local Government •
Outreach Opportunities...

MY NATION

Government Officials • Spiritual Revival • Economic Prosperity • Peace
and Order...

EVERY NATION
CURRENTLY
HAS WORK IN
85 NATIONS.

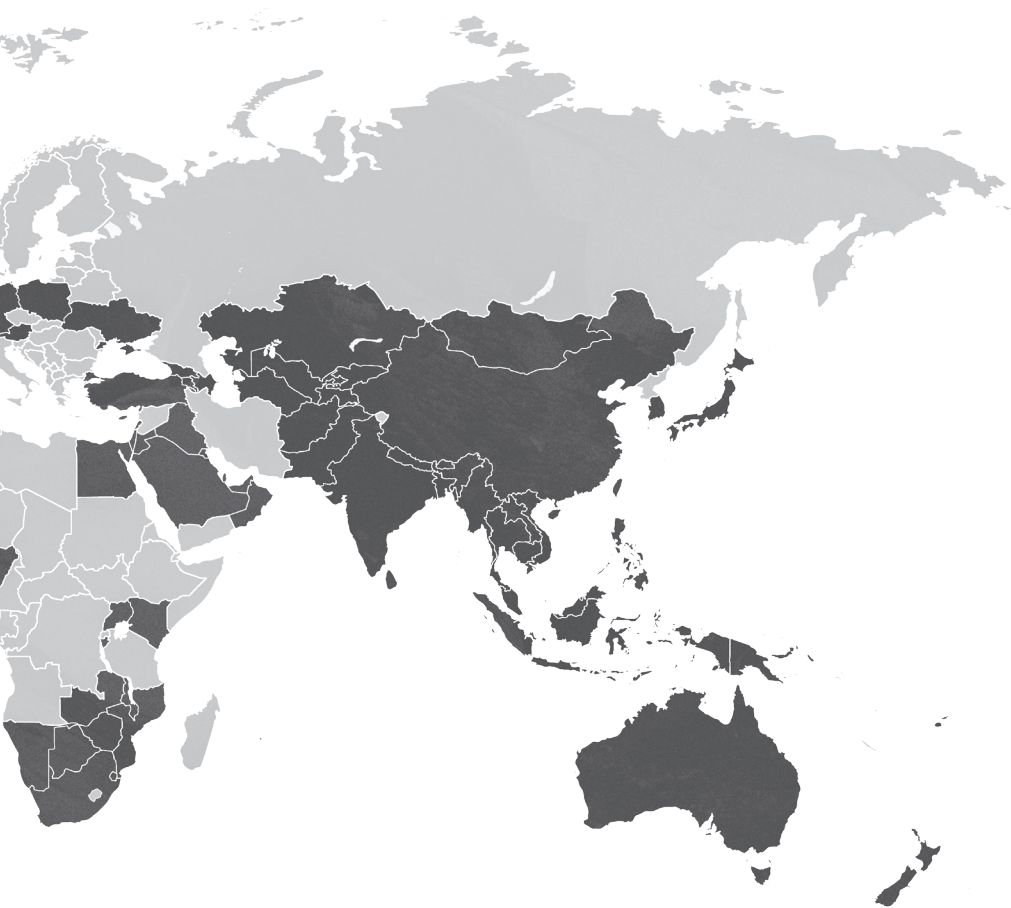
CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR THE
REMAINING 110 NATIONS
AND BELIEVE GOD FOR OPEN
DOORS TO PLANT MORE
CHURCHES.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Afghanistan | Bulgaria |
| Albania | Burkina Faso |
| Algeria | Cabo Verde |
| Andorra | Cameroon |
| Angola | Central African Republic |
| Antigua and Barbuda | Chad |
| Argentina | Chile |
| Bahamas | Comoros |
| Bahrain | Congo |
| Barbados | Costa Rica |
| Belarus | Côte d'Ivoire |
| Belize | Cuba |
| Benin | Czech Republic |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Democratic Republic
of the Congo |
| Brazil | |



