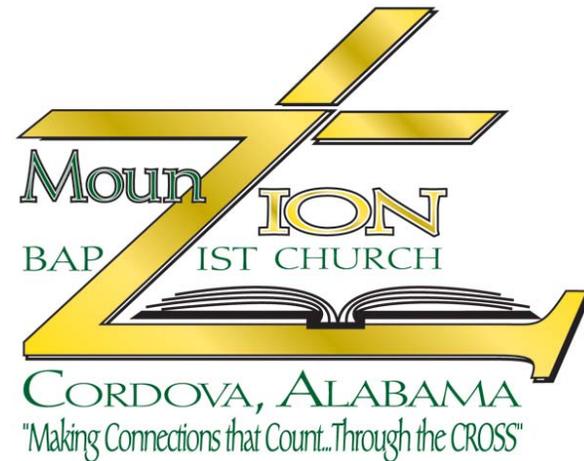


# THE DANIEL FAST 2010:

*A Guide to Seeking  
God for Change*



MARCH 1<sup>st</sup> – MARCH 21<sup>st</sup>

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# JOURNAL NOTES

Beginning **March 1<sup>st</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup>**, the Mount Zion Baptist Church will be participating in a church-wide Daniel Fast. The Daniel Fast is a time set aside for 21 days to pray and fast for the God's blessings and favor on our families, church, city, and county throughout the year. This is not just a dietary adjustment; this is a time to seek God for 2010.

During this time we ask you to pray for:

***Our Church (the Mount Zion Baptist Church Family)*** – Leadership: Our Pastor; Deacons, Trustees, Officers; Members; Healthy and Stronger Marriages; Spouses for seeking singles, singles contently living faithfully for Christ, Children and Youth; Salvation of unsaved family members of our members, healing of sick among us, and deliverance to those bound by addictions.

***Our City /County***– For Revival; the plight of drug abuse (sellers and users), our City, County, and State Governments, unity among Churches; Businesses; Children and Youth, as well as, School leadership and teachers; employment for citizens.

***Our Country America*** – Our President and leaders (our government); for a new *Great Awakening* (revival of Godliness); righteousness; our troops.

## **Scriptural questions about fasting.**

Is there a place for fasting in New Testament times?

Fasting was not required of the disciples of Jesus.

Matthew 9:14 (Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33) "Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples fast not?"

But Jesus spoke of a day when there would be a place for fasting.

Matthew 6:16-18 (Not "if," but "when ye fast ...") "Moreover when ye fast, ...But thou, when thou fastest..."

Matthew 9:14-15 (Luke 5:34-35) "And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."

What guidelines are set forth in scripture concerning fasting?

A. It is to be done in a manner of humility and secrecy. This secrecy is a matter of not doing so "to be seen of men."

# JOURNAL NOTES

In Matthew 6, Jesus instructs on the motive for *giving, fasting, and praying*. All three may be done publicly; however, again the motive must not to be seen of men or to impress them.

Matthew 6:16-18 "Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret ..."

Luke 18:9-14 "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray. . . The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are . . . I fast twice in the week, I give tithes . . . And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to this house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

B. Fasting is closely related to prayer and reading of the Word. Fasting is an extremely valuable and important facet of the Christian life; but it is not an infallible means of "getting what we want" from God. (Jeremiah 14:12 "When they fast, I will not hear their cry ...") Example: II Samuel 12:15-23 (David's son died anyway.) Obedience is better than sacrifice (I Samuel 15:22).

## THE DANIEL FAST

*"Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who at the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead." - Daniel 1:11-15*

# JOURNAL NOTES

*"In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, not did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."* – Daniel 10:2,3

## NOTABLE QUOTES ON FASTING

**As Elmer Towns says:**

*"Fasting for an answer is similar to prayer. Sometimes you can pray once in an act of faith, and God hears and answers. On other occasions you must continuously ask in faith before an answer will come. We need to pray often and fast continually to build up our faith and our spiritual character."*

**As Jentezen Franklin says:**

*Fasting is a principle that God intended for everyone to be able to enjoy. It's not a punishment; it's a privilege! By making fasting a way of life, you can get closer to God and grow in your spiritual walk like never before.*

## Seven Tips for Observing a Daniel Fast or Daniel's Diet

1. **Be Specific** – Daniel was very clear in his objection to the Babylonian diet. He defined his objecting immediately. (Daniel 1:8)

The king's food was likely not kosher, and against Jewish dietary laws.

Daniel and his friends had vowed against wine.

The king's food could have been offered up to idols or demons.

