

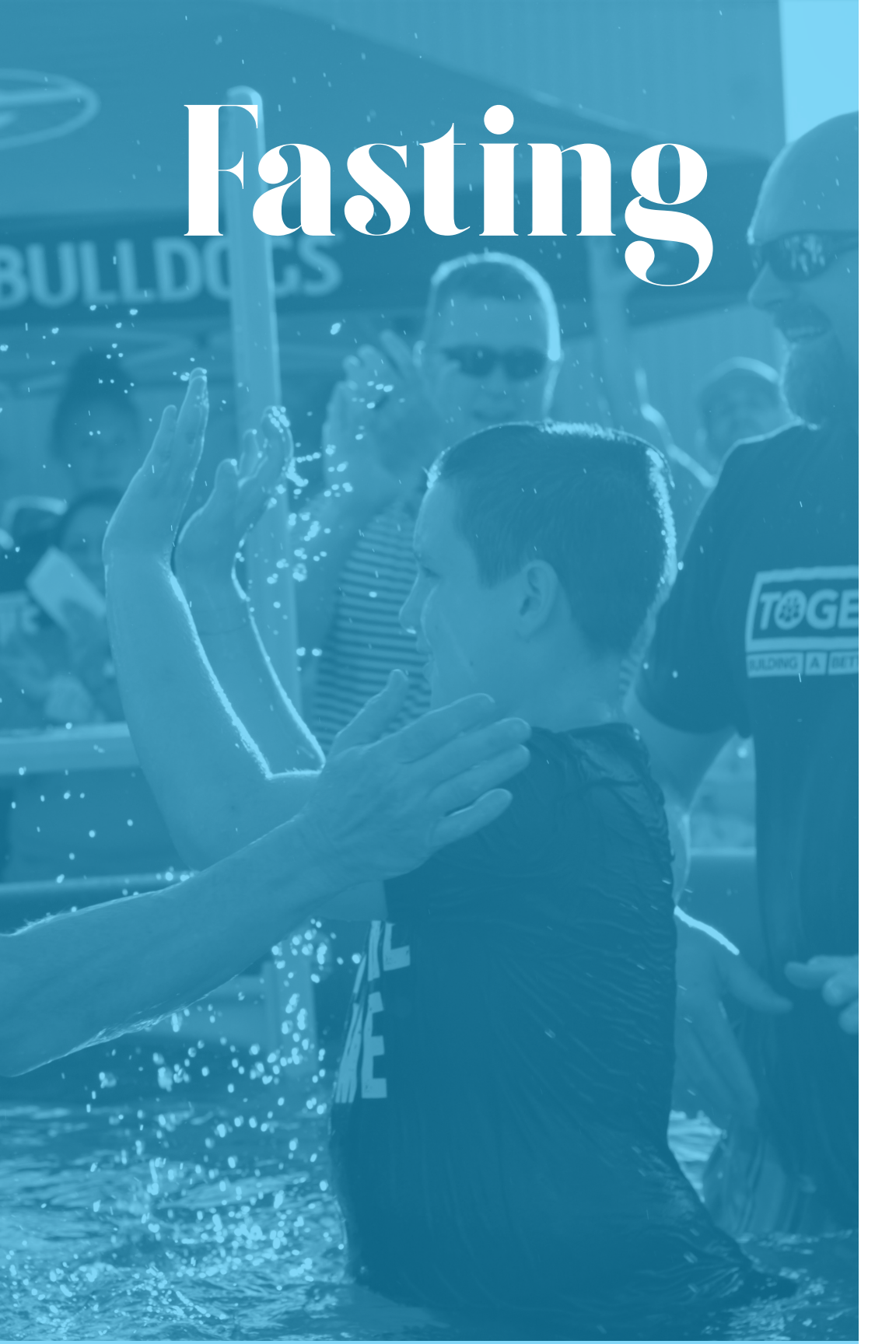


21

DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING

— 2022 —

Fasting



“A prayerful church is a powerful church.”

- Charles Spurgeon

Bethlehem Kids,

In January of 2021, we kicked off the new year and called our church to participate in 21 days of fasting and prayer. This time of prayer and fasting strengthened us as a church like never before. We are excited to do this again this year!

Jesus said, “If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19). When we share the experience of fasting and praying together as the body of Christ, we will have more focus and power in our prayers and grow closer to God and each other.

