



Abide

The Power and Beauty
of God's Word

Midyear Prayer, Fasting and Consecration
August 8-10, 2022

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VICTORY

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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. At the start and middle of each year, we take time to pray and fast in order to humble ourselves before God, seek Him, consecrate ourselves to Him, and corporately agree for breakthroughs.

Jesus fasted.

‘Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And 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.

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. In the succeeding pages, 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 and 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 share your faith goals and answered prayers with him or her. Continually pray for each other even after the fast.

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 devotional. 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

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.

¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵And 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**

My Plan

DAY 1

☐ Water only

☐ Liquid only

☐ One meal only

☐ Other:

Prayer meeting(s) to attend:

DAY 2

☐ Water only

☐ Liquid only

☐ One meal only

☐ Other:

Prayer meeting(s) to attend:

DAY 3

☐ 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 so far in 2022.

For the rest of 2022, I am seeking God and trusting Him in these areas . . .

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 Classmates and Colleagues

“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

The Word of God PRUNES

Read John 15:1–4

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”

A vinedresser is not just a typical farmer who plants crops and harvests. He must know all there is to know about grapes and how to nurture them. When Jesus spoke of the relationship between the vinedresser and the vine, we see the attitude of our Father in heaven towards us, His children. He takes care of us, knows us, and nurtures us.

When the vinedresser nurtures the vine and branches, he prunes and removes things that hinder the branches from bearing fruit. In the same way, when God prunes us, He also removes things from our lives that hinder our growth and fruitfulness. God prunes us with His word. John 15:3 assures us that God has cleansed us with His word. It is His word that shows us what Christlikeness is and which aspects of our lives need to change in order for us to be more like Christ.

As a response to God’s desire to have a loving and nurturing relationship with Him, we abide in Christ. This means having a relationship of dependence, trust, and submission. Being pruned can be painful and challenging, but our

continuing and enduring relationship with the Father through His Son gives us hope and enables us to be transformed.

Before we ever reached out to God, He reached out to us first. Yes, we abide in Him, but more importantly, He abides in us.

As we pray and fast this week, reflect on God's word through our devotional, and participate in our church's prayer meetings, we will look at different images that show us the power and beauty of God's word. We will see how God's word prunes and transforms us. Pruning can look different for all of us—God works in different areas of our lives and in different timings. Some pruning is immediate, but some take more time.

Together, let us be open to God's pruning *SO THAT WE WOULD BECOME MORE LIKE CHRIST EVERY DAY.*

What area of your life needs pruning from God? How will you respond to what He is doing in your life today?

What adjustments do you want to make in your relationship with God for the rest of the year? Why is this important to you?

Who are you standing with during this week of prayer and fasting? Spend a few minutes talking about how you can encourage one another this week.

¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." JOHN 15:1-4

Heavenly Father, thank You for initiating this loving relationship with You. May You reveal areas in my life that need to be pruned, and as You do so, I pray for the humility to receive and obey Your word. Teach me to abide in Your truth and walk in Your ways.

In Jesus' name, amen.

day 1

The Word of God Is Like RAIN

Read Isaiah 55:10–11

¹⁰“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, “so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

Additional Reading: Isaiah 55:1–9; Hebrews 12:1–3

Isaiah 55 depicts the condition of the Israelites after they turned their backs on God. They were in captivity, disheartened, and unsure of their future. But because of His great love for them, God was inviting them to return to Him. He wanted them to listen to and abide in Him. He was reminding them that they could find forgiveness, satisfaction, security, and restoration only in Him. He then assured them that He would reveal His thoughts and ways through His word.

Interestingly, God likens His word to rain, which does not return to the sky unless it has served its purpose of watering the earth. During the dry season, not much vegetation can grow or thrive on the hardened and parched ground. However, when it rains, the dry and dusty land gradually transforms into a

lush, fertile field. Plants begin sprouting and growing. Flowers on trees start producing seeds, which eventually bear fruit. These then become food for birds and other animals that come out to find shelter among them. The fields also produce a bountiful harvest for people to enjoy. Though all of these things take time to happen, the rain never returns to the atmosphere unless it has watered and transformed the dry land into a flourishing habitat.

Likewise, God's word will never return to Him until it has served its purpose. His word will nourish and satisfy our souls, especially at times when there is dryness and unfruitfulness. And as we continue to respond in faith by believing and abiding in His word, God will restore and transform our lives.