Write out a commitment that outlines: why you are fasting, how long you are fasting, and from what you are fasting. (*Remember this is not a **school test**. No one will check your work. Write to the Lord, so that you can reflect on what you've written when the fast is over.*)

2. **Fast as a spiritual commitment** – The Daniel Fast involves a spiritual commitment to God. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." – Daniel 1:8

3. **Reflect inner desire by external discipline** – Most people desire better health, but don't discipline themselves to say no to junk food, and other unhealthy foods. A Daniel Fast will involve a

commitment in four areas: your food choices, a spiritual commitment as reflected in constant prayer during the diet, your time commitment (determining to fast for a certain time and sticking with it), and your testimony commitment – your fast is a statement of faith in God.

4. **Pray to see the role of sin in your relative health or sickness** – let this be a time of repentance. Repentance is linked to our good health or healing (see James 5:13-20)

According to James 5:13-20 we can make the following observations:

Our actions and attitudes are vital. James said, "are there any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms." (v.13)

The sick person must call for the elders. (v.14)

Sin is something related to the cause of sickness. (v. 15)

Lack of health or healing may be the result of spiritual rebellion. (v.15)

Lack of health or healing may be due to sin of wrong consumption, i.e., poor diet, drugs, pornography, etc. (v.15)

Repentance is linked to health. (v.16)

Prayer alone may not gain healing; faith in God is the major factor. (v.15, 17-20)

5. **A Daniel Fast is a statement of faith to others** – Daniel asked the overseer to compare the appearance of the 4 sons of Israel with the other people who ate the king's food.
6. **Learn the effects of the food you eat** – What makes some food good for us? What negative effects do certain foods have on our bodies?
7. **YIELD ALL RESULTS TO GOD** – Daniel said, "as you see fit, deal with your servants." We don't really know if Daniel or his friends ever again ate the king's food.

#### NOTE

**Drink lots of pure water; Chew only "sugar-free" gum and mints  
Avoid foods, smells, and surroundings that can tempt you to break your fast.**

**REMEMBER: this time is for you to concentrate on God. Don't beat yourself up if you find it too difficult to follow the dietary restrictions. Enjoy the journey of prayer, the Word, and seeking GOD. HAVE A GREAT DANIEL FAST**

PASTOR DARREN C. ALLEN

for what's to come.

What has caused you to shrink back in your expectation of what God wants to do in your life?

Are you ready to be expanded beyond recognition? That's what God's new wine will do in and through you.

Pray the Lord will expand your life to glorify Him, giving you boldness to step out and be the shining light that he has called you to be.

#### Day 21: Sunday, March 21

##### Luke 4:1-2, 14-15

*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 of God's specific path for our lives. Many times following a season of prayer and fasting we have a more defined understanding of the part that we play in the body of Christ and a greater sense of our particular spiritual giftings. (1 Corinthians 12)

This chapter in the Gospel of Luke describes the circumstances surrounding the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

Notice that He went into the desert "full of the Holy Spirit." However, He returned to Galilee, "in the power of the Holy Spirit." Being full of the Spirit is knowing God and his character; walking in the power of the Spirit is when we know that we have the God-given strength and authority in our lives to walk out His will.

The power of the Spirit is essential for us to accomplish the assignment God has for our lives. God could be leading you to fast so that you can receive His specific instructions for your life. He will empower you, not just to know Him, but to walk in His power to accomplish what He has called you to do.

Are there areas of your life that need more clarity?

Are you walking in the power of the Spirit and living in God's purpose for your life

Write down those things God is speaking to you. As you conclude your fast, pray that God continually reveals His purpose and gives you ever increasing clarity and strength to walk it out.

might seem that worry has even replaced Jesus as the focal point of our lives. Jesus Himself admonished us several times not to worry. And the great apostle, Paul, tell us in the passage above that there is an antidote to worry...prayer.

When we worry about something, we are spending energy on it, wondering what might happen, rehearsing the "if only's" and "what if's" in our mind. Why not take that same energy and refocus it on prayer instead? When we worry, we are simply talking to ourselves about our fears, but when we pray, we are taking those fears to God. We can't control the future, but in the words of Anne Graham Lotz, God is already there! He knows exactly what is going to happen and he promises to be with us every step of the journey.

As we are nearing a close to this season of prayer and fasting, let's make an effort to convert our worry into prayer. As Paul says in the verse above, "let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers," and you will find that the peace of God will guard your heart.

Are there things that you consistently worry about?

As you go through your day today, recapture each worried thought and send it up to God as a prayer.

See how dramatically your outlook improves when the peace of God is activated through prayer!

### **Day 20: Saturday, March 20**

#### **Luke 5:37-38**

*And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the new wine would burst the wineskins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine must be stored in new wineskins.*

Two things do not mix: new wine and old wineskins. The reason is simple: old wineskins cannot grow and stretch to hold the new wine. The new wine God wants to fill you with is expansive; it is a picture of God's Spirit. It always brings an enlargement. A container that is dead, dry, stiff and shrinking back cannot be entrusted as a storehouse for God's valued treasure.