■ Nations with Every Nation Churches
■ Unreached nations

Denmark	Guyana	Mali	Russia	Somalia
Djibouti	Haiti	Malta	Rwanda	South Sudan
Dominica	Hungary	Marshall Islands	Sain Kitts and Nevis	Sudan
Ecuador	Iceland	Mauritania	Saint Lucia	Suriname
Egypt	Iraq	Mauritius	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Switzerland
El Salvador	Israel	Moldova	Samoa	Syria
Equatorial Guinea	Italy	Monaco	San Marino	Tanzania
Eritrea	Jamaica	Montenegro	Sao Tome and Principe	Trinidad and Tobago
Estonia	Kiribati	Morocco	Senegal	Tunisia
Ethiopia	Latvia	Nauru	Serbia	Turkmenistan
Finland	Lebanon	Nicaragua	Seychelles	Tuvalu
Gambia	Libya	Niger	Sierra Leone	Uruguay
Greece	Liechtenstein	North Korea	Slovakia	Vanuatu
Grenada	Lithuania	Norway	Slovenia	Vatican City
Guatemala	Luxembourg	Palau	Solomon Islands	Yemen
Guinea	Macedonia	Palestine		
Guinea-Bissau	Madagascar	Paraguay		



57 ACTIVE CHURCH PLANTS

PRAY FOR MORE CHURCHES TO BE PLANTED.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. PSALM 2:8

Pray for our new church plants as they make disciples, meet the needs of their communities, and share the good news of the gospel in new cities.

<i>Armenia</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Romania</i>
<i>Australia</i>	<i>Jordan</i>	<i>Scotland</i>
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	<i>Kenya</i>	<i>Singapore</i>
<i>Bangladesh</i>	<i>Laos</i>	<i>South Africa</i>
<i>Bhutan</i>	<i>Macau</i>	<i>Sri Lanka</i>
<i>Brunei</i>	<i>Malawi</i>	<i>Sweden</i>
<i>Burundi</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>Taiwan</i>
<i>Cambodia</i>	<i>Maldives</i>	<i>Tajikistan</i>
<i>Canada</i>	<i>Mauritius</i>	<i>Thailand</i>
<i>China</i>	<i>Mongolia</i>	<i>Timor-Leste</i>
<i>Croatia</i>	<i>Mozambique</i>	<i>Tonga</i>
<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>Myanmar</i>	<i>Turkey</i>
<i>Fiji</i>	<i>Nepal</i>	<i>Uganda</i>
<i>France</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>United States</i>
<i>Georgia</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>Uzbekistan</i>
<i>Honduras</i>	<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>Vietnam</i>
<i>India</i>	<i>Panama</i>	<i>Zambia</i>
<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Philippines</i>	
<i>Iran</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	

CAMPUS MINISTRY

“... therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” MATTHEW 9:38

PRAY:

- For new students to be engaged with the gospel this year
- For wisdom for campus missionaries and churches as they evangelize and disciple college students
- For favor with university faculty to engage students
- For peace for students who have been affected by COVID-19
- For provision for students who have been affected by COVID-19
- For wisdom for campus missionaries as they find new ways to minister to students



9:38 Challenge: Set your alarm for 9:38 a.m. (or p.m. if you prefer). Every time your alarm rings, take a quick moment to pray that God would send campus missionaries and church planters to boldly proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth.

GOD IS GREAT AND GOOD

ISAIAH 57:15

*For thus says the One who is high and lifted up,
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly,
and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*

Additional Reading: Jeremiah 10:6; Revelation 4:11; Psalm 106:1; Psalm 119:68
(Optional: Luke 18:19)

In the classic children’s book series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the reader is often reminded that Aslan is not a tame lion. When the eldest Pevensie girl, Susan, is told that Aslan is a lion, she says, “I’d thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe?” The friendly Mr. Beaver responds, “Safe? ... who said anything about safe? ’Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

Like Susan, who had misconceptions about Aslan, we often have misconceptions about God. A lot of these misconceptions arise when we downplay either God’s greatness or his goodness. When we talk about God’s greatness, we refer to God’s attributes that belong to God alone—such as infinity and omnipresence. When we talk about God’s goodness, we refer to

God's attributes that humans can also have—such as mercy and kindness. If you focus only on God's greatness, you may have a hard time believing that he loves you, especially under challenging circumstances. But if you focus only on God's goodness, you may start to think of him as a "tame lion" who lacks power.