The purpose of this time with God is to ask for forgiveness of our sins, to change our hearts and minds as we turn from our sin and put Him and His ways first in our life. Psalm 139:23-24 says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” God loves us too much to leave us in our sin. Ask God to show you specific areas in your life that are in need of change and ask for forgiveness. Pray that God shows you habits that He wants to change in you so that you may experience the new life that He designed for you to have. We are called to be the light and we know that when you grow closer to God you will be able to shine that light brighter and brighter for the world to see. If we do this together the world will be a much brighter place!

In Christ,

Bethlehem Kids Team

WHY FAST?

God created us with the need and the desire for many things, so why would we choose to go without the things God has created?

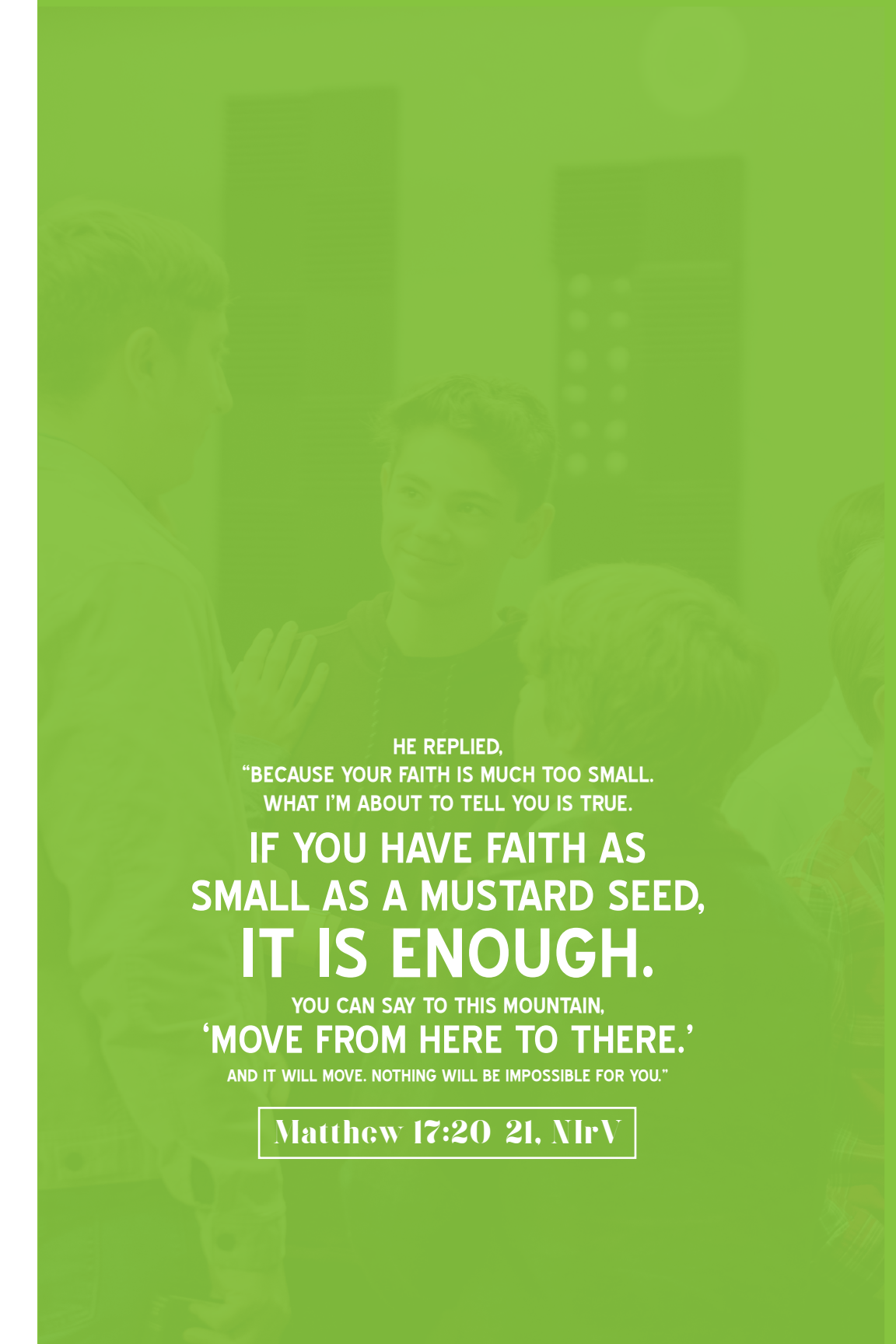
Fasting for spiritual and health reasons is a practice we see throughout Scripture. Moses, Daniel, Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, and Paul all fasted. Even Jesus Himself fasted (Matthew 4:1-11). When talking to His disciples, Jesus said, "When you fast..." not if you fast (Matthew 6:16). Though we are not required to fast in order to be saved, fasting was an expected discipline throughout the Old and New Testament and should be a regular spiritual practice in the life of a believer to help build our character, bring us near to God, and strengthen our faith.

