



21
DAYS OF PRAYER
21

A GUIDE FOR PRAYER
2019 SPRING EDITION

21 