In Isaiah 57, the prophet rebukes the Israelites for their unfaithfulness. Instead of worshiping the one true God, they've turned to the powerless gods of surrounding nations. The people don't remember their great and good God, for if they did, they could never worship another.

Isaiah had a profound revelation of God's greatness, often giving him the name, the Holy One of Israel. He reminds the people that God is the All-Mighty who dwells in the high and holy place and inhabits eternity. But Isaiah doesn't stop there. He then reminds the people that the Lord is the one who is with the lowly in spirit. Not only is he a great God, awesome and holy, but he is good, reviving those who come to him in humility and repentance. Surely a God such as this is worthy of all of our worship.

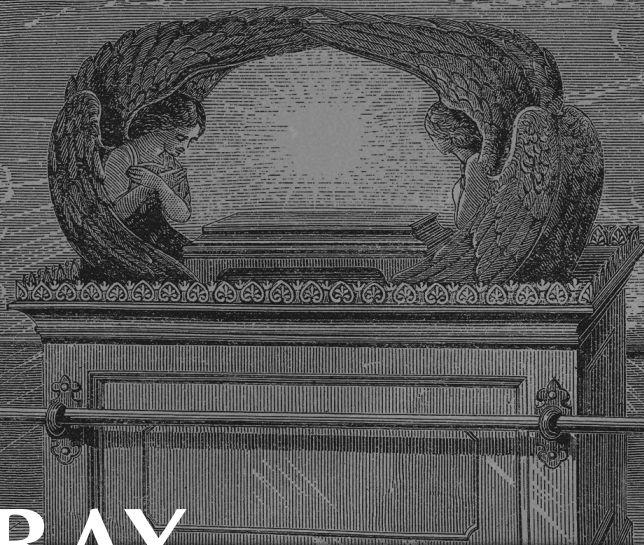
But so often, we're like the Israelites. We forget how awesome our great and good God is. We allow other people, objects, ideas, goals, dreams—the list goes on and on—to steal the worship only he deserves. This week, we will be exploring the attributes of God in two categories: his greatness and goodness. In considering his greatness, we'll learn that he is transcendent, unchanging, and sovereign. In looking at his goodness, we'll examine how God is just, long-suffering, and kind. As we meditate on God's greatness and goodness this week, may the Holy Spirit reveal our misconceptions and hidden idols, that we may redirect all of our worship to the only one who is worthy.

**BECAUSE GOD IS GREAT AND GOOD, HE IS
WORTHY OF OUR WORSHIP.**

Reflect

Which aspect of God’s character is harder for you to believe—his greatness or his goodness? Why do you think that is?

List all the reasons you believe God is worthy of your worship.



PRAY

*For thus says the One who is high and lifted up,
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly,
and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*

ISAIAH 57:15

O God in heaven, there is none like you. You are great, mighty, and powerful, yet you are good, kind, and just. None of your characteristics overshadow the others. You are worthy of my worship, not only because of what you have done for me, but because of who you are. You are an awesome God. Lord, I pray that this week your Holy Spirit would teach me to better understand your greatness and your goodness. Open my eyes to see you at work in my life and in the world around me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

GOD IS TRANSCENDENT

EXODUS 15:11

*“Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”*

Additional Reading: Deuteronomy 3:24; 2 Samuel 7:22; Ephesians 4:4–6; Hebrews 1:3

Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa, is one of the most iconic mountains in the world. While Table Mountain is beautiful from below, the views from the top are even more breathtaking—Lion’s Head, Camp’s Bay, the Twelve Apostles. There’s nothing like standing on a mountain peak, looking down at the world around you. But at some point, we all have to leave the mountain peak and make the long trek back down to reality.

