



PRAYER & FASTING 2023

Prayer and Fasting

When the disciples said, 'Lord, teach us how to pray', it was a genuine, heart-felt cry. It's a cry that needs to echo daily in our own lives as believers. We must cultivate a heart for prayer if we are going to create the lifestyle of a praying believer.

1. What is fasting?

Fasting is simply defined as going without food for a period of time, either entirely or partially. It is a spiritual discipline that has many benefits.

Please note: If you have any health issues contact your GP or health professional for advice before committing to any fast, including the Daniel, partial or liquid fasts.

2. Why would anyone starve themselves?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that has been out of vogue in many churches in the Western world for over a century. So why do we take the time to fast?

We are a church that seeks to not just live a Christian lifestyle, but see our lives, our family, friends, neighbours and co-workers affected by the life and power of Jesus.

We want to become the kind of church God has in mind, the kind of church we read about in the New Testament where times of fasting resulted in a channel of God's power. Fasting disciplines a person's spiritual appetite, aligns their soul with the will of God and opens a channel of God's life and power that perhaps no other activity can.

We want to build momentum, we want to see the Lord move not just in each one of our lives, but the lives of every person that we have the opportunity to influence.

THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT WE SEE PEOPLE FASTING:

- For mourning (Nehemiah 1:4; 1 Samuel 31:13)
- For repentance (1 Samuel 6; Nehemiah 9:1; Jonah 3:5)
- To hear from God (Ezra 8:21)
- To provoke God to move on their behalf (2 Chronicles 20:3; Esther 4:16; Daniel 9:3)
- To petition God (Acts 10:30)
- To seek the mind of God (Acts 13:2)
- To prepare for ministry (Matthew 4:2; Acts 13:3)
- For spiritual power (Matthew 17:21)

3. What are the benefits of fasting?

Fasting has many benefits but it's not a way to earn God's blessing, or 'get' God to answer our prayers. We need to be obedient, humble and surrender to God's will and purposes in every situation.

- Fasting brings direction from God (Acts 10:30; Acts 13:2-3; Judges 20:26)
- Fasting brings the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14)
- Fasting brings answers to prayer (Esther 4:16; Nehemiah 1:4)
- Fasting brings action from God (2 Chronicles 20:20-21)
- Fasting brings a spiritual breakthrough (Matthew 17:21)
- Fasting deepens humility (Ezra 8:21, 1 Peter 5:6)

As you begin your fast, focus on the souls of those close to you who need salvation. Do not be discouraged but persistent. Keep praying!

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

HEBREWS 12:3

Sessions 1–5

1. God Is Our Refuge

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

Christ is our secret place, our panic room and our place of safety. He is the only one in whom we find refuge in this world. When things spin out of our control, He's always in control. He never leaves us nor forsakes us. He is faithful and loyal. He is everything. He is our all in all.

KEY SCRIPTURES

The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.

(PSALM 46:11, NKJV)

But I will sing of Your power; Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; For You have been my defense And refuge in the day of my trouble.

(PSALM 59:16, NKJV)

ILLUSTRATION

Plowing at night through rough, foggy seas, a battleship's radar suddenly indicates an object directly in its path. The ship's captain sends a radio signal, "We are on a collision course. Advise you to change course 10 degrees north."

A response crackles over the radio: "Negative. We advise you to change course 10 degrees south."

The captain can now see a blinking light from the approaching object. Perturbed, he bellows a reply: "I'm a ship's captain. Change course 10 degrees north, now!"

"I'm a seaman second class," comes the reply. "Advise that you change course 10 degrees south to avoid imminent collision."

The captain is furious. He blurts another command: "This is a battleship! Change your course immediately!"

Back comes the calm reply: "This is a lighthouse."

The battleship changed course.

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask Christ to take centre stage in your life
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas in your life that need God's touch
- Surrender your fears and failures to the Lord
- Sing of God's goodness and declare His power over your life

DAILY TASK

- Study and reflect on Psalm 91
- Spend 30 minutes in prayer
- Find other words for 'refuge' and apply them to your circumstances
- Revisit Sunday's preaching

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

God is not only Lord of our physical life but our thought life, too. Ask Him to help you deal with any areas in your mind where you face struggles.

Read Psalm 1 and make note of anything God highlights to you.

2. God Is Our Strength

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

Strength to those who need it. That is our Saviour's promise. He is our strength when we feel weak or experience situations that appear too much for us to handle. His call is simple, yet profound: 'Come to me all you who are weary'. When we humble ourselves and seek His help it unlocks access to strength far beyond our own ability.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.

(DEUTERONOMY 31:6, ESV)

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

(PHILIPPIANS 4:13, ESV)

But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

(ISAIAH 40:31, ESV)

ILLUSTRATION

George Liele demonstrated a strength of compassion. Born into slavery, Liele was taught to read and write by his slave owners. He attended church, but believed he could only be loved by God if he did good things. But he submitted his life to God. His story will challenge those who have grown up in the church or in cultural Christianity to consider the gospel again.