However, there may be times when the change is not apparent. We may feel like we are not growing or maturing and be tempted to revert to old habits or search for answers elsewhere. We may still have insecurities and worry, and we may be unable to forgive those who have wronged us. But His word assures us that He is working in us. Though transformation can be instant, it often involves a long process.

Therefore, while we wait, let us continue reading, meditating on, believing in, and obeying God's word. We can be confident that His word will fulfill His purpose in us as we remain in Him. His word will transform us, enabling us to flourish and live the fruitful life He has planned for us. Our once dry, meaningless, and unrighteous life will be transformed into a life characterized by Christlikeness, inexplicable joy, complete peace, and overflowing love. God can use such a changed life to glorify Him and reflect His love to others.

**God's word will ACCOMPLISH HIS
PURPOSE IN US.**

What are some things you are trying to find satisfaction in instead of Christ? Identify some practical ways you can turn from these and rely on God.

In what areas in your life do you want to experience transformation? How do you think this will happen?

Are there areas in your life that are taking longer for change to happen? What do you think God is teaching you about this?

¹⁰"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, "so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

ISAIAH 55:10-11

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your word that satisfies my soul. You have promised to make every aspect of my life flourish as I continue to abide in Your word. Give me the grace to persevere, knowing that You will bring forth growth and transformation in my life at Your appointed time. Thank You for Your word, which never fails to accomplish Your purpose.

May my life glorify You and reflect Your love to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

day 2

The Word of God Is Like the BREATH OF LIFE

Read John 6:54–63

⁵⁴“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. ⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” ⁶¹But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”

Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000 demonstrated not only God’s power to provide, but also the people’s continuing need for sustenance in order to live. Jesus showed them that though their perceived need was physical food, their greater need was spiritual nourishment, creating the opportunity for Jesus to reveal Himself as the bread of life.

Unfortunately, because of their lack of spiritual perception, the Jews misunderstood what Jesus meant when He further revealed that this bread was His flesh and blood. This encounter caused many of them to no longer follow Him. Our Lord, however, was making it clear that He was using the feeding on His flesh and the drinking of His blood figuratively for having a mutually abiding relationship with Him characterized by reliance on Him. And just as Jesus totally relied on the Father for life when He lived on earth, we too will also experience the life of God when we rely on and abide in Him.

Jesus explained that the flesh offers no help at all, implying that the limitations of the fleshly life, being caught up only by the temporal things of this life, will hinder us from understanding Jesus' teaching. In contrast, Jesus' words impart spiritual life, for as John 3:34 says about the Son, *For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.*

Similarly, in Jeremiah 15:16, the prophet responded to the Lord's revelation, *Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart . . .* Jeremiah's appraisal of God's words was the same as Jesus' appraisal of His own words, that to feed on Christ meant to feed on Christ's words.

The word of God includes His thoughts, feelings, and plans for us as revealed in the Scriptures. But this goes beyond the written word. When God's word is spoken, it becomes life giving. Romans 10:17 says, *So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.* The spiritual practices of confessing God's word and praying the Scriptures, as well as the ministry of preaching and teaching, all help us in cultivating an abiding relationship with God.

Our response to His words, such as repentance, faith, worship, obedience, forgiveness, sacrifice, and giving, RELEASES HIS SPIRIT TO CONTINUALLY RENEW AND TRANSFORM US, MAKING US FRUITFUL FOR HIS KINGDOM.

What is one hard teaching you have learned from God's word?
How did you respond to it?

In what area do you need God's Spirit to breathe life? Why is
the flesh of *no help at all*?

Do you speak, confess, and proclaim God's word? How can you
do this more beginning today?

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." JOHN 6:63

Heavenly Father, thank You for speaking life to me through Your word. Thank You that through Your word, I can experience the fullness of Your love and joy. Help me to continue abiding in Your word as sustenance and nourishment for my soul. May I declare, confess, and speak Your word in every area of my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

day 3

The Word of God Is Like FIRE

Read Jeremiah 20:9

If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

Additional Reading: Luke 24:13–22

Jeremiah was called to proclaim God’s message of judgment to Israel and also a promise of redemption if she would return back to Him. When he shared the message, people rejected, imprisoned, and even tortured Jeremiah. He felt drained, disappointed, and discouraged.