Our vessels must be prepared for the fresh, dynamic, living presence of God – everything we do will flow from it. This preparation comes through prayer and fasting, producing a container that is ready for the new thing God wants to do. God's new wine always changes us – it expands our faith, enlarges our purpose, and brings renewed vision.

Everything God does is expansive, He is not into shrinking wineskins – it is up to us to shed them. As we seek Him in this season, let's shed the old wineskin and ask God to fully prepare our hearts

## **THE DANIEL FAST MENU**

*Daniel seemed to eat only things planted for harvest and drink only water. You may want to keep it simple and eat only vegetables and drink only water.*

### **FOODS TO EAT**

**Whole Grains:** brown rice, oats, rolled oats, oatmeal, barley, corn, popcorn, wheat

**Legumes:** dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black-eyed peas, green beans, green peas, peanuts, etc. Grain legumes include beans, lentils, lupines, peas and peanuts (includes natural peanut butter).

**Fruits:** apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, berries, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, breadfruit, cantaloupe, cherries, coconuts, cranberries, dates, figs, grapefruit, grapes, grenadine, guava, honeydew melons, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, melons, mulberry, nectarines, oats, olives, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelons, etc.

**Vegetables:** artichokes, asparagus, beets broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, any peppers, and potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, etc.

**Seeds:** all nuts, natural peanut butter, natural almond butter, sprouts, ground flax, etc.

**Liquids:** spring water, distilled water, filtered water, 100% all natural fruit or vegetable juices.

### **FOODS TO AVOID**

Meat, because Daniel didn't want to take the chance of eating non-kosher food and/or meat that was offered to idols.

White flour and all products using it.

White rice, white bread, hominy, and pasta. Fried foods

Caffeine (Note: to avoid headaches from loss of caffeine, make sure you drink lots of water)

Dairy products – including but not limited to milk, cheese, cream, butter, eggs

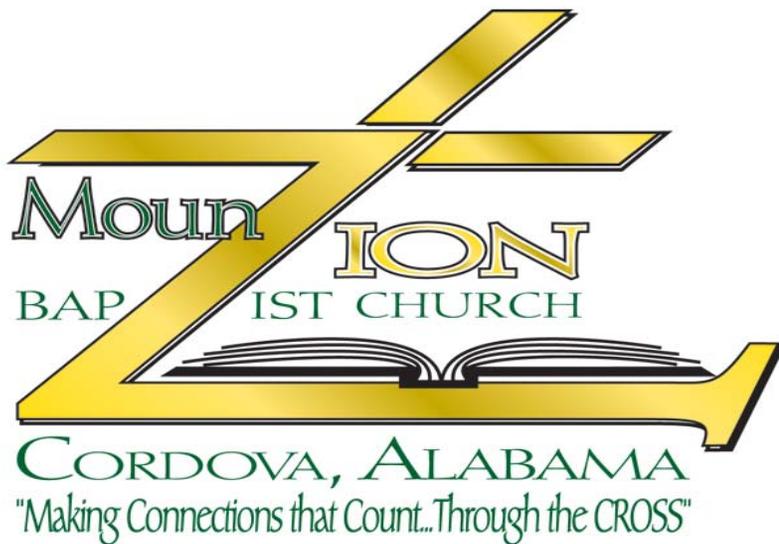
Carbonated beverages, including diet sodas

Wine or any other alcoholic drinks.

Foods containing preservatives or additives

Refined sugar; High fructose corn syrup

Chemical sugar substitutes; Margarine, shortening, animal fat, high fat products



# FASTING DAILY DEVOTION

MARCH 1st—MARCH 21st  
2010

*(developed by Fellowship Church,  
Houston, TX - Pastor Ed Young)*

## **Matthew 17:14-16**

*And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."*

What a great example of humility – this man approached Jesus and knelt before Him in the midst of a crowd. As the father approached Jesus, he believed that Jesus would bring his son relief. But even in his belief, his approach was humble and submitted to what Christ would choose to do. Looking further into the story, we find the father was also persistent and resisted taking offense. Though the disciples were not able to help him, he set aside his temporary disappointment in their failure and continued to seek after Jesus – the solution to his circumstance, the source of relief through his trial.

Being humble before God is realizing our need of Him, submitting to His will, pursuing Him and being confident the outcome will occur in God's perfect timing.

Be encouraged that approaching God with a heart of humility will always position you to find relief in Jesus. Don't be ashamed to humble yourself before God, even in the midst of others looking on. Offenses and disappointment may come but continue in your pursuit of Jesus. You may not get relief right away but know that God is never late and His solution is always perfect.

Prayer is a posture of humility. Humble yourself before the Lord each day and bring your cares to Him. He wants to meet you where you are and answer your every need. Pray too, that God help you with the disappointment and discouragement that we each face along the way. Is there discouragement in your heart today? Write it down and release it to our perfect God.