Liele had a talent for teaching and was ordained as the first black pastor in the Baptist church in America. He preached to both white and black members in his church. He was freed by his master in 1776 and later moved his family to Jamaica and started preaching the gospel there. He was thrown in jail while there for preaching the gospel to slaves, but he was released and went right on preaching. He was the first known Baptist missionary, taking the gospel to Jamaica 10 years before William Carey went to India. He “left a legacy of slaves and former slaves who knew freedom and rest in Jesus Christ because of his faithful teaching”.

[SOURCE: ERLC.COM](#)

God can use you too, no matter how difficult things may seem.

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God to reveal any areas in your life where you need His strength
- Ask for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit
- Identify the daily need for God’s touch
- Lean on God’s word and understand that it is progressive and not instant

DAILY TASK

- Read and meditate on Psalm 18
- Pray for 40 minutes
- Worship the Lord for 20 minutes
- Write out your goals to grow in God this year

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

The Lord is your strength. He grants power to the weak and those who call upon Him in their hour of need find strength.

3. God Is Our Healer

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

We are all familiar with the Scripture in Isaiah, 'by His stripes we are healed', and we all remember Jesus' promise that healing is the children's bread. But do we *know* them? Nothing makes us feel lower than illness and it's God's desire to lift us up and make us well. Christ wants to heal us from all our sicknesses and diseases!

KEY SCRIPTURES

Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.

(PSALM 30:2, NIV)

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

(JAMES 5:14-15, NIV)

But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,' declares the Lord...

(JEREMIAH 30:17, NIV)

ILLUSTRATION

A woman who had been bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and barely touched his clothes. She had said to herself, "If I can just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Jesus turned. He saw the woman and said, "Don't worry! You are now healed because of your faith." At that moment she was healed.

(MATTHEW 9:20-22, CEV)

At this very moment in time, God can heal you!

PRAYER POINTS

- Declare God's healing over you and your family
- Ask the Lord to heal you completely
- Refuse to accept sickness as a life sentence

DAILY TASK

- Look up Scriptures on healing and commit them to memory
- Ask for the elders of the church to anoint you with oil and pray with you for healing

- Stir your faith by reading Scripture and applying it in your life daily
- Take your medication, but understand that the Lord is your healer
- Christ has the final say. Seek Him in prayer for one hour today

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

Jesus is the one who heals our bodies and our minds. Surrender your thoughts to Him. Make Him Lord of your thought life and ask the Holy Spirit to be your filter.

Read and meditate on Romans 12:1-2.

4. God Is Our Provider

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

We all have different needs at different times in our lives and Christ provides for all of them, be it physical, emotional or financial. Without Jesus to lean on, our worlds would be much more difficult on many different levels. Choose to declare today: He is my provider.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram caught in the thicket by its horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in the place of his son. And Abraham named that place The Lord Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

(GENESIS 22:13-14, NASB)

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

(PHILIPPIANS 4:19, NKJV)

Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

(ACTS 14:17, KJV)

ILLUSTRATION

George Müller (1805-1898) was a Christian missionary evangelist and a coordinator of orphanages in Bristol, England. Through his faith and prayers (and without asking for money) he had the privilege of caring for over 120,000 orphan children. He also travelled over 200,000 miles (by ship) to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in 42 countries and to challenge believers about world missions and trusting God.

In his journals, Müller recorded miracle-after-miracle of God's provision and answered prayer. Here is an example:

One morning, all the plates and cups and bowls on the table were empty. There was no food in the larder and no money to buy food. The children were standing, waiting for their morning meal, when Müller said, "Children, you know we must be in time for school." Then lifting up his hands he prayed, "Dear Father, we thank Thee for what Thou art going to give us to eat."

There was a knock at the door. The baker stood there, and said, "Mr. Müller, I couldn't sleep last night. Somehow I felt you didn't have bread for breakfast, and the Lord wanted me to send you some. So I got up at 2 a.m. and baked some fresh bread, and have brought it."

Mr. Müller thanked the baker, and no sooner had he left, when there was a second knock at the door. It was the milkman. He announced that his milk cart had broken down right in front of the orphanage, and he would like to give the children his cans of fresh milk so he could empty his wagon and repair it.

[SOURCE: MISSIONMINDEDFAMILIES.ORG](https://www.missionmindedfamilies.org)

Now you too can pray, let go, and trust God to work on your behalf.

PRAYER POINTS

- Thank God for all He has done in your past
- Ask Him to continue to provide for all your needs
- Thank Him, by faith, for meeting your future needs

DAILY TASK

- Give your seed-faith offerings to the Lord
- Journal your short- and long-term needs
- Ask God to show you which of those needs are not in His plan for you
- Read and study Matthew 6:25-34
- Spend 40 minutes in prayer

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

Casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully].

(1 PETER 5:7, AMP)

Read this verse and note the things you need to give to the Lord. Try not to focus on what isn't going well in your life and instead find things to be grateful for.

5. God Is Our Way

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

The most essential tool in navigation is a compass. A compass helps keep you on course in spite of any external interference. It's simple, solid and reliable. Even more so is Christ. His Word is our compass, a constant in an ever-changing world.

KEY SCRIPTURES

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

(JOHN 10:9, NKJV)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

(1 JOHN 2:15-17, ESV)

There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; whoever hates reproof will die.