Thankfully, the same is not true for our awesome God. As Creator, God is transcendent. That means that he is distinct from everything else in creation, surpassing the laws of nature. He dwells in the high and holy place, and there is no one and nothing in the world like him. He exercises control and authority in all of creation, and the miraculous becomes possible.

In Exodus 15, Moses and the people of Israel lift a song of praise to the Lord after he miraculously parted the Red Sea and delivered them from the

hands of Pharaoh. After seeing God's transcendent power on full display, they sing, "Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?" In defeating the Egyptians, the Lord also showed that he was mightier than the Egyptians' gods. There is no obstacle or opposition too big for our awesome God!

As we begin this week of prayer and fasting, you face your own obstacles and opposition to your faith. You may be praying for the salvation of a loved one, for healing for you or someone close to you, or financial breakthrough. Or you may be dealing with trials, temptations, and testings in your faith. You're holding onto God and crying out for a miracle. Be in faith. Because God is above his creation, he can part a sea, make manna rain from heaven, and cause water to spring forth from a rock. Through him, we can trust that miracles can and do happen.

BECAUSE GOD IS TRANSCENDENT, MIRACLES ARE POSSIBLE.

Notes

Reflect

Are you currently facing an obstacle or opposition to your faith? What is it?

Do you find it easy or hard to believe that God can do a miracle in your life?
How can meditating on his transcendence increase your faith?



PRAY

*“Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”*

EXODUS 15:11

Heavenly Father, you are exalted in the heavens yet near to your children. I rest in the fact that you are transcendent and powerful. Through you, anything is possible. The Israelites saw your power on display when you parted the Red Sea, and I ask that you would move through the difficulties I face today. You alone are awesome in glorious deeds, and I thank you that you hear my prayers. In Jesus' name, amen.

GOD IS UNCHANGING

HEBREWS 6:17

So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath.

Additional Reading: Numbers 23:19; Psalm 102:25–27; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17
(Optional: Malachi 3:6)

Duct tape was developed during World War II as a waterproof, rubber-based adhesive. Since then, duct tape has garnered a reputation for its durability. It's such a durable material that it's now commonly used by DIY crafters to make anything from formal dresses to canoes. In the 2015 movie, *The Martian*, Matt Damon's character even uses duct tape for repairs on Mars! Duct tape has its reputation because of its constancy and reliability. Its makers promise us that it is waterproof and durable, and they deliver—every time.

Today, we're exploring God's unchangeability—his constancy. God's unchangeability refers to the fact that his character and eternal purposes don't change. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is constant and reliable. This fact is very comforting in a world full of change and

uncertainty. Because God doesn't change, he can be trusted and relied upon absolutely.

The author of Hebrews says that when God desired to show the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath. The author goes on to say that part of God's unchanging nature is that it's impossible for him to lie. Not only can we trust him absolutely, but we can also trust his Word. If God said it, he will do it. If he promised it, it will come to pass.

While the Bible makes it clear that God's character and purposes are constant, we also see that God responds to our actions, such as our prayers and our faith. But this doesn't put the pressure on us, as if we need to pray just the right way or muster up enough faith from our willpower. Instead, a robust faith is possible because of the constancy of God's character and the trustworthiness of his Word. Pray with confidence this week, knowing that God's response will be based on his unchanging character and eternal purpose.

BECAUSE GOD IS UNCHANGING, OUR FAITH HAS A FIRM FOUNDATION.

Notes

Reflect

How does trusting in God’s unchanging character and Word help you to have a robust faith?

How will knowing that God will respond to you based on his unchanging character and eternal purpose impact the way you pray?



PRAY

So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath.

HEBREWS 6:17

Lord, you are a safe dwelling place for all generations. You do not lie or fail to keep your promises. Jesus, you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. Because you are unchanging, I give you my anxieties and trust that my life is in your perfect plan. I repent of when I have doubted and ask that you would grow my faith to trust you more. God, thank you for your constant faithfulness! In Jesus' name, amen.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN

JOB 42:2

*“I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”*

Additional Reading: Genesis 50:19–20; Daniel 4:34–35; Romans 8:28

If you're a parent, you've probably had to tell your child to stay away from the stove or fire. If you have a curious child, they probably asked you why. You try to explain, but they don't understand your reasoning. Eventually, you resort to, “Because I said so.”