## **Day 19: Friday, March 19**

### **Philippians 4:6-7**

*Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.*

Worry seems to be an inescapable fact of modern life. No doubt there is plenty to worry about: our kids, the economy, global warming, war, disease... the list could go on forever! Sometimes it

heart, renew your spirit, and restore the joy of your salvation. Pray with confidence, knowing that He wants to fill you with His life and peace.

### **Day 17: Wednesday, March 17**

#### **Mark 1:12-13**

*Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.*

Even Jesus disconnected from the world to fast and pray. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. They also describe other times Jesus pulled away from the demands of the crowds, His ministry and even His closest friends to pray.

There are times that we, too, need to pull away from the things of the world and focus on God. "The things of the world" can certainly include more than just food. In fact, in our world, it is more likely to be television, movies, Facebook, Twitter, cell phones and internet that keep us "tuned in" to the world. None of these things are wrong in and of themselves, but they are avenues for a mental and spiritual "crowd" to gather around us and drown out the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit.

Fasting is a means of disconnecting from the distractions of daily life and consciously choosing to bring God into greater focus. Giving up physical nourishment is the first step in engaging that process. If you think about it, though, we nourish our souls as well as our bodies. We do so through reading, talking, socializing, playing and leisure. When we fill our souls up with all those things, we don't feel a hunger for God.

During this time of fasting, we are sure to feel physical hunger, but let's be intentional about cultivating spiritual hunger as well. Let's draw away from the crowds, and lay aside for a season the activities we use to nourish our souls. Instead let's allow ourselves to enter a state of spiritual hunger – a hunger for righteousness. Jesus said that being spiritually hungry is a blessed state, because we can be sure of being filled with food that truly satisfies our deepest needs. (Matthew 5:6)

During this time, you will find that being still before the Lord will set you in a place of increased strength, peace and hunger for God.

Are you disconnected from the things that nourish your body and soul?

What do you need to deny yourself so that this can be a powerful time in your life?

### **Day 18: Thursday, March 18**

We hope that you will spend some time with God each day during the fast...and afterwards. Here are some thoughts and Scriptures to help you structure your time alone with Him.

#### **Matthew 17:14-16**

*And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."*

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Write it down and release it to our perfect God.

### **Day 1: Monday, March 1**

#### **Pray**

Before you begin reading, take some time to ask God to open your eyes to what he wants for your life during this day of fasting. Don't focus so much on the next 21 days as you do on today.

#### **Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-12**

King Jehoshaphat and the nation of Judah were up against the wall. They were about to face a massive army that was bent on destroying them and they knew it was more than they could handle.

In desperation and as an act of faith, Jehoshaphat decided to fast and pray. Jehoshaphat led the nation in a prayer. At the conclusion of the prayer he said to God, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you."

Jehoshaphat knew that God's perspective on the situation was the same perspective he needed to have. And in the end, God gave them an overwhelming victory.

#### **Journal/Meditate**

When we are up against the wall, we tend to buckle down and try to handle it ourselves. Or, we just roll up in a ball and give up. As Christ-followers, we have another option. We can stand firm—on our knees—and see things from a higher perspective. God is bigger than anything we will ever face.

Think about an area of your life where you need God to show up. Write down some different things that God is showing you about this situation. Now focus on seeing that situation from God's perspective.

#### **Apply**

1. As you come up against obstacles throughout your day—whether they are large or small—get in the habit of praying before you do anything else.
2. Thank God for the ways he is working in your life and how he is helping you see things from a new angle.

#### **Day 2: Tuesday, March 2**

##### **Pray**

Take a moment today to thank God for all he is doing as you fast. Thank him for the options he has made available and the benefits that will come from sticking with your commitment.

##### **Read Daniel 1:1-20**

Daniel was in a foreign land with foreign rules. He was chosen out of the crowd and put on the fast track with all the perks. Daniel received special food from the king's table that most people would love to have. Not only was it an honor, it helped him fit in to this foreign land with foreign rules and rulers.

Yet, in the midst of this, Daniel had a difficult decision. "When in Rome, do as the Romans..." was a real option and it had privileges. But, Daniel knew God had a better plan for his life. Daniel was left with the decision to pursue the privileges of the foreign land or make changes that aligned him with God's plan.

##### **Journal/Meditate**

Daniel put his faith into action and trusted God's plan. As a result, God blessed Daniel's life in ways the foreign rulers could not. And Daniel's decision also led to opportunities for others to experience God's blessings.

In what area of your life are you in a "foreign land"? Rather than

Holy Spirit resides in us and places in us the desire to do what is pleasing to God. (Hebrews 10:16) The Holy Spirit always wants to do what is right. He always wants to uphold the perfect will of God, pleasing the Father in every way. It is our job to lay down our stubborn fleshly will and yield to the will of God. In that moment, the Holy Spirit will be there to help us in our time of need. Instead of trusting in our own strength, let's learn to yield to and become totally reliant upon the Holy Spirit.

