



Set Apart

A Biblical
View of
Holiness

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EVERY NATION



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EveryNation.org/Fasting #ENfast2024

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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 breakthroughs in people's lives. Every Nation churches and campus ministries begin each 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 can receive God's answers to our prayers.

Fasting helps us become sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

While they were worshipping 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, allowing us to better focus on God and submit to his will.

Fasting brings revival.

And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. **ISAIAH 58:12**

Throughout history, God has brought revival and delivered nations from destruction in response to prayer and fasting. Fasting helps us persevere 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 5.

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

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 mealtimes, 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

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: _____

DAY 4

Water only Liquid only One meal only Other: _____

Prayer meeting(s) to attend: _____

DAY 5

Water only Liquid only One meal only Other: _____

Prayer meeting(s) to attend: _____

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 thankful to God for ...

Answered Prayers

List highlights, answered prayers, and lessons learned in 2023.

In 2024, I will seek God and trust 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 Colleagues and Classmates ...

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 & Educational Institutions • Local Government • Outreach Opportunities ...

My Nation

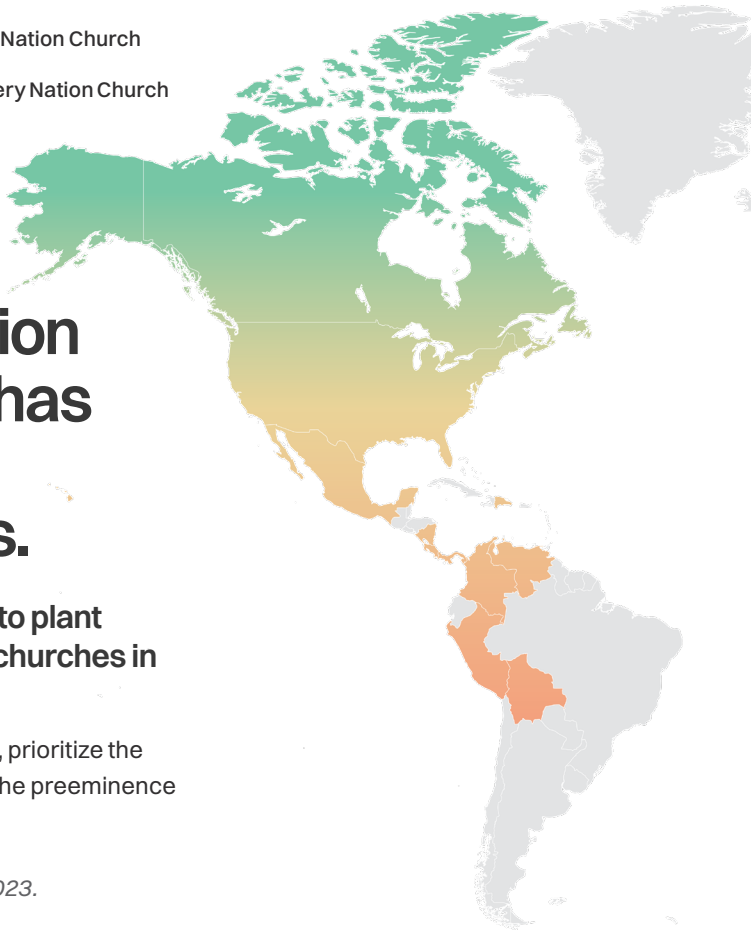
Government Officials • Spiritual Revival • Economic Prosperity • Peace ...



Nations with an Every Nation Church



Nations without an Every Nation Church



Every Nation currently has work in **82** nations.