(PROVERBS 15:10, ESV)

ILLUSTRATION

In The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21), Jesus makes a profound statement we all should listen to very carefully. He states in verse 15 that "one's life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses." The parable of the rich fool suggests this very thing. This parable tells of a rich man who has yielded a great crop. He decides to tear down his old barns and build newer, bigger barns. Then after he is done, he decides to retire, so to speak, thinking that he has enough stored up to last many years. Now he can sit back, relax, and take it easy. What happens? God calls him a fool and says that his life is required of him that day. Jesus completes this parable by saying, "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." So many of us long for the day we can sit back and enjoy our fortune we have been saving up for retirement and take the path of easiness. This man was ruled by his wealth, thinking of all he had accumulated, only to die that night and see his wealth squandered and split up. He was unable to take it with him.

[SOURCE: BIBLE.ORG](#)

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God to help keep you on the right path
- Ask God for wisdom (James 1)
- Worship Him

DAILY TASK

- Spend an hour studying Proverbs 5, 6 and 7 and then pray over what you've read
- Write down any areas in your life where you need direction
- List out answers to prayers over the years
- Take serious time in prayer and thought

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

Ask for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. Seek God in a fresh way for you and your loved ones. Let God clear your mind and fill you with His peace that goes beyond our understanding.

Sessions 6–10

6. God Is Our Source

WRITTEN BY KATE GOOCH

God is the source of all. He is Jehovah Jireh (the Lord our provider). While our resources may be limited, God's supply is never exhausted. He who created the heavens and the earth lacks nothing. He is not constrained by what physically seems possible but provides even in the most unexpected and unusual ways.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

(1 CORINTHIANS 8:6, NIV)

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvellous glory and excellence.

(2 PETER 1:3, NLT)

ILLUSTRATION

In the 1836, George Muller opened the first of five orphanages in Bristol, England. In his lifetime, these orphanages would provide a home for over 10,000. George Muller was not a man of great wealth. In fact, when he felt that God called him to build the orphanages, he had a mere two shillings in his pockets. There were frequently times when they did not have enough food for either themselves or the children they cared for. Yet, George steadfastly relied on God to provide even when the circumstances seemed impossible. They choose to trust in God in every situation. On one occasion, George's wife walking into the study to tell him, "We are out of milk; there isn't enough for the morning porridge." Setting aside his pen, George replied, "Mary, let us pray!" Two of the orphanage workers joined them. George added: "Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him and expect help from Him, He will never fail you." There was a knock at the door and Mary returned from answering the door with an envelope. Within it, there was more than enough money for milk. Within two minutes, two more letters with money and pledges arrived.

[SOURCE: GUIDEPOSTS.ORG](#)

On another occasion, when all funds were exhausted, George considered selling any items to hand. He wrote, "This morning I had asked the Lord, if it might be, to prevent the necessity of our doing so." That afternoon, a lady arrived with a package containing money that had been sent several days earlier. George wrote, "That the money had been so near for several days without being given, is a plain proof that it was in the heart of God to help us; but because He delights in the prayers of His children, He had allowed us to pray so long ... to try our faith and to make the answer so much the sweeter."

[SOURCE: GEORGEMULLER.ORG](#)

PRAYER POINTS

- Read Philippians 4:19 and ask God specifically for any needs you have today
- Ask God to reveal anyone who is in need that you can bless, encourage, or support
- Ask God to help you to 'excel in the grace of giving' and to be a good steward of all He has given us
- Ask God for greater faith to trust Him in every area of your life, including your finances

DAILY TASK

- Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7. Even in the face of their own lack and poverty, where did the Macedonian churches choose to invest what they had? Why?
- Honour the Lord with your tithes, first fruits and offerings (Malachi 3:10; Proverbs 3:9-10). Pray over your financial budget—and if you don't have a budget, spend some time prayerfully creating one. Ask: is there anything I can do to give God greater honour with my finances?

- Consider: Do I lean on God to provide, or do I try to address my financial needs through my own efforts (e.g. relying on credit and loans, taking on additional work, replacing time in church with time at work)? Do I seek God's Kingdom first, and prioritise Him before my work and financial needs?

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

We do not need to worry about our financial and material needs. God not only knows what we need, but is able to liberally supply. Read Matthew 6:19-34 and record anything that God highlights to you.

7. God Is Our Hope

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

Christ is our hope in the midst of hopelessness. When we feel like all hope is lost, we must remember Christ. Nothing in this world will last except the hope we have in Him. Keep this thought—and hope in Christ—in your mind today.

KEY SCRIPTURES

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

(2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18, ESV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(1 PETER 1:3-7, ESV)

ILLUSTRATION

Since it first aired, popular home improvement show Fixer Upper has garnered more than 24 million viewers, making it one of the highest-rated shows of its kind. Chip's sense of humor and Joanna's impeccable eye for design are what attract this following. But the true foundation beneath each home they build or renovate is their faith.

Chip's faith journey can actually be traced back to a Billy Graham Crusade the year after he was born.

"The impact that man has had on my life is immeasurable," Chip said.