Are there areas in your life causing an internal struggle?

Make a decision today that you will yield to the Holy Spirit and lean on His strength, not your own, to overcome obstacles of sin and selfishness in your life.

Surrender and release those areas to God, knowing He will help you.

#### **Day 16: Tuesday, March 16**

##### **Romans 8:5-6**

*For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Have you ever looked up at your ceiling fan blades or in the deep recesses of your couch cushions and noticed the filth that builds up over time? Even though we might clean on a regular basis, there are times when we need to go...a little deeper. We realize that what appeared to be clean on the surface was in all actuality, quite filthy.

The same thing can happen spiritually. As we go about our daily lives, there are things that can build up over time. Even if we regularly worship, pray and read our Bible, the different pressures and cares of this world can quietly build up, and end up consuming our lives. Without even realizing it, we can lose our peace, our joy, and our passion for the things of God. Our service to God, which used to fill us with life and excitement, becomes a duty that we must fulfill.

Fasting is the deep cleaning that helps us take our mind off of the things of this world and instead have a refreshed focus on the things of the Spirit. It is an incredibly effective way to get into the nooks and crannies of our soul and bring all those dusty old habits, broken mindsets and rusty attitudes out into the light of God's truth. In fasting and prayer, our service to God returns to something we want to do rather than something we have to do.

As you pray and fast today, ask God to show you any areas where you could use a refreshed spiritual focus.

Like David, in Psalm 51:10-12, pray that God will cleanse your

ceived. We have received truth.

The kind of truth John is talking about in this passage is not a list of laws and rules such as were given to Moses. Make no mistake; the revelation of God through the word of the law was glorious. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai after receiving the commandments, his face shone so brightly with the glory of God that he had to wear a veil. But the word of the law cannot compare with the word of life that has been revealed through Jesus Christ!

In John 1:18, we are told that no one – not even Moses – had ever seen God. But Jesus has not only seen God; He is God. The truth that John is speaking about is a clear and unveiled vision of the true nature of God. When we try to look at God through the lens of legalism and religion, it is like looking at Him through a veil. Only when we see Him through Jesus Christ can we truly get a glimpse into His heart. It is from a state of grace, not legalism, that we will find real and lasting transformation. (2 Corinthians 3:7-18)

Have you been looking at God through the veil of legalism and religion?

In Jesus, we see the full revelation of the nature of God – His love and holiness, mercy and justice, compassion and power all perfectly and beautifully expressed.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you see God through the eyes of grace and truth given to us in Jesus Christ.

#### **Day 15: Monday, March 15**

##### **Romans 7:18-20**

*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 sin living in me that does it.*

There's an internal war that often wages within each and every one of us. Paul describes this so well here in Romans 7 – we desire to do the right thing, but in our own efforts, we don't have the power to and we mess up.

The good news is that we don't have to rely on our own strength to make right decisions. We don't have to be dominated by our sinful nature and end up doing the things we don't want to do. But the only way we can live this kind of life is by yielding to the Holy Spirit and relying on the strength of Jesus Christ, not our own.

When we're facing struggles, we must rely on God's power alive within us through the Holy Spirit. When we are born again, the

giving up or giving in, use this time to reveal God's plan to others. Stay true to God's plan for your life and you will see blessings accrue. And not only that, you will allow other people the opportunity to experience the greatness of God's plan.

##### **Apply**

What changes do you need to make in order to follow God's plan in the "foreign land" of your life?

Use these opportunities to bless others by showing them God's plan.

#### **Day 3: Wednesday, March 3**

##### **Pray**

Before you begin reading, ask God to reveal His plan and purpose for you during this day of fasting. Don't focus so much on the diet and discipline, but on what He wants to reveal to you today.

##### **Read Matthew 4:1-11**

Prior to embarking on His public ministry, Jesus was led into the desert and fasted for 40 days. At the end of the 40 days, He went toe-to-toe with Satan and faced some serious temptation. Satan knew Christ was vulnerable and he did his best to cause Jesus to sin. Jesus, though, stood firm and refused to give in to the temptation.

After 40 days of fasting and solitude before God, Jesus was intently focused on God and His plan. Not even the most devious scheme Satan could devise would knock Jesus off focus. Jesus' purpose to redeem the world would not be compromised!

##### **Journal/Meditate**

The temptation of Jesus in the desert reveals a lot about Satan and his deceitful ways. He will often attack us when we are at our weakest point, when our cravings are at their all-time high. Satan's only goal is to keep us from fulfilling our God-given purpose. But our mission in life to serve Christ and reflect Him in all we do supersedes any physical or emotional desire we may have. And the only way to maintain a proper understanding of our purpose in the face of temptation is to be focus on Christ.