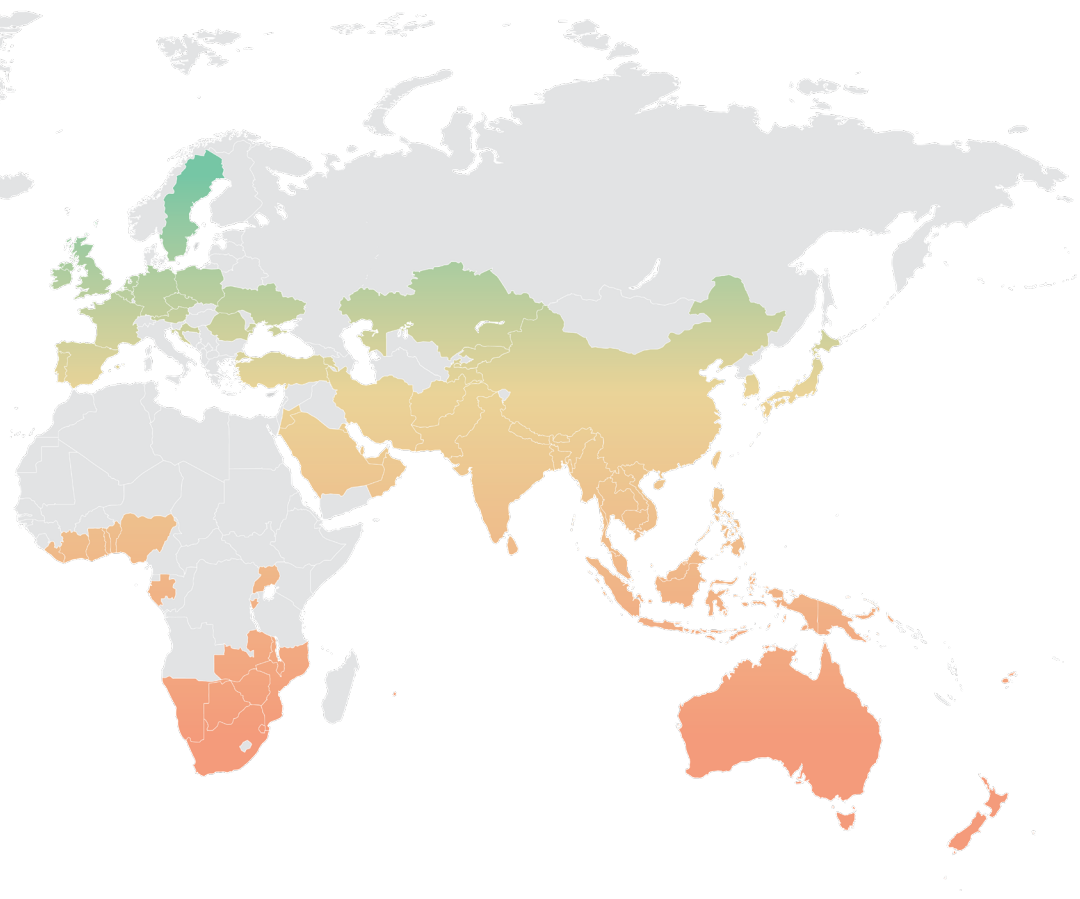
Fulfilling God's call to plant campus-reaching churches in every nation.

Let's pray for the nations, prioritize the campus, and recognize the preeminence of the gospel.

Numbers as of August 2023.

Continue to pray for the remaining **113** nations without an Every Nation church and believe God for open doors to plant more churches.

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- Andorra
- Angola
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belize
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Cabo Verde
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cuba
- Cyprus
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Denmark
- Djibouti
- Dominica
- Ecuador
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Estonia
- Ethiopia
- Finland
- Gambia
- Georgia
- Greece
- Grenada
- Guatemala
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Hungary



Iceland
Iraq
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Kenya
Kiribati
Latvia
Lebanon
Lesotho
Libya
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Macedonia
Madagascar
Mali

Malta
Marshall Islands
Mauritania
Micronesia
Moldova
Monaco
Mongolia
Montenegro
Morocco
Nauru
Niger
North Korea
Norway
Palau
Palestine
Paraguay
Russia

Rwanda
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the
Grenadines
Samoa
San Marino
São Tomé and Príncipe
Senegal
Serbia
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Slovakia
Slovenia
Solomon Islands
Somalia
South Sudan

Sudan
Suriname
Switzerland
Syria
Tanzania
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkmenistan
Tuvalu
Uruguay
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Vatican City
Yemen

Pray for new churches to be planted.