When you have been praying for something for a long time and haven't seen the results you want, fasting can help bring the breakthrough you are seeking. When you fast it gets God's attention and lets Him know you are serious.

We do not fast in order to talk God into answering our prayers, but to show Him that we trust Him and want to depend on Him in all things.

Fasting is saying that we desire the Lord more than we desire this thing we are fasting from. As Pastor Jason says, when we fast, we are declaring before Him, "I need You more than I need _____."

The goal of fasting is to eliminate distractions and build our relationship with God, praying according to His will, not ours. Fasting gives us spiritual eyes to see, gaining His perspective on how we may pray in order to accomplish His purposes. Remember, your personal fast should be a challenge to you, not what someone else is doing or wants to do. **Most importantly, pray with your parents and let the Holy Spirit lead you on what to do.**



HE REPLIED,
“BECAUSE YOUR FAITH IS MUCH TOO SMALL.
WHAT I’M ABOUT TO TELL YOU IS TRUE.

**IF YOU HAVE FAITH AS
SMALL AS A MUSTARD SEED,
IT IS ENOUGH.**

YOU CAN SAY TO THIS MOUNTAIN,
‘MOVE FROM HERE TO THERE.’

AND IT WILL MOVE. NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU.”

Matthew 17:20 21, NIV

WHAT DO WE FAST?

THERE ARE 3 TYPES OF FASTS:



COMPLETE FAST:

In this type of fast, you would give up something completely for 21 days.



SELECTIVE FAST:

This type of fast involves removing certain things, for example, you might want to fast from a video game but not all of your video games. Or maybe it's fasting from a certain TV show you love, but not all TV. It could be that you remove sweets from your diet or your favorite candy.



PARTIAL FAST:

This type of fast would be giving up something during a certain time of the day.

BOTTOM LINE: Keep it simple. Choose something that has become a distraction for you, or something that is taking too much of your time and eliminate it. Whatever you choose to fast, take the time you would normally spend doing the activity from which you are fasting and spend it with God in prayer. Your fast may appear to be simple to some, but it is a huge step of faith, especially if you are new to fasting. Each person should commit to fast at his or her individual level of ability and availability during the next 21 days.

PREPARING FOR YOUR FAST

As you consider fasting, we want to encourage you to spend some time in prayer, ask God to lead you in this time of seeking Him, and listen to the Holy Spirit for His direction. **Ask Him specifically what He wants you to fast.** Whether you choose to fast from a type of food (candy, soft drinks) or a certain TV show or video game for 21 days, the point is to **humble yourself in a new way** and draw near to God to experience a greater relationship with Him.

WHEN YOU FAST, EXPECT IT TO BE HARD.

Our spiritual enemy, Satan, will fight against you just as he fought against Jesus when He fasted (Matthew 4).

1 Peter 5:8–9 says,

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

Fasting is spiritually and physically challenging, but we take on this adventure not with fear, but **fully believing** and **expecting that God will fight for us** as we pray.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

THERE IS NO SPECIFIC FORMULA ON HOW TO PRAY.

Prayer is simply talking to God. Praying Scripture, God's words, back to Him, and reminding yourself of His promises is a great way to connect with Him and know His will and direction for your life.

The goal of using this guide is **not to add pressure or overwhelm you**, but to help you get comfortable talking to God. Use this prayer guide as a tool to pray. If you have a hard time staying focused in prayer, use the prayer guide to bring your focus back to God.

Feel free to add your own personal prayers as well.

As you pray, be sure to take time to listen. **Write down what God may be speaking**

to you in the journal space provided. To make your prayer time even more meaningful, you can write notes or prayer requests and play worship music in the background. The most important step is committing to regularly entering God's presence through prayer.

This guide was written to help you discover and enjoy prayer in a new way. While prayer does take commitment and can require discipline to develop into a daily habit, we also want to remember that it's something we "get to" do instead of something we "have to" do. **It's a privilege to be able to come to God in prayer.**

PRAYER IS
SOMETHING
WE “GET TO”
DO INSTEAD OF
SOMETHING WE
“HAVE TO” DO.



DAY 1

Psalm 139:23–24, NIV

God, see what is in my heart. Know what is there. Test me. Know what I'm thinking. See if there's anything in my life you don't like. Help me live in the way that is always right.