Think about ways your vision becomes clouded by the evil one. What schemes has the evil one used to try and get you off purpose? Make a list of ways you can make sure your focus remains strong.

##### **Apply**

1. Take time today to refocus on God's purpose for your life. Thank Him for giving you the ability to be victorious in the face of temptation.
2. Whether it is your media intake, too much work, lack of a budget, missing church, or anything else, remove the stumbling blocks that keep you from maintaining your focus and purpose in life.

#### **Day 4: Thursday, March 4**

##### **Pray**

As you prepare to read God's word, take a moment to give Him glory for all that He has provided for you. And thank Him for the work that He is doing in your life and the life of the church.

##### **Read Psalm 34:1-10**

David was known as a man after God's own heart. Whether facing times of trial, desperation, boredom or victory, David always turned his face toward God. He continually sought God's wisdom and direction for his life.

David knew that God was the only one who could truly satisfy and provide for all his needs. And he knew that God was the only one who could truly deliver him from his doubts and fears. And because he knew that, David continued to give God glory and praise through everything he faced.

##### **Journal/Meditate**

No matter what he was facing, good or bad, David always gave praise and glory to God. And he called those around him to do the same thing. He never took credit for his victories. He never blamed God when things got difficult. David knew that those who seek the Lord faithfully will find satisfaction and protection in His arms.

Are you turning to God in every situation you face? During this time of fasting, make a point of glorifying God continually. Praise Him for your victories and ask for His guidance during the more difficult times.

##### **Apply**

Each day thank God for at least one victory you had during the day. And ask Him to help you in any areas where you are struggling.

Make sure to use the victories and struggles as opportunities to point others to God.

#### **Day 5: Friday, March 5**

##### **Pray**

Take a moment today to thank God for all he is doing as you fast. Thank him for the options he has made available and the benefits that will come from sticking with your commitment.

##### **Read Exodus 16:1-12**

Let's take a brief trek down memory lane. The Israelites had been in slavery for hundreds of years. God sent Moses, and through a series of miraculous plagues, Pharaoh was convinced to release them. Once the Israelites were released, though, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his entire army to chase them down. But God miraculously parted the Red Sea: providing an escape route for the Israelites and a death trap for the army. They were finally free! If

ence, the clearer and more recognizable His voice becomes.

time of fasting, what is your mind tuned to?

What distractions do you need to remove so that you can focus on God?

Prepare your heart to hear the voice of God, and ask God to help you remove distractions that keep you from focusing on Him and hearing Him clearly.

#### **Day 13: Saturday, March 13**

##### **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?" 20 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."*

When we pray and fast, we don't do so to change God or His will. By praying and fasting, we are the ones changed. Coming into alignment with God helps us curb our doubts and fears. When we pray and fast, the thing that leaves – the thing that "goes out" – is our unbelief. It is when we have faith to believe, that we can pray with confidence and know that "nothing will be impossible" as we live to bring glory to God.

Ask God to strengthen our hearts to fully believe Him and believe His word. It is okay to recognize and acknowledge if you struggle with unbelief. It's the first step in allowing God to strengthen your faith and bring you into alignment with His plan for your life.

What is it that you need faith to believe for?

Align yourself with God's Word and will during this fast. Release your unbelief.

Pray with confidence, knowing "nothing will be impossible for you."

#### **Day 14: Sunday, March 14**

##### **John 1:17**

*For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if you could see God for who He really is? What would He say about the state of humanity? About religion? About our own propensity toward sin? There is no need to wonder about what God is like because to know Him, we have only to look at Jesus. In Jesus we have received grace, but there is even something more that we have re-

One of those churches helping to lead out during these 21 days is Celebration Church in Florida, led by Pastor Stovall Weems. And as a part of this combined time of fasting and praying, Pastor Stovall and his church have developed some powerful words of encouragement and hope that will be a source of inspiration for us over the remaining 10 days.

As you read these words, we hope you appreciate the work and wisdom that have gone into them. And we urge you to continue praying through the Scriptures as we all seek to discover God's will for our lives.

Take a moment to thank God for providing support and encouragement through people from around the world.

Ask God what you can do to take that encouragement and share it with those around you.

Pray for God's vision and direction to continue to be made clear over the next half of this fast.

**Prayer:**

Dear Lord, Thank you so much for all of the things you have been doing in my life during this fast. I thank you for your provision, your direction and most of all for the fact that I am able to grow closer to you. I pray right now that as I continue this fast, you will use the words of others to encourage me so that I may in turn encourage others. I pray all of this through my Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

**Day 12: Friday, March 12**

**John 10:27**

*"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."*

Have you ever been searching for a radio station only to be frustrated by finding static rather than music? You then focus to fine tune the dial again, and suddenly you hear a clear signal. The fact is, the signal always existed on the airwaves; the only difference is that now you have adjusted your tuner to the right frequency.