As we pray for the remaining 113 nations without an Every Nation church, we're specifically asking God for opportunities to plant more churches in Arabic-speaking nations across Northern Africa and the Middle East.

There are 24 nations in this area with 505 million people. Just over 2% of the population are evangelical Christians, and God has already given us open doors to do ministry in key cities.

Algeria

Bahrain*

Chad

Djibouti

Egypt

Eritrea

Iraq

Jordan*

Kuwait*

Lebanon

Libya

Mauritania

Morocco

Oman*

Palestine

Saudi Arabia*

Somalia

South Sudan

Sudan

Syria

Tunisia

United Arab Emirates*

Qatar*

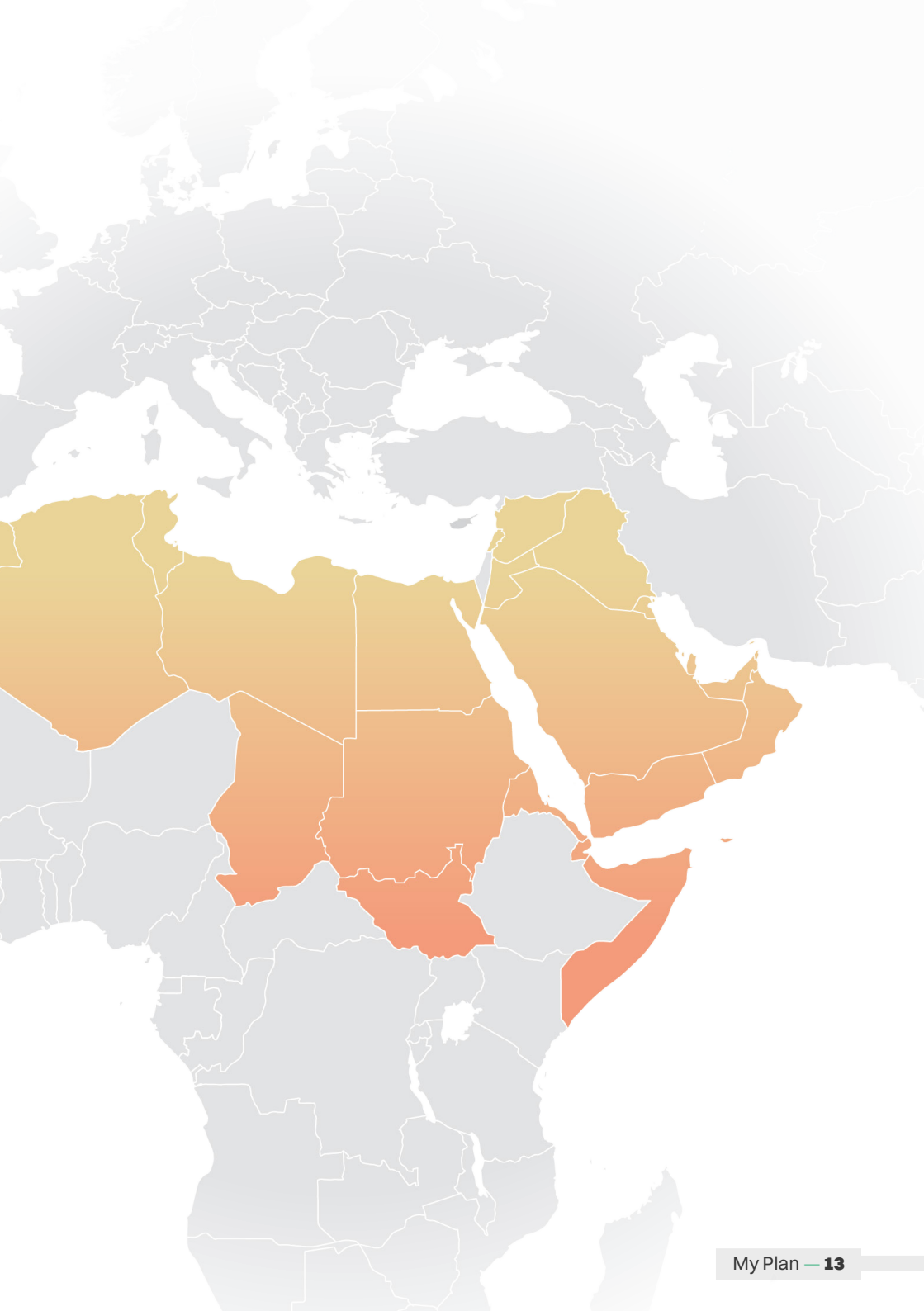
Yemen

Let's stand in prayer for:

- Hearts to be open to receive the gospel
- God to send more laborers to these nations
- Grace, protection, and boldness for Christians in this area

**Nations that Every Nation currently has work in.*

Population stats courtesy of Operation World.



The Call to Holiness

1 Peter 1:13-16

¹³ Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ **but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,** ¹⁶ **since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**

Additional Reading: Leviticus 11:45, 20:26; Numbers 15:37-41; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Isaiah 6:1-7; Matthew 22:34-40

God is holy in all his ways, completely set apart in his essence and character. So what does it mean for us to be holy? As twenty-first-century readers, we’re quick to define “holy” as behavior God expects us to achieve. However, the Hebrew word for holy, “qadosh,” means consecrated, sanctified, dedicated, set apart, and separated from the world.

God’s call to holiness is more than simply changing our actions or something to achieve: it’s a call to set our hope on the grace of God through Jesus to be fully transformed and to live set apart.

In his letter, Peter is writing to Christians dealing with persecution. Many people viewed Christians as dangerous because they didn't follow the conventional behaviors of the world and lived counter to the culture around them. Despite what is happening to and around them, Peter's encouragement is to be holy, hold on to faith, and continue living in a manner that sets them apart.