Have you ever felt that when doing God’s will, things turned for the worst? What were your thoughts? For Jeremiah, his thoughts were, *“I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name.”* He wanted to quit being God’s voice to the people. Yet, there was something else at work in his heart—the word of God! He said, *there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.*

Have you ever been entrusted to keep a secret from a loved one, like a grand birthday gift or a wedding proposal? Do you remember how hard it was to keep it to yourself before the reveal and how amazing it felt when you finally shared it? Psychologists call this phenomenon “capitalization,” which is the sharing of positive events that you experienced. They found that it is beneficial to the ones sharing it and the ones receiving it.

God’s word is infinitely greater than any birthday gift or wedding proposal because it will change our lives eternally! That is why even when Jeremiah wanted to keep quiet because he was emotionally distraught, he still felt the fire of God’s word in the core of his being, wanting and waiting to be released.

Like fire, the Bible impassions us, igniting a fire within us that is hard to shut. Keeping it to ourselves is hard, since we know this message can and will dramatically transform those who will hear it. We cannot help but open our mouth and preach the good news of the kingdom of God. In fact, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus testified of their encounter with the resurrected Jesus in Luke 24:32, *“Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”*

**When God’s word touches our hearts,
WE BECOME INFLAMED WITH WARMTH,
PURITY, AND PASSION FOR HIM AND HIS
KINGDOM PURPOSES.**

How has God transformed you? In two or three sentences, write your testimony below. Ask God for opportunities and the boldness to share this with others.

Recall a time when you were reluctant to preach the gospel but did it anyway. What was the result?

What passage of Scripture has made the most impact on you recently? Why? Share this with a relative or friend this week.

If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

JEREMIAH 20:9

Heavenly Father, thank You that as I go through challenging times in my life, Your word is forging a deeper relationship with You. Burn up any apathy, timidity, and passivity. Inflame my heart with love for Your word so that the fire inside me will spread to the world around me. In Jesus' name, amen.

conclusion

The Word of God Bears FRUIT

Read John 15:4–5, 7–8, 16

⁴“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. . . . ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. . . . ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”

In the past few days, we saw how God’s word is likened to rain that makes us flourish, the breath of God that gives us life, and also like a fire in us that makes us bold to proclaim the gospel. As we continue to abide in Christ and His word, the inevitable result is our lives bearing fruit. When we respond to God’s pruning, which is the word of God working in our lives, we will be more fruitful.

In this context, the word *fruit* figuratively refers to everything done in true partnership with Christ, as a believer (a branch) lives in union with Christ (the Vine). Fruit is the noticeable evidence that God is working in and through our lives. The fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) is the work of God producing Christlike character in our lives. Fruit also represents the good works that God values because it glorifies Him. The apostle Paul refers to *the fruit of righteousness* (Philippians 1:11), the *fruit in every good work* (Colossians 1:10), and *the fruit of the light* that consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth (Ephesians 5:9). This is not a result of our own striving or ability; it overflows from an abundant, abiding relationship with Christ. Fruit in our lives is how God is honored in the earth and how we are known to be His disciples.

Fruit-bearing is a process that takes time, but as we continually surrender our lives more and more to the Lord and remain connected to the Vine, not only will we be more fruitful, but we will even bear *much fruit*.

Finally, Jesus has chosen us not only to produce abundant fruit, but also fruit that will endure. The fruit of Christlike character being formed in us is not transient; rather, it lasts forever. The fruit of good works done in collaboration with Christ will not only be temporal; they will have eternal significance and will receive eternal rewards.

When God's word abides in us, it produces much fruit in our lives that will BRING GLORY TO GOD.

As a follower of Christ, do you think your life is bearing fruit?
How do you think you can bear *more fruit* and *much fruit*
this year?

To whom can you preach the gospel this month? List three to
five friends, classmates or officemates, neighbors, and relatives
below. How can you pray for them starting today?

⁷"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." JOHN 15:7-8



Father in heaven, I pray that Your grace will enable me to abide in Your word so that I would be able to live a fruitful life. Thank You Lord that as Your word continues to clean and prune me, more people will see the fruit of the Spirit in my life. As I exhibit the character of Christ, may it lead to opportunities for me to share Your word to other people who will become followers of Christ.

In Jesus' name I pray, amen.



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