PRAYER

God, You created me. You know me better than I know myself. Search my heart and point out anything that upsets You. Give me the power from Your Holy Spirit to change to be more like You. Replace it with a greater love for You, in Jesus' name.

For further study, read Psalm 139:13–24.

DAY 2

Philippians 2:13, NLT

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.



PRAYER

God, thank You for your Holy Spirit working in me, giving me not only the desire to do Your will but also the strength to accomplish it. Help me to listen to Your Holy Spirit, and give me the mind of Christ. I want to do what is pleasing to You.

For further study, read Philippians 2:1–15.

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DAY 3

Mark 9:24, NLT

The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"



PRAYER

God, I know that I sin because I struggle to completely trust You. God, I do believe You. I believe in Your authority and Your Word. I trust in You, and I'm sorry for when I have a hard time believing. Grow my trust in You and fill me with faith.

For further study, read Mark 9:14-29.

DAY 4

Hebrews 11:6, NLT

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.



PRAYER

Father, I ask You to give me eyes of faith because I know that without faith it is impossible to please You. I pray that You will help me live out the life You created for me to have through faith.

For further study, read Hebrews 11:1-39.

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DAY 5

John 16:13, NIV

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.



PRAYER

God, point out any lies that I have believed. Thank You for giving me the Spirit of truth. Lead me and guide me into all truth.

For further study, read John 16:5-15.

DAY 6

Romans 12:2, NLT

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.



PRAYER

God, I ask for forgiveness in any areas where I have acted like someone who doesn't believe in You. Help me be a new person through faith, trusting in Your truth written in the Bible. Thank You for the opportunity to become a new person in Christ.

For further study, read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Romans 8.

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DAY 7

2 Corinthians 10:4, NIV

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.



PRAYER

God, help me to rely on You when I am tempted to think I can handle situations on my own. Your ways are not my ways. Your thoughts are greater than my thoughts. I want to experience miracles because of Your power in my life.

For further study, read Ephesians 6:10-18.

DAY 8

John 10:10, MSG

A thief is only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.



PRAYER

King Jesus, thank You for coming to give me a life filled with joy. I want all that You have for me, Lord. Help me believe that Your plan for my life is far better than I could ever dream of.

For further study, read John 10:1-18.

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DAY 9

Romans 2:4, NLT

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?



PRAYER

Father, thank You for the loving-kindness that You have shown to me. Thank You that it is Your kindness that makes me want to be closer to You and guides me to ask for forgiveness when I sin. God, give me the faith, strength, and wisdom to turn from my sin and follow You with my whole heart, knowing that a life lived following You is far better than anything I can ever imagine.

For further study, read Romans 2:1-11.

DAY 10

Matthew 5:44, NIV

But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you.



PRAYER

God, right now I am thinking of those who have hurt me, and I ask You to bless them. Lord, show Yourself to them, that You love them, and that You sent Your Son to die for them on the cross. I pray that they would know how much You love them. Please help me love them the way that You do.

For further study, read Romans 12:9-21.

[illegible]

DAY 11

Matthew 6:14-15, NIV

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.



PRAYER

God, help me to forgive others as You have forgiven me. Thank You for the grace and the forgiveness You have shown me, even when I don't deserve it. Thank You that You do not hold my sins against me. Help me to show that same grace and forgiveness to others.

For further study, read Matthew 18:21-35.

DAY 12

Ephesians 3:16-17, NIV

I pray that he will use his glorious riches to make you strong. May his Holy Spirit give you his power deep down inside you. Then Christ will live in your hearts because you believe in him. And I pray that your love will have deep roots. I pray that it will have a strong foundation.



PRAYER

Father, make me stronger through Your power within me, Your Holy Spirit. I pray that Jesus would make His home inside my heart as I learn to trust You more and more, making Him the foundation of my life.

For further study, read Ephesians 3:14-21; Jeremiah 17:5-10.

[illegible]

DAY 13

1 Timothy 2:1, NIV

First, I want you to pray for all people. Ask God to help and bless them. Give thanks for them.



PRAYER

Father God, I pray for the people You have placed in my life. Today, I specifically pray for my family and those closest to me. Thank You for placing them in my life. Jesus, reach out to them and lead their hearts closer to You. Help them to hear Your voice, and give them a desire to obey You. I pray that they would know and understand the truth and be saved through faith in Christ Jesus.

For further study, read 2 Peter 3:8-10.

DAY 14

1 Timothy 2:2-4, NLT

Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.



PRAYER

God, I lift up those in high positions of leadership in government. Guide their hearts towards Yours. There is no power except from You. Give them wisdom through Your Holy Spirit and lead them to an understanding of Jesus Christ if they don't already know You. Bless them so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and respect.