In 1975, his mother, Gayle, attended a Billy Graham Crusade in Albuquerque. Rededicating her life to the Lord, Gayle was changed that night, and Billy Graham's impact on her would cascade down to the rest of the family.

"His simple sermons brought people from all denominations and churches; whenever they extended an invitation to believe, attendees would swarm to the front," Chip said.

"Even though my mom had been baptized at the age of 8, she decided to go forward to answer the invitation to believe. My parents made attending church a priority, (which) strengthened their marriage, and they involved themselves in a young couple's Sunday school class. In the 1990s my mom worked at Word Publishing, which published books for Billy Graham. She found continued encouragement in his writing."

[🔗 SOURCE: BILLYGRAHAM.ORG](https://www.billygraham.org)

God can use us all to bring hope in whatever we do!

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God to help you identify the situations where you need hope
- Ask God to help you fan the flame of His word over your circumstances
- Pray through: Joshua 1:9; 2 Timothy 1:7; Philippians 4:13; Psalm 37:4; Psalm 28:7; John 16:33; Mark 11:24; Psalm 34:4

DAILY TASK

- Read your Bible regularly
- Memorise as many hope- and faith-filled verses as you can
- Resist the temptation to hide away when things are tough
- Turn to the Lord in worship and prayer

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

You are God's child! He knows you and the situations you face. He gives us whatever we ask for in His name, so ask Him for strength, courage and boldness. Remember, when we are weak, He is strong.

8. God Is Our Stability

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

From national economies, to the built environment, to our own lives—both physically and mentally—stability is crucial. Without it things fall apart. Spiritual stability is developed by pursuing intimacy with Christ and Christlikeness. God is seeking those who will worship and serve Him wholeheartedly, without compromise. Steadfastness isn't a virtue that shines in comfort, but in conflict, affliction and uncertainty.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

(HEBREWS 10:23, ESV)

Stand firm therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and don't be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

(GALATIANS 5:1, WEB)

His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

(MATTHEW 25:21, WEB)

ILLUSTRATION

Jesus shares this story:

"Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash."

(MATTHEW 7:24-27, NLT)

Stability is a requirement for building a strong life in God.

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God to show you any areas where you lack stability
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide you into a stable believer's life
- Pray through: James 1:12; Hebrews 10:35-36; 2 Peter 1:5-7; Romans 5:3-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:5

DAILY TASK

- Study Matthew 7:24-27
- Dedicate an hour of prayer to the Lord
- Worship the Lord for 30 minutes
- Read Psalm 112:6-7 and journal anything God speaks to you about

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

Study 2 Corinthians 10:5. Taking captive every thought simply means taking control over what you think about. It happens in three steps. First, accept responsibility for your thoughts. Second, change what you think about. Finally, take any problems to God in prayer.

9. God Is Our Wisdom

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

(1 KINGS 4:2, KJV)

Wisdom brings perspective to our lives. Solomon was blessed with wisdom by God and that's my prayer for my life, too. Spending time in prayer and the Word is the key to developing discernment and wisdom; make time for both!

KEY SCRIPTURES

How much better to get wisdom than gold, and good judgment than silver!

(PROVERBS 16:16, NLT)

Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

(COLOSSIANS 4:5-6, NLT)

Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

(PROVERBS 1:7, NLT)

ILLUSTRATION

Once upon a time, there was a secluded island where all the feelings lived. Happiness, Sadness, Knowledge, Anger, Trust and all the other feelings including Love. One day it was announced to the feelings that the island was going to sink, so they all had to vacate the island as soon as possible or die. All the feelings and company quickly began to prepare their boats to leave as soon as possible. Love was the only one who decided to stay and hold out until the last possible moment.

When the island had almost sunk, and Love wanted to leave, it found itself without a boat. Someone else must have taken it. Love, worried, decided to ask for help.

Richness was passing by in its most beautiful boat, and Love asked, "Richness, can you take me with you?" Richness answered, "No, I can't. There is a lot of gold and silver in my boat and sadly there is no place here for you."

Next, Love saw Vanity who was also passing by in a beautiful vessel. "Vanity, please help me!" pleaded Love. "I can't help you, Love. You are all wet and would damage my boat if I take you in," Vanity answered.

Sadness was close by, and Love asked for help once again, "Sadness, let me go with you." Sadness unwillingly responded, "Oh...Love, I am so sad that I prefer to go alone!"

Happiness passed by Love too, but she was so happy and cheerful that she did not even hear anything when Love called her!

Love was in disbelief. It was doomed to go down with the island, but then suddenly there was an elderly voice, "Come, Love, I will take you." When they arrived at dry land, the elder went on her own way. Love, now blessed and overjoyed, forgot to ask the elder her name.

Realising how much she owed to the elder, Love asked Wisdom, another elder, "Who was that who stopped to offer me a ride?"

"It was Time," answered Wisdom. "Time? But why did Time help me?" asked Love.

Wisdom smiled and with compassion answered, "Because only Time is capable of understanding how valuable Love is."