The book of Job follows the story of a righteous man's attempts to grapple with his intense and seemingly senseless suffering. Finally, in chapter 38, God shows up and speaks to Job. But he doesn't offer words of comfort or answers to his questions like we might imagine. Instead, Job gets the equivalent of a parent's “because I said so” when God says, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?”

Job humbles himself and acknowledges God's sovereignty, proclaiming that he can do all things and that his purposes can't be hindered. He understands that the Lord is the sovereign King of creation. Job then says in Job 42:2–3: “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of

yours can be thwarted. ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” In God’s sovereignty, Job’s trials were meant to purify his faith and produce endurance in his character. God remained compassionate, merciful, and in control through the suffering. After seeking comfort and answers for forty-two chapters, Job finds the real source of comfort—not in having his questions answered, but in repenting for his doubts and trusting the Lord.

Trusting in the Lord’s sovereignty is much easier said than done, especially when we are experiencing our own trials and pain. How can we trust that God has our best interest in mind in the middle of difficult circumstances? We can look to Jesus, the innocent sufferer, who suffered and died to save us. In the middle of overwhelming pain and sorrow, when God’s ways don’t make sense to us, we can look to the cross and be comforted that our sovereign God saw fit to send his Son to die that we might be saved.

BECAUSE GOD IS SOVEREIGN, THERE IS
COMFORT FOR TIMES OF TROUBLE.

Notes

Reflect

What trial are you currently facing? How can trusting in God’s sovereignty bring you comfort?

How does looking to the cross assure you that God always has your best interest in mind?



PRAY

*“I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”*

JOB 42:2

Father, you are Lord of lords and King of kings, sovereign over everything in the universe. Your kingdom knows no end and no limitation. No enemy can ruin what you have planned. In your sovereignty, you humbled yourself to die on the cross that I may be comforted and know your greatness. God, teach me how to humble myself before you. I release control over my own life and ask that you would grant me your peace. In Jesus' name, amen.

GOD IS JUST

DEUTERONOMY 32:4

*“The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he.”*

Additional Reading: Genesis 18:25; Romans 3:26; Revelation 15:3

The mimic octopus, first discovered off the coast of Indonesia in 1998, is a master of disguise. This tricky sea creature can change its shape, color, and movements to impersonate up to fifteen different predators. In today's devotional, we start looking at God's attributes of goodness. These are his attributes that we, as his people, are called to imitate. But unlike the mimic octopus, whose mimicry is only skin deep, our imitation must begin in the heart.

Our awesome God is righteous, meaning he is right in all he does and is the very standard of what is considered right and good. As a good God, he holds us to these same standards, punishing evil and rewarding good. When you think of God's justice, you may only think of his punishment toward the wicked, such as the destruction of Sodom in Genesis 19. But we should also

think of God’s defense of the widow and the orphan. Because he is just, he takes up the cause of the righteous and is the defender of the one treated unjustly. He is a good judge, fair in all his dealings, the defender of the defenseless, and the rewarder of the righteous.

Trusting in God’s justice can be challenging in a world full of so much injustice. If God is just, why do evil men prosper? Why do the righteous suffer? Why does injustice seem to prevail? But when these questions plague us, we can look to Jesus. He is the perfectly righteous One who suffered unjustly that we may be justified, or made righteous in God’s sight.

In the here and now, justice will often be incomplete. But that will not always be the case. When Jesus returns and brings the fullness of his kingdom, every wrong will be made right. Until then, we’re called to stand for what is right, be fair in all of our dealings, and defend those in our communities who suffer unjustly.

**BECAUSE GOD IS JUST, HE EXPECTS US
TO BE JUST IN ALL OUR RELATIONSHIPS.**

Notes

Reflect

Why is it necessary for a good God to be just? How does this attribute of God help you to understand what Jesus did for you on the cross?

What does it look like for you to be just in all your relationships?