In verse 14, he reminds them that they, too, once lived in darkness, but Christ has ransomed them, changing their identity. They are now set apart, called to be sanctified and to live dedicated to Christ. Jesus truly changes our identities and enables us to live holy.

We should aspire to be holy; however, it's not merely aspirational. It's obtainable when we put our hope in Christ. It's only through Jesus that our identity can be changed, and we can live genuinely different than the world around us. Answering the call to be holy is not easy, but it is necessary. It's a call to accept the grace of God through Jesus and allow ourselves to be transformed. Holiness is not merely something to achieve but is an inherent aspect of our identity as believers. We are called to be set apart.

... but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Reflection: Think of the moment when you were first aware of God's grace and accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Reflection: Are there areas in your life where you have trouble living "set apart" from the world?

Faith Step

Spend time in prayer to
thank God for his grace and
the call to be holy.



Heavenly Father, you are worthy of my praise and worship. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are your ways higher than my ways and your thoughts higher than my thoughts.

I consecrate myself to you, remembering the works of your hands and the beauty of the gospel. Thank you for setting me apart as your own and calling me to be holy.

Lord, help my heart revere you so that I may reflect your glory to those around me. In Jesus' name, **amen.**

The Community of Holiness

1 Peter 2:4-9

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. . . .

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Additional Reading: Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:6; Isaiah 28:16; Hosea 2:23; Malachi 3:16-18; Ephesians 2:11-13; Hebrews 10:24-25; Revelation 5:10

In the Old Testament, the temple was the dwelling place of God. It was set apart and consecrated for worshiping Yahweh, but Peter is showing us that we, the people of God, are now set apart and consecrated for the worship of God. We are being built together as a spiritual house, a royal priesthood that ushers in the presence of God wherever we are. The community of holiness is God's consecrated people, filled with his presence to declare his perfect goodness.