[SOURCE: THEMINDSJOURNAL.COM](https://www.themindsjournal.com)

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God for wisdom and understanding
- Read Proverbs 1–8 and note anything that speaks to you
- Ask God for help with making better choices
- Reflect on your notes and worship God

DAILY TASK

- Pray for 25 minutes
- Read a chapter of Proverbs every day, making notes along the way
- Seek God daily
- Avoid distractions

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

God is the only source of true wisdom. His divine wisdom is very different to that which comes from our earthly education. Ask God to fill your thoughts and speech with His Word.

10. God Is Our Peace

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

When the Lord talks about 'peace' it's not simply the absence of conflict or animosity. The Lord's peace is the presence of joyful tranquillity and as much richness of interpersonal communication as you are capable of. Our world is in desperate need of peace, and it is up to us to seek and live in the peace that only Christ can give.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

(PHILIPPIANS 4:6, NIV)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

(EPHESIANS 1:3, NIV)

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

(COLOSSIANS 3:15, NIV)

ILLUSTRATION

Once there was a king who offered to give a prize to an artist who could best paint a depiction of peace. Many artists decided to participate and sent the king their masterpieces.

Among the various masterpieces, one picture was of a calm lake closely resembling peacefully towering snow-capped mountains where a blue sky with fluffy clouds was overhead.

The picture was exemplary. Most of those who viewed the paintings of peace from different artists thought that this painting was the best among all others.

But the king had another winner in mind. To the crowd's surprise, the picture that won was of a mountain too but was more plain and rugged than the other piece.

The sky was shady and looked angry because there was lightning. It was exactly the opposite of what peace should look like. The others thought that maybe the artist submitted a wrong painting showing storm rather than peace.

What others didn't notice was that if you look closely at the painting, there is a tiny bush growing in the cracks of a rock. In the bush, there is a nest built by a mother bird and in the midst of the stormy weather, the bird sits peacefully on her nest.

In that specific portrait, it was depicted that in the presence of all the turmoil, there is still someone who can be calm in his or her heart.

[SOURCE: OLLINWOMEN.ORG](https://ollinwomen.org)

PRAYER POINTS

- Peace is only truly attained by an active, daily walk with Christ
- Ask the God of peace to fill your life again
- Spend 40 minutes praying through all the Scriptures on peace that you can find

DAILY TASK

- Turn off all distractions
- Worship the Lord for 30 minutes
- Pray through Psalm 91 and journal your thoughts
- Reflect on this week's preaching

Fix your thoughts on what God says about you—not on your past or your weaknesses, but Christ, the Prince of Peace. Set your alarm, get up early and go for a prayer walk and worship Him.

Sessions 11–15

11. God is Our Saviour

WRITTEN BY CHIP KAWALSINGH

Whatever the odds against you may be—even if they seem insurmountable—remember this: God is with you. He is the Lord who walks with you, guides you, and by His Word removes all fear, doubt and obstacles from your way. As the Bible says, ‘He will neither leave us nor forsake us.’ God is our ever-faithful and loving Father.

KEY SCRIPTURES

He will say to them, ‘Listen to me, all you men of Israel! Do not be afraid as you go out to fight your enemies today! Do not lose heart or panic or tremble before them. For the Lord your God is going with you! He will fight for you against your enemies, and he will give you victory!’

(DEUTERONOMY 20:3-4, NLT)

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

(1 PETER 1:18-19, NIV)

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

(COLOSSIANS 1:13-14, NIV)

ILLUSTRATION

The True Story Behind The Song ‘I Have Decided To Follow Jesus’

... Into these hostile and aggressive communities, came a group of missionaries from the American Baptist Missions spreading the message of love, peace and hope in Jesus Christ. Naturally, they were not welcomed. One missionary succeeded in converting a man, his wife, and two children. This man's faith proved contagious and many villagers began to accept Christianity.

Angry, the village chief summoned all the villagers. He then called the family who had first converted to renounce their faith in public or face execution. Moved by the Holy Spirit, the man said:

"I have decided to follow Jesus."

Enraged at the refusal of the man, the chief ordered his archers to arrow down the two children. As both boys lay twitching on the floor, the chief asked, "Will you deny your faith? You have lost both your children. You will lose your wife too."

But the man replied:

"Though no one joins me, still I will follow."

The chief was beside himself with fury and ordered his wife to be arrowed down. In a moment she joined her two children in death. Now he asked for the last time, "I will give you one more opportunity to deny your faith and live." In the face of death the man said the final memorable lines:

"The cross before me, the world behind me. No turning back."

He was shot dead like the rest of his family. But with their deaths, a miracle took place. The chief who had ordered the killings was moved by the faith of the man. He wondered, "Why should this man, his wife and two children die for a Man who lived in a far-away land on another continent some 2,000 years ago? There must be some remarkable power behind the family's faith, and I too want to taste that faith."