In our hectic lives, there are so many signals bombarding our senses that it can become difficult to distinguish God's voice from the deafening "static noise" of life. Fasting enables us to tune out the world's distractions and tune in to God. As we fast, we deny our flesh. When we deny our flesh, we become more in tune to the Holy Spirit and can hear God's voice more clearly. If you truly listen for God's voice, you will hear it. When you hear it, it will build faith within you.

If you desire to tune out the static of life and really tune into the voice of God, come to Him first and foremost with ears that are willing to listen and a heart that is ready to obey what he says. (Psalm 34:18, Isaiah 66:2) The more we practice being in His pres-

anyone had a reason to thank God, it was the Israelites. That act alone should have been enough to last them a lifetime.

But, a growling stomach can drown out even the loudest cries of victory. This newly-freed group of people was hungry and it changed their perspective on everything. Instead of focusing on what they had, they could only think about what they didn't have. Food became more important than freedom.

**Journal/Meditate**

Do you ever lose perspective? While you are participating in this fast, are you focusing on what you can't have or on all that you already have? Take a few minutes today to make a list of the things you are thankful for—especially things that you may normally take for granted.

When we take time to express gratitude to God, it reminds us of the many ways he provides for us every day and it reaffirms that he is "the Lord your God."

**Apply**

Make a list of what you are thankful for. Try to think of things you may not have thought of before.

Look at everything in your life as a gift from God. Because when you do, you will gain a new perspective on all He has provided for you.

**Day 6: Saturday, March 6**

**Pray**

Take a moment before you read and ask God to open your heart to what He has to say. Listen closely to His still, small voice as you read the account of Adam and Eve.

**Read Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7**

God gave Adam and Eve the freedom to experience nearly everything in the Garden. The blessings and opportunities were innumerable. They had free reign, with only one exception. God instructed Adam and Eve not to touch the tree in the middle of the Garden. Yet, despite the countless blessings available to them, Adam and Eve chose to hang dangerously close to the one restriction.

Satan used that one restriction to manipulate and seduce Eve (and in turn, Adam) away from the will and blessing of God. He twisted God's words and caused them to focus on the one thing they were told they could not have. And the seduction was all about their appetite—both physical and spiritual. Satan distracted Eve from the blessing and shifted her focus to the one thing she could not have. And ultimately, they exchanged freedom for a taste of what was restricted.

### **Journal/Meditate**

During this fast, have you focused on the freedom or restriction? We are free to eat of all the fruits and vegetables God has created. There is no way to count all the possibilities. Yet, with all the freedom we have been given, it is tempting to focus on the few restrictions.

Satan can manipulate the freedom God has given us in many areas of our lives. He can make God's freedoms feel restrictive. Don't let Satan manipulate you into giving up the freedom God has given.

### **Apply**

Spend today focusing on the freedoms you have in this fast. Ask God to reveal areas of your life where you have been manipulated into trading in your freedom.

### **Day 7: Sunday, March 7**

#### **Pray**

As you prepare to read God's word, take a moment to thank God for being your constant provider. And thank Him for giving you spiritual nourishment during this time of physical fasting.

### **Read: Genesis 25: 24–34**

As the eldest of two sons, Esau was in line to receive the family birthright—an privilege that included authority over the family's estate, control over the family's finances, and most importantly, God's blessing. The birthright was a tremendous honor; and to lose it, no small thing.

Yet in a tragic moment of weakness, Esau bartered away his family birthright for a single bowl of soup. Esau traded future power, fortune and blessing in order to satisfy a momentary hunger pang. He gave up everything for instant gratification.

### **Journal / Meditate**

In a world where self-discipline and restraint are quickly fading, Esau is a great example of how instant gratification can be costly. But before we rush to judge Esau, we must ask ourselves, "Am I willing to bargain away future blessings in order to have what I want right now? Do I ignore the long term consequences of my choices in order to experience momentary satisfaction?"

God doesn't want us to make poor choices. But when we make those choices, God often allows us to live-out and experience the consequences in order to help us mature.

### **Apply**

Learn not to focus so much on "What I want now." Rather, focus on what God has in store for your life.

Before making any decisions, ask yourself, "Is what I'm choosing the best thing considering God's plan for my life? Is it His will? Is

that will come from sticking with your commitment.

### **Read: 2 Kings 2:23-25**

Elisha was a man of God. Account after account throughout 2 Kings shows how God used Elisha in miraculous ways. Elisha purified poisoned water, miraculously fed a hundred people, blinded enemies of his people, prophesied military victories and famines, and even brought a young man back to life. Elisha is undoubtedly one of the heroes of the Old Testament.