Since we are now holy and set apart by God, he calls us to live in such a way that others can see his transforming power in us. As his “spiritual house,” we are expected to live and act differently so that we can be a witness of God’s goodness and call people out of darkness, not just through our individual lives but also as the Church.

If we’re to fulfill this calling, being part of a local church is vital. In 1 Peter 1:22-23, Peter tells his readers to love one another and reminds them of the importance of abiding in the Word together. Just as separate stones are joined to form a sturdy structure, we as believers are called to support and build each other up. Through our unity, we display the love of Christ to the world.

To be set apart means that we’re different than the world around us, and as the Church, a body of believers, we should stand out in our communities. Each local church should be a beacon of hope because of what God has done within us. When believers gather to worship and pray, we should expect to see families, cities, and nations changed by the gospel.

God has chosen his Church to be a royal priesthood and a holy nation. We are set apart for his divine purpose. Our role is to declare his goodness to a world longing for hope and purpose. Through our transformed lives, we become living testimonies of God’s power and goodness.

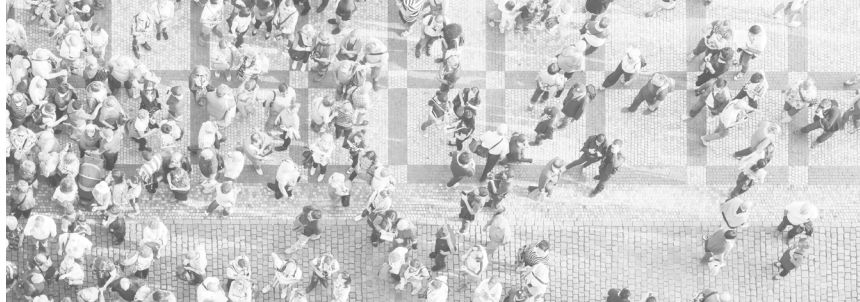
But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Reflection: Think of believers in your life that have been integral to your walk with Christ. Spend time thanking God for placing them in your life.

Reflection: How can you use your God-given gifts and talents to serve your local church?

Faith Step

Write down a few ways you
could actively participate in
your local church.



Heavenly Father, thank you for choosing us and setting us apart for your purposes. Thank you for the privilege of being part of your Church.

Help us appreciate each member's unique role and work together in unity. Move our hearts so that we would continue gathering together and stirring up one another to love and good works.

Work through us to bring your hope, healing, and transformation to the world. You have sent us as a light in the darkness; may we continually proclaim your praises and draw others to you. In Jesus' name, **amen.**

The Challenge of Holiness

1 Peter 2:10-11

¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹**Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.**

Additional Reading: Psalm 119:18-20; Romans 7:21-25; Philippians 3:20; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Hebrews 11:12-16

What or where do you consider “home”? Maybe it’s the neighborhood you grew up in, the city you and your family relocated to, or a nation you had to leave behind unexpectedly.

Sojourners and exiles have a unique relationship to “home.” Sojourners are travelers who pass through a place for a short time until they reach a specific destination. Exiles are those who have been sent away or even banished from their homelands.

By calling his readers “sojourners” and “exiles” in 1 Peter 2:11, Peter challenges their sense of home. He’s being clear—they’re temporary residents in this world, living in a place that’s not really their home. Until Christ returns, they must live as redeemed and holy people in a fallen world.

Peter instructs them “to abstain from the passions of the flesh,” sinful desires that are rebellious and even hostile to God. We must hold tight to God’s call to holiness as these passions wage war against our souls.

God gives us mercy and grace to abstain from these desires. He’s given us his Word to renew our minds. He puts us in spiritual community to strengthen and encourage us. Even in moments when we feel weak or have failed, the gift of repentance allows us to turn back to God in grace and without shame.