In a spontaneous confession of faith, he declared, "I too belong to Jesus Christ!" When the crowd heard this from the mouth of their chief, the whole village accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

🔗 [SOURCE: RENEWALJOURNAL.COM](https://renewaljournal.com)

PRAYER POINTS

- Surrender every part of your life to Jesus. He's either Lord of all, or not Lord at all
- Thank God for saving you and walking with you in His goodness
- Thank God for the joy of salvation
- Ask God to challenge your faith by giving towards a First Fruits pledge

DAILY TASK

- Do a study on 'surrender'. If you're unsure how, team up with someone
- Spend time in worship and listen to a word on surrender via the HCC app
- Journal anything that God has spoken to you about

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

Jesus loves you so much that He laid His life down for you. God values us so much that He sent His Son to die for you. He bought you with a price and so now your life is not your own, it belongs to God. Everything you do should be to bring joy and pleasure to Him. Dwell on God's love for you and write out as many Scriptures of God's unfailing love as possible.

12. God is Our Passion

WRITTEN BY KATE GOOCH

God is fiercely passionate about you, so much so that He gave His one and only Son so that you could spend all eternity with Him. He is a jealous God, longing to be Lord of all in our hearts and lives. When we could devote ourselves to so many things, God's favour rests on those who devote themselves to Him and His house first.

KEY SCRIPTURES

"But why did you need to search?" he asked. "Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?"

(LUKE 2:49, NLT)

My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

(PSALM 84:2, NIV)

One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

(PSALM 27:4, NIV)

ILLUSTRATION

"That boy will beat me one day," remarked a tutor to a friend, watching the young Michaelangelo work his chisel and hammer.

Although a slow learner in the beginning, he went on to become better than all the other boys in the apprenticeship, and in time — better than the tutor himself.

Michelangelo was a great believer in hard work, that typical trait persistent in all men of Genius. He held that there was nothing which the imagination conceives that the mind cannot do. "If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery," he once remarked, "it would not seem like genius at all." He attributed all his prowess to studying a little more, and working a little harder than his contemporaries.

When he was a boy, his parents, seeing his interest in the arts, declared that no son of theirs would ever follow the discreditable path to poverty that the profession of an artist would lead to, and forbade him from ever pursuing it, punishing him for covering his walls and furniture with sketches. His passion, however, burned in him like a coal, and would not let him rest until he had made a name for himself in the field. A few years later when he was a young man on his own, it seemed for a time that his parents had been right, for at one stage of his life, he was so poor that he could not afford to have his younger brother come visit him where he was working because he had only one bed which he shared with three other workers.

But he pursued the work with such relentless vigour that during his early years he lived a very frugal life, a little bread and wine was all he needed for supper. He would often rise in the middle of the night to resume his work by candlelight, and on some occasions, would be too tired to undress, and slept in his uniform, ready to spring to action as soon as he was refreshed by sleep.

His work was filled with such incredible detail that he would take days, sometimes weeks working on one specific feature of his art, such as bringing out the detail of a bulge of a vein on the arm, or working on the striation of a muscle fiber on the thigh.

"I do not see any progress since my last visit," said a friend to him once on a returning visit after several weeks.

"But," replied the sculptor, "I have retouched this part, polished that, softened that feature, brought out that muscle, given some expression to this lip, more energy to that limb, etc."

"But these are minor things!" exclaimed the visitor.

"Perhaps," replied the great artist, "but minor things make perfection, and perfection is no minor thing."

Even in the last years of his life, already famous, the 89 year old would still be found chipping away at a block of marble or painting some work of art on a canvas, working as fervently at 89 as he had done at 20.

His last, unfinished work, the Pietà Rondanini, can be found today at Sforza Castle in Milan. While most men would recline at an easy chair and take pride in being elevated to the status of modern Genius, he would cheerfully say "Ancora imparo!" meaning; "I am still learning".

🔗 [SOURCE: PAUL GWAMANDA ON MEDIUM.COM](#)

Passion keeps people practicing, working, training and studying long after others have stopped. It can seem obsessive. Whilst some may spend their lives trying to win earthly prizes, accolades and awards, as believers, our focus should be first and foremost on eternity and the one who we will spend eternity with (1 Corinthians 9:24–26). Our best energy should be spent building what God is building—His church!

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God to give you a greater zeal for His presence and His house
- Ask God to show you more of who He is
- Ask God to reveal any areas that are distracting you or causing you to neglect your relationship with Him
- Prayerfully consider Jeremiah 29:12–13, Jeremiah 33:3 and Isaiah 50:4–5

DAILY TASK

- Remove any distractions. Resist the temptation to check your phone or social media
- Spend time in prayer and worship. Sing of God's goodness, faithfulness, and greatness
- Look up the following verses: Zechariah 8:2; Isaiah 41:9–10; Isaiah 9:7; John 3:16; Jeremiah 31:3. Write down what these scriptures reveal about God's passion
- Read Philippians 3:5–11. How did Paul's passion change? Write down anything that God reveals to you

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

Read Zephaniah 3:17 and remind yourself that God takes great delight in you. He rejoices over you with joyful songs. He is your mighty saviour. He will calm all your fears.

13. God is Our Promise

WRITTEN BY KATE GOOCH

God always keeps His promises. He is passionate in His commitment to fulfil His promises—not out of obligation or duty, but because it would be inconsistent with His very nature to fail. He is truth, and what He says is certain. He is love, and He fulfils His promises out of His zealous love for you. He is eternal, and His promises are weaved into a far greater plan that we can't yet see. He is never late and always perfectly on time. He is glorious not only in how He brings His promises to fulfilment, but also when. He is able even when we are not. But His promises are more than an answer to our present needs, troubles or uncertainties, they are promises of His very glory for all eternity. It's the promise of sharing in who He is, knowing Him, and worshipping Him forevermore. That is our true gift!