For further study, read Colossians 1:16-17; Romans 13:1.

[illegible]

DAY 15

Colossians 4:3-4, NIV

And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.



PRAYER

Father, I lift up the pastors and leaders of our church to You. Thank You for choosing them and calling them to share Your truth. Give them a holy and pure love for You, Your word and Your truth. Give them strength that allows their actions to line up with their beliefs. Give them wisdom and empower them to teach the truth as clearly as they should. Help me to have the courage and words to proclaim the gospel today.

For further study, read Colossians 4.

DAY 16

Matthew 16:18-19, NIV

"Here is what I tell you. You are Peter. On this rock I will build my church. The gates of hell will not be strong enough to destroy it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. What you lock on earth will be locked in heaven. What you unlock on earth will be unlocked in heaven."



PRAYER

King Jesus, thank You for Bethlehem Church. God, I pray that our church will continue to be a light in this dark world. Bless all Bible-believing, truth-preaching, and Jesus-following churches in our community to continue to stand strong against the powers of darkness and fight the good fight. Thank You for giving us the keys to the kingdom of heaven. We ask that Your power and Your love, through Your Holy Spirit, would be poured out in new ways, in Jesus' name.

For further study, read Matthew 16.

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DAY 17

2 Timothy 4:2-5, NIV

Preach the word. Be ready to serve God in good times and bad. Correct people's mistakes. Warn them. Encourage them with words of hope. Be very patient as you do these things. Teach them carefully. The time will come when people won't put up with true teaching. Instead, they will try to satisfy their own desires. They will gather a large number of teachers around them. The teachers will say what the people want to hear. The people will turn their ears away from the truth. They will turn to stories that aren't true. But I want you to keep your head no matter what happens. Don't give up when times are hard. Work to spread the good news. Do everything God has given you to do.



PRAYER

Father, I lift up the Church across the world to You. God, I pray that You would open doors for our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world to preach the truth. Give them a steady spirit, and help them to stand firm in the face of hard times and suffering. Help them not be afraid to suffer for You, that they would work hard at telling others the Gospel, and fully carry out the ministry You have given them.

For further study, read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28.

DAY 18

Matthew 9:36-38, NLT

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."



PRAYER

God, we know that You are in charge of the harvest of people who come to know You and the number of people who will know You is bigger than we understand. Please bring people to partner with You and serve You. Send out Your people with hearts full of excitement for the lost, and bring them home to You.

For further study, read Luke 10:1-18.

[illegible]

DAY 19

Matthew 22:37-40, NIV

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me realize how much I am loved by You, to know Your love, understand Your love, and grow my ability to love You with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind, and all my strength. Help me to love those around me the way that You do. Help me to see them through Your eyes.

For further study, read 1 Corinthians 13.

DAY 20

Luke 8:38-39, NLT

But Jesus sent him home, saying, “No, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you.” So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him.



PRAYER

God, help me to tell others about You. Help me to share my story of what You have done for me with others. Help me to be a witness for You, telling the world about Jesus. Help me to be a light for You.

For further study, read John 17:18-21.

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DAY 21

Isaiah 58:6-8, NIV

"Here is the way I want you to fast. "Set free those who are held by chains without any reason. Untie the ropes that hold people as slaves. Set free those who are crushed. Break every evil chain. Share your food with hungry people. Provide homeless people with a place to stay. Give naked people clothes to wear. Provide for the needs of your own family. Then the light of my blessing will shine on you like the rising sun. I will heal you quickly. I will march out ahead of you. And my glory will follow behind you and guard you. That's because I always do what is right.



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as I end this fast, I pray that Your presence would continue to guide me, Your Holy Spirit would fill me, and help me to walk in the ways of Jesus. God, I give You my life. Fill me, every part, and use me to bring glory to Your name. Help me to live for You, hear Your voice, and to do Your will. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth and in my life as it is in heaven. I surrender my life to You, help me to become more like Jesus. In His name I pray, Amen.

For further study, read Isaiah 58.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND HERE:

- www.liberty.edu/osd/lu-shepherd/spiritual-disciplines-40-days-of-fasting-resources/
- www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting.html

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A Final Word:

“ Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on

EVERY PIECE OF GOD'S ARMOR

so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the

BELT OF TRUTH

and the

BODY ARMOR

of God's righteousness.

FOR SHOES,

put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the

SHIELD OF FAITH

to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on

SALVATION AS YOUR HELMET,

and take the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT,

which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. ”



BETHLEHEM CHURCH

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