PRAY

*“The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he.”*

DEUTERONOMY 32:4

Jesus, you are the only just and wise King. I look to your ways to understand righteousness and goodness. Even though we are broken people living in a broken world, you are able to bring justice where there is injustice. You have called me to be your hands and feet, to speak truth, to defend the defenseless, and to stand for what is right. Lord, open my eyes to those who need your healing. Guide my ways so that I would be your mouthpiece for justice in this world. In your name I pray, amen.

GOD IS LONG-SUFFERING

2 PETER 3:9

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Additional Reading: Exodus 34:5–9; Psalm 86:15; Joel 2:12–13; Romans 5:8

When we think of the term “long-suffering,” we usually simplify it to the word “patient.” We think that God’s patience is much like our own and that he is simply waiting. But long-suffering means so much more than patience—it means that God is slow to anger. On the other side of his patience is wrath.

Throughout the Old Testament, the people of Israel recount time and time again that the Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. They recognized just how deep sin is buried in the human heart yet how God perseveres in his goodness and love. The Israelites bounced back and forth between worshiping God and falling away from him. They saw firsthand just how slow he was to anger. His long-suffering nature does not last forever, but he endures longer than we can imagine.

We learn in 2 Peter 3 that God's promise of judgment and redemption will certainly come to pass. Even within that promise, he does not wish that anyone would suffer the fullness of his anger. God is just and merciful at the same time. As believers, we have benefited from God's undeserved goodness that leads us to salvation and through life transformation. He gives us the promise of the new heavens and the new earth.

We believers should not forget that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). He has been long-suffering for our sake and continues to endure for nonbelievers. While others who don't know Christ are still in their sin, we are called to bring the gospel hope to them. Repentance and forgiveness are gifts for everyone all over the world no matter their past or current situations. It's not our job to save others, but it is a privilege to share the truth of God's hope with them.

When we grasp what it means for God to be long-suffering, it changes how we approach non-Christians. We learn to persevere in those relationships as we generously share our faith and love.

**BECAUSE GOD IS LONG-SUFFERING,
WE CAN PERSEVERE IN SHARING THE
GOSPEL OF GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE.**

Notes

Reflect

What specific things in your life has God been long-suffering toward? How have you responded?

What would it look like for you to be long-suffering? How would that impact your relationships?



PRAY

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

2 PETER 3:9

God, you've displayed your patience in your Word and in my life. No one can show mercy and steadfast love like you do. Your example of patience is demonstrated on the cross where you died for the sins of everyone, even those who would not accept you. Even when I sin, you give me grace to repent because you are a good Father. I ask that your Holy Spirit would fill me with the gift of long-suffering to show patience to others in the same way you have been patient with me. In your name I pray, amen.

GOD IS KIND

EPHESIANS 2:7

...so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Additional Reading: Deuteronomy 7:7–8; Luke 6:35; Titus 3:4–5

(Optional: 1 Corinthians 13:4; Romans 2:4)

In the trilogy, *Lord of the Rings*, many characters stand out for their selfless deeds. But none so much as Samwise Gamgee, the humble and loyal Hobbit who follows Frodo into danger and certain death, helping his friend carry the heavy burden of the One Ring and accomplish his mission of destroying it. As they near the end of their journey, Samwise goes without water so that Frodo will have enough. And as Samwise lay sleeplessly one night, he says to himself, “I’ll get there, if I leave everything but my bones behind. And I’ll carry Mr. Frodo up myself, if it breaks my back and heart.” And that’s precisely what Samwise did, carrying Frodo when he had no more strength to walk. Samwise was a genuinely kind and selfless friend.

The same is true of God and his relationship with us. God’s love for us is kind. When we talk about God’s kindness, we’re referring to his benevolent concern for those he loves. What’s so amazing about his kindness is that it’s freely given, not earned or deserved. In fact, the Bible teaches us that

God shows his loving-kindness to those who don't deserve it! God set his loving-kindness upon Israel, though they were insignificant among the nations (Deuteronomy 7:7–8). He then led the Israelites with loving-kindness, despite their consistent unfaithfulness (Hosea 11:4). And because of his loving-kindness, while we were still sinners, he died for us (Romans 5:8). Because God loves us, he gives of himself, not for what he can gain, but for what we gain.