KEY SCRIPTURES

God's way is perfect. All the Lord's promises prove true. He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.

(PSALM 18:30, NLT)

It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.

(ISAIAH 55:11, NLT)

And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

(2 PETER 1:4, NLT)

ILLUSTRATION

In Genesis 18:1–15, God promised to give Abraham and Sarah a child, but Sarah couldn't believe it. In her mind, both she and her husband were too old and her time of child-bearing had passed. The thought of her bringing life into the world seemed ridiculous. But Sarah was wrong, because nothing is too hard for God. Though she initially laughed in disbelief, we see in Genesis 21:1–7 that God did the impossible. The couple welcomed a son named Isaac.

This story reminds us that it's never too late for God, and His promises don't expire.

PRAYER POINTS

- Read 2 Corinthians 1:20 and declare that all the promises of God are yes and amen. Be specific in declaring 'yes and amen' to each and every promise God has given you, both for the present life and eternity
- Declare the names of God in your situation, remembering that He is Lord of all, He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords (e.g. He is Jehovah Jireh—my provider; Jehovah Rapha—the God who heals; Emanuel—the God who is with us; Jehovah Shalom—he is our peace; Jehovah Raah—the Lord my shepherd)
- As you wait on Him, ask God to show you what He wants to teach you in this season and how He wants to transform you into the person He wants you to be. Ask God to show you how you can serve, love, give and minister to others even as you wait
- Pray for the needs of others who are also waiting on God to move in their situations

DAILY TASK

- Spend 15 minutes praising and worshipping God for who He is, for His faithfulness, and for His incomparable grace, glory, wisdom and power
- Read Romans 4:17-22. For each verse, write out what Abraham did and/or what God did. What can you learn from Abraham's example?
- Write out the promises of God that He has already fulfilled. Thank God for all He has already done
- Look up each of these Bible verses and write out his promise for you today: Isaiah 26:3; Isaiah 41:10; Isaiah 41:13; Isaiah 43:1-2; Matthew 6:33; Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 11:13; John 8:36; John 10:27-29; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 1:6; Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Peter 1:3; Hebrews 13:5

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

When doubt, fear or worry creep in, take those thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5) and replace them with a declaration of God's word, believing that every promise is yes and amen! Make an intentional decision to choose faith over fear. Remember, God is not fickle, nor does He lie. He is not like man and will not let you down or let you go. Nothing you are facing and nothing you have done is too big for God.

14. God is Our Security

WRITTEN BY KATE GOOCH

There is a security in God that is stronger than any physical structure. He is a shield around you. He commands His angels to guard you. He protects you, defends you and saves you, giving you peace in spite of anything that might be happening around you. Our security comes not from our finances, retirement plans, careers or other people, but from trusting in the God who is the same God yesterday, today, and forevermore.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Those who trust in the Lord are as secure as Mount Zion; they will not be defeated but will endure forever. Just as the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, both now and forever.

(PSALM 125:1-2, NLT)

For the Lord is your security. He will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.

(PROVERBS 3:26, NLT)

He led me to a place of safety; he rescued me because he delights in me.

(PSALM 18:19, NLT)

ILLUSTRATION

On 11th September 2001, Michael Hingson was working on the 78th floor of the North Tower in the World Trade Centre when, at 8.46am, the American Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the North Tower. With jet fuel spilling into the floors below, the North tower swaying, and ceiling tiles, debris and burning paper falling around him, Michael sat with his assistance dog, Roselle, at his feet. Blind soon after birth, Michael heard the boom above him and the screaming around him but could not see what had happened. Roselle, his guide dog, had a fierce fear of thunder, but remained still and calm in the explosion. Believing that they were a team, Michael chose to trust Roselle's judgement, relying on Roselle's sight even when his own senses suggested that something extraordinary had happened. He didn't panic, knowing that if Roselle seemed calm, they could evacuate. Steadily, Roselle would guide Michael as he walked the 1,460 steps down stairway B and out onto the New York City streets to safety.

🔗 SOURCE: *THUNDER DOG* BY MICHAEL HINGSON

It would have been easy for Michael to panic and rely only on what his senses told him, but he chose to trust his safety and security to a much-loved guide dog who could see what he could not and who could guide him when the way ahead was uncertain. As believers, our safety and security is no less grounded in trusting in God, who can see what we cannot and who will guide us and protect us on life's journey, even when we can't see every step, turn and detour along the way.

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God for help in any area where you or your family need His protection today
- Ask God for wisdom and direction so that you can walk securely along the path He has for you (Proverbs 3:6)

DAILY TASK

- Spend time praising and worshipping God
- Read 2 Kings 6:8-20. Write down anything God speaks to you about
- Read Exodus 3:1-4:17. What was the source of Moses' insecurity and what were God's answers?
- Prayerfully read Psalm 121

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

We can sleep knowing that we are kept safe and secure (Psalm 4:8). We do not need to worry about what might happen or dwell on our fears, but can trust God to keep us. Read Psalm 91 and write down every verse that speaks to God's protection, safety, security, and shelter. Ask God to grant you peace and rest as you learn to live in the shelter of the Most High.