As we read this passage centuries after it was written, we can identify with feelings of spiritual alienation, dissatisfaction, and longing that Peter’s original readers may have felt. This is the challenge. As exiles, we live in a temporary home, but it can be tempting to live as if this is where we belong. We must decide, day in and day out, to deny self and obey God’s calling to be holy.

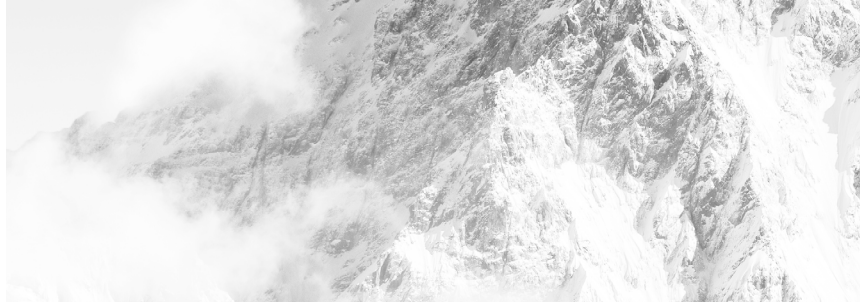
Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

Reflection: Does the idea of being a “sojourner” or “exile” change your perspective of the world around you?

Reflection: Are there practical things you can do today to abstain from the passions of the flesh?

Faith Step

Talk to a prayer partner about what “passions of the flesh” you both may be dealing with. Spend time in prayer, repenting and asking the Holy Spirit to renew and strengthen you.



Jesus, thank you that you've made a way for me to be holy, even when I struggle with unholy desires. You've placed me as a sojourner and exile in this world, but I pray that you would reign over my heart and renew my inner self day by day.

Help me to accept the challenge of holiness and choose righteousness daily, even when I'm tempted to follow my flesh.

Change me from the inside out so that I may be a light in this world. In your name I pray, **amen**.



The Conduct of Holiness

1 Peter 2:10-12

¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² **Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.**

Additional Reading: Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:14-16; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:13; Galatians 5:16-24; Ephesians 4:1-3; Titus 2:7-8

Peter instructs his readers that as they abstain from temporal passions, they must also strive to do good. There are things not to do and also things they should do. He tells them to live in a way that is respectable, even by nonbelievers, and, as they see God's people doing good deeds, they might come to worship God.

But what does this kind of gospel-centered good conduct look like? Even people who don't follow Christ can do things that are considered "good." What sets apart the conduct of a believer from that of a nonbeliever is the holy example of Christ. We must look to Jesus as the model for how to live out holiness through our conduct. His example

and teachings are applicable in any culture at any point in time. Why? Because God's character is immutable—he never changes.

Moreover, Christ shows us that holy conduct is more than just random acts of kindness. It refers to a lifestyle that is consistent in both public and private spaces. Jesus teaches his disciples how to treat others, manage money, live compassionately, respect authority, and submit to God. He demonstrates how to see the world through holy eyes and respond in a way that reflects God's unchanging, holy character.

As we strive to live out holy conduct, we must remember the cross. The gift of salvation and knowledge of God's holiness lead us to do good deeds. Those deeds could never bring about atonement for our sins. Rather, our works flow out of a revelation of God's goodness and holiness.

We have an opportunity to live out a missional mindset through our actions, behavior, attitude, speech, and thoughts. Our conduct should stand out against the background of the world because Christ's holiness has set us free and set us apart.

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Reflection: How does your lifestyle consistently honor God in both public and private spaces?

Reflection: How has your conduct been a reflection of God's holiness to others around you?

Faith Step

Take time to meditate on the gospel and ask God how you can live out holy conduct in your community. Write down what God speaks to you, and talk with a prayer partner about actionable next steps you will take.