Despite our sin and unfaithfulness, God sent his Son to die for us so that we could be reconciled to him—so that we could have a relationship with this great and good God. We have done nothing to deserve this, but out of the overflow of his kindness, we have become the recipients of his grace. And for all eternity, the immeasurable riches of God's grace will be on full display for us to marvel at as we bask in his benevolent kindness toward us.

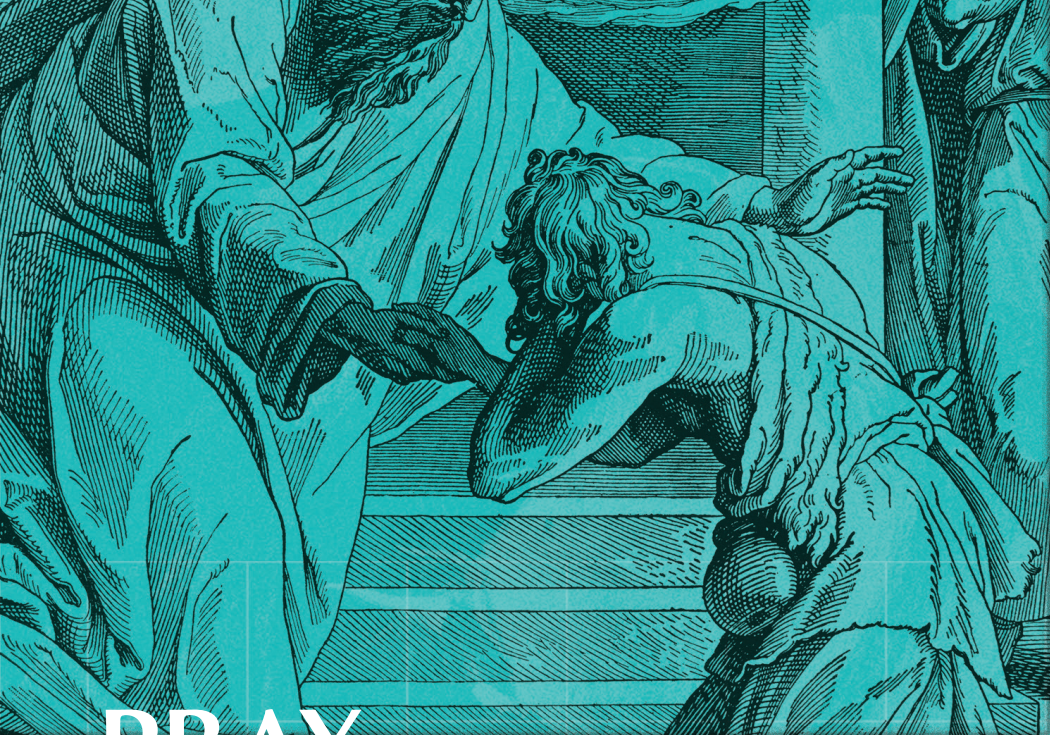
BECAUSE GOD IS KIND, WE HAVE AN ETERNITY OF BLESSINGS TO ANTICIPATE.

Notes

Reflect

Romans 2:4 says that “God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.” During this week, has God revealed anything in your life that you need to repent of? How does God’s kindness help you to repent and trust in him?

Does selfless kindness characterize your relationships? What would it look like for you to be kind in your relationships? How does the revelation of God’s kindness to us help you to express that kindness in your relationships with others?



PRAY

...so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

EPHESIANS 2:7

Lord, your loving-kindness has drawn me to you, to repentance, and into your promise of blessing. I have done nothing to deserve your kindness. But in Christ, you freely give me all that I need spiritually, physically, emotionally, financially, and more. Your kindness brings joy to my heart in every season. Thank you for your eternal grace. As you open my eyes to your kindness in my life, help me to show that kindness to others around me. In Jesus' name, amen.



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