15. God is Our Joy

WRITTEN BY KATE GOOCH

Our joy in God is not dependant on our circumstances; it comes from our position in Him. God wants us to experience true joy—a gladness that is not dependant on emotions or feelings but flows from His presence in our lives. There is no limit to the abounding joy we can experience and no limits to the glory God wants to reveal within us. However deeply we have already come to know God, there is always yet greater beauty to behold.

KEY SCRIPTURES

I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.

(PSALM 9:2, NLT)

You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new wine.

(PSALM 4:7, NLT)

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.

(PSALM 16:11, NLT)

ILLUSTRATION

According to Charles Spurgeon, the story behind the hymn, 'More to Follow' was as follows. A man named Mr Rowland Hill had pledged to give a poor minister £100, and sent him £5 in an envelope marked 'more to follow'. At the end of the next month, another £5 was sent with the same message, 'more to follow'. This continued until the full amount was given. The 'more to follow' came to an end, but it is never so with God. The experience would inspire the words:

*Have you on the Lord believed? Still there's more to follow
Of His grace have you received? Still there's more to follow
Oh, the grace the Father shows! Still there's more to follow
Freely He His grace bestows, Still there's more to follow
More and more, more and more, Always more to follow
Oh, his matchless, boundless love! Still there's more to follow*

*Have you felt the Saviour near? Still there's more to follow
Does His blessed presence cheer? Still there's more to follow
Oh the love that Jesus shows; Still there's more to follow
Freely He His love bestows, Still there's more to follow
More and more, more and more, Always more to follow
Oh, his matchless, boundless love! Still there's more to follow*

*Have you felt the Spirit's power? Still there's more to follow
Falling like the gentle shower? Still there's more to follow
Oh, the power the Spirit shows, Still there's more to follow
Freely He His power bestows, Still there's more to follow
More and more, more and more, Always more to follow
Oh, his matchless, boundless love! Still there's more to follow*

[SOURCE: SPURGEON.ORG](https://www.spurgeon.org)

PRAYER POINTS

- Start by rejoicing in God! Praise Him, reminding yourself of His matchless beauty and glory
- Spend 10 minutes simply thanking God for all He has done for you
- Ask God to fill you afresh with His Spirit

DAILY TASK

- Worship God for 30 minutes
- Read and reflect on Philippians 4:4. Consider: are you always full of joy in the Lord? Why/why not?
- Read 1 Peter 1:3-9. What did Paul consider would cause the church to rejoice with 'glorious, inexpressible joy'?

MENTAL HEALTH FOOD

In Nehemiah 8:10, it says that the 'joy of the Lord is our strength,' meaning that the joy of the Lord is our safety, refuge, protection and stronghold. Joy is not the same as happiness; happiness is dependant on how we feel about our circumstances and situations, but joy is promised by God despite our circumstances. The joy of the Lord gives us strength even when our own strength might otherwise be failing.

First Fruits

Giving our finances – sowing and reaping – should be a normal part of Christian life. Jesus, in the Gospels, commissioned his followers to ‘give and it will come back to you’. We can go as far as to say the mark of a true convert is one who lives the exchanged life: a life that reflects Christianity as Jesus intended it to be; a life of love under-pinned by giving and receiving; a life of generosity and obedience.

1. What is first fruits?

First fruits comes from the Hebrew *bikkurim*: ‘promise to come’

First fruits is an offering given in faith, believing that God will bless and prosper you over the next 12 months. It’s a prophetic arrow shot into the new year declaring God’s goodness and blessings over your future.

KEY SCRIPTURE

“You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the Lord your God. Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him. But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My angel will go before you and bring you in to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them. You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars in pieces. But you shall serve the Lord your God, [a]and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst. There shall be no one miscarrying or barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days. I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you. I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land.”

EXODUS 23:19-30 (NASB)

PROMISES FROM SCRIPTURE

- The Lord sends angels.
- The Lord removes opposition from around you.
- The Lord commands a blessing over your food and water.
- The Lord will take sickness away from your surroundings.
- The Lord gives you long life.
- The Lord will increase your inheritance.
- The Lord will repay what was stolen.

2. What is the difference between tithes and first fruits?

The best of all first fruits of any kind, and every sacrifice of any kind from all your sacrifices, shall be the priest's; also you shall give to the priest the first of your ground meal, to cause a blessing to rest on your house. (Ezekiel 44:30)

TITHES VS. FIRST FRUITS

- The tithe is 10% of your income.
- First fruits is given in relation to what God wants to do in your life.
- The tithe releases your past efficiency.
- First fruits relates to your future prosperity.
- The tithe protects what you have.
- First fruits protects what you will have.
- The Tithe is given in faith that God will protect your present needs.
- First fruits is given believing for the increase that God will give you in the future.

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

LUKE 6:38 (NKJV)



HARVEST CITY CHURCH

harvestcity.org |     