Jesus, thank you for being the perfect example of holy conduct. Help me to know how to be righteous and holy in my actions, speech, and thoughts. Empower me to do good deeds from a genuine heart.

God, help me to live so that others may see my good works and give you glory. Your gospel has changed me from the inside out; help me to be more like Christ so that others may know you.

Strengthen me with your joy as I reflect your goodness to the earth. In Jesus' name I pray, **amen.**

The Crucifixion of Holiness

1 Peter 2:21-25

²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ **He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.** ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Additional Reading: Isaiah 53:3-6, 7; Luke 15:1-7; John 10:11; Romans 6:10-11, 23; Galatians 3:13

The cross of Christ is essential to the gospel message. We thank Jesus that his death on the cross reconciled us to God. For us today, crucifixion is an unfamiliar practice. In Jesus' culture, crucifixion was a shameful and tortuous way to die. It was a method the Romans used to torment and humiliate perpetrators, and they used their victims as a forewarning to others.

At face value, Christ's death was supposed to be a warning—"If you live the way this man lived, you will die." But in reality, it was freedom—"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness." Crucifixion represented unholiness, yet Christ took our sins upon himself so that we could be holy.

His death is the centerpiece of our holiness, his sacrifice the starting point of our new identity. It's not our works, our family background, our financial situation, or our societal status that saves us to righteousness. All of our spiritual blessings, including the basis of our holiness, hinge upon the cross of Christ.

His life, death, and resurrection impact every part of our lives. He offers salvation for our souls, healing for our bodies, peace and wisdom, and reconciliation into the family of God. All of these gifts have been freely given, and we receive the fullness of our salvation only by grace through faith.

Christ's sacrifice bridged the gap between God and us. He laid a firm foundation to build our lives upon, and we can rest in his complete work that makes us righteous before God. Through the power of the resurrection, we can live holy. The basis for our holiness is the cross of Christ.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Reflection: Reflect on the significance of the cross and Christ's sacrifice for you.

Reflection: What does it mean for your faith journey knowing that holiness hinges upon the cross of Christ?

Faith Step

Write down the names of people you are hoping will come to faith. Pray that God would give you an opportunity this week to preach the gospel to them.



Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice on the cross. I deserved death for my sins, but you gave me the free gift of eternal life.

You ransomed me from darkness and have made me holy. Thank you that my holiness does not rest on me but on your life, death, and resurrection. May I remember the goodness of your gospel all the days of my life.

Lord, I give you glory for bridging the gap between us, and I pray that I would be bold in sharing your goodness with those around me. **Amen.**

The Commitment of Holiness

1 Peter 3:13-16

¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ **but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,** ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Additional Reading: Proverbs 16:7; Psalm 34:13-14; Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:24-26

Peter encourages his readers to stay committed to faith in the midst of criticism and persecution. He tells them not to bend to the pressures of the culture around them, maintaining a heart that reveres Christ as Lord. Remarkably, he states that their trials could even be used for good and draw people to Christ. When others ask about their unwavering faith, they should be ready to share the message of salvation with gentleness, respect, and clarity.

The commitment to holiness is an inward devotion to Christ resulting in an outward expression. As we draw near to God and allow his Spirit to change us from the inside out, he fills our hearts and minds with his wisdom, strength, and love. He empowers us to respond to challenges and defend our faith with gentleness and respect.

When opposition comes your way, how do you react? It can be tough to look past any embarrassment or frustration it brings us, but in everything, God has a purpose. These oppositions can lead to opportunities to share our faith.

Despite the pressures we encounter from the world, moments of criticism or persecution allow us to serve as witnesses for God. If we are dedicated to holiness, how we live our lives will reflect him to the world and could lead to an opportunity to preach the gospel.

A commitment to holiness is expressed through our conduct, character, and attitude. It's a dedication to honoring God and bearing witness to the hope we have in him. May we stay committed to the call to live set apart, bringing glory to our Lord and drawing others closer to him.