Yet, in this instance, our hero is seen cursing some children who were making fun of his bald head. Elisha called out to God to destroy the disrespectful young people. Elisha expressed a dark desire to God. Did Elisha's prayer force God to do something God did not want to do? Of course not. But the prayer shows us that we can go to God with anything. Elisha was not afraid to complain to God. For Elisha, there was much more to prayer than glancing over the issues that his was facing—good or bad.

### **Journal/Meditate**

God invites us all to join him in a conversation known as prayer. He wants us to openly and honestly communicate—in good times and in bad. God wants us to come to him and express dreams that we have told no one else about. He knows that at times our communication will be selfish. There are times our communication will reveal dark things in our hearts like hurt, anger, bitterness and envy. And it can be scary to share those parts of our heart with God.

But like Elisha, we can express our deepest secrets to God without worrying that He is going to be shocked and punish us. God will work through our honesty to align us with His will.

### **Apply**

Search your heart for the deep secrets you have been hiding from God. Spend the next few minutes opening up and being honest with God. Don't worry about what you say. Simply go to God and begin to pray.

### **Day 11: Thursday, March 11**

#### **Hebrews 12:1**

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."*

One of the most encouraging aspects of a fast like the one you are taking part in is the fact that you are not alone. Right now, thousands of other people are taking part in this with you. Not only are you surrounded by the people of Fellowship Church, you are also joined by churches and people from around the world.

## Day 9: Tuesday, March 9

### **Pray**

Ask God to reveal His truth to you during this time of prayer. Open your heart to receive His word, and listen to how God wants to use this time to lead you to a larger than life existence.

### **Read: Numbers 11:10-15**

Moses knew what it was like to be overwhelmed and overburdened. Though he loved the Israelites, they also drove him crazy at times! They always seemed to be complaining about something. Ironically, in this passage, they were complaining because they didn't have any meat to eat. Though God had miraculously delivered them from slavery and supernaturally met their every need, it wasn't enough for them! They wanted more.

But Moses was not afraid to take his feelings to God. And he went to God in times of frustration, irritation, and pure anger. But Moses also went to God in times of joy and happiness. When it came to prayer, Moses held nothing back from God.

### **Meditate/Journal**

Many of us have felt overwhelmed and overburdened in the workplace, in our homes, or in our social circles. But so often we think we can't bring these issues to God. How did Moses do it day after day? How did he maintain his sanity?

The key was that he knew that God was ready to listen—no matter what. There were probably many occasions when Moses was hanging from his last thread and he unloaded on God. But that's what God wants. He wants you to come to Him when you are irritated, frustrated, or just plain angry—just as much as He wants you to come to Him when you are happy, joyous and victorious. Don't hold anything back when it comes to communicating with God, because God is big enough to handle anything you bring to Him.

### **Apply**

When you talk with God, find a quiet, solitary place and imagine that God is sitting next to you. Then, just start talking. Don't be afraid to share your frustrations. But don't just talk. Be ready to listen. You may find that the issue isn't with everyone else. He may want to use your situation to mold and shape you.

## Day 10: Wednesday, March 10

### **Pray**

Take a moment today to thank God for all he is doing as you fast. Thank him for the options he has made available and the benefits

it in line with His desires?"

## Day 8: Monday, March 8

### **Pray**

As you prepare to read God's word today, take a moment to think about prayer. Consider what you think prayer is, and isn't. And ask God to help you discover the revolutionary way prayer can change your life.

### **Read: Matthew 6:5-8**

In a world steeped with temple traditions, theological rituals and priestly routines, Jesus' instructions on prayer turned the religious world upside down. Many of the religions elite during the time viewed prayer as a means to elevate themselves and display their superiority when it came to the things of God. But Jesus saw through the hype of these hypocrites and taught otherwise.

People had never heard anyone speak about prayer the way Jesus did because He taught "as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." Jesus taught that prayer was alive, growing, and vibrant. Prayer was no longer something to be seen by men as a means to establish superiority. Jesus showed the world how prayer is something that acts as a lifeline to connect us with God.

### **Journal / Meditate**

One of the greatest lessons Jesus taught about prayer was the fact that God knows what we need before we ever ask it. And while some view that statement as an opportunity to duck out of prayer altogether, the real strength of that truth is that it frees us up to just pray. We no longer need to worry about what we say in prayer.

The words we use to talk with God are not as important as the fact that we are coming to God with our requests. God isn't concerned with whether or not we use the right pronouns, verbs, sentence structure or train of thought. All God is concerned about is that we come humbly to Him and talk about what is going on in our lives.

Don't get hung up on the semantics of prayer. Instead, focus on the amazing fact that God is waiting for you to come to Him and talk about what is going on in your life.

### **Apply**

When you sit down (or stand up or lie down or kneel) to pray, simply open up your heart to God. Tell Him in plain language about your feelings, your thoughts, and your desires. Don't worry about the words that come out of your mouth. Just start talking with God.