... in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...

Reflection: What responses have you given in the past when others have criticized or questioned you about your faith?

Reflection: Ask God to fill you with wisdom, gentleness, and respect so you will be “prepared to make a defense” to those who ask about your faith.

Faith Step

Think about people you know who might bring opposition to your faith or testimony. Pray for them, and pray that God would give you an opportunity to boldly share your faith with them.



Lord, thank you for the gospel; I am not ashamed of it, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

I submit myself to you and trust that you are with me. Empower me to show kindness to everyone and patiently endure evil, and help me see opposition as opportunities to share your good news.

Thank you, Jesus, for being my example in this. You are worthy of my commitment and devotion. Fill me with your compassion and grace for others. **Amen.**

The Crucible of Holiness

1 Peter 4:1-5, 12-16

¹ Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. . . .

¹² **Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.**

¹³ **But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.** ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Additional Reading: Psalm 34:19-22; Zechariah 13:9; Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-21; Acts 5:40-42; 1 Peter 1:7

Gold is one of the most valuable metals on earth, but when it's first mined, it often contains hints of other minerals. For it to be at its highest value point (pure gold), it must

be refined with intense heat to melt and separate it from any impurities that would taint its value. As precious as gold is, our faith is even more precious and goes through a similar refining process.

1 Peter 1:7 tells us that our faith will endure tests of genuineness. Throughout this letter, Peter teaches that the call to holiness involves a gathered Christian community, presents an internal challenge, requires correct conduct, is built upon the crux of the cross, and demands commitment. In chapter 4, he reveals holiness will lead you to a crucible.

Being a Christian does not shield us from fire, but the hope of the gospel makes us fireproof. As we face trials, we're drawn closer to Christ and find comfort because he also suffered.

If we face suffering because our lives are set apart for God, we ultimately will receive a blessing. It may be in this life or it may be in the next, but God always keeps his promises. Although culture, media, our friends, or even our family might sway us in what's "normative," we must persevere to live set apart and renew our minds daily to live the call to holiness that God has set before us.

Even in our sufferings, we can rejoice "because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." As God's consecrated people, we will no doubt find ourselves in the crucibles of life that purify our faith. Let us fix our eyes on the blessing that awaits us and trust that God is at work even amid our suffering. May we find strength in Christ, knowing we will share in his eternal joy and glory.

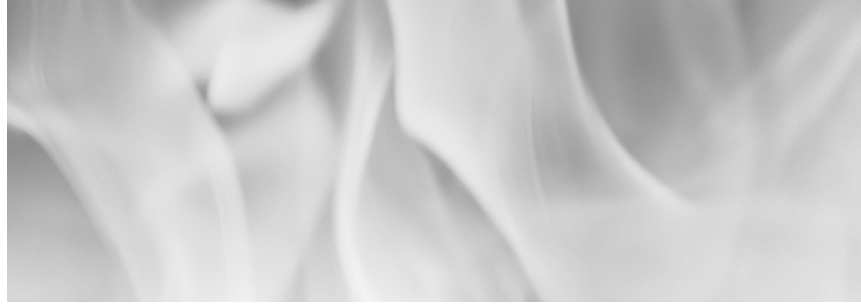
Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Reflection: What kind of crucibles have you faced in your walk with Christ? Are you grateful for them?

Reflection: How have you felt God strengthen you through suffering?

Faith Step

Take time to thank God for any trials you may be facing. Praise him now for strength and guidance through any trials that may come up in your life.



God, thank you for walking with me through every trial. You are my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

You provide peace in the midst of my suffering and strengthen me to persevere. When doubts arise, fill me with the assurance of your faithfulness. I will rejoice in suffering, knowing that it leads to endurance, character, and hope.

I trust that as I participate in Christ's sufferings, I will share in his eternal joy and be made holy to glorify his name. In Jesus' name I pray, **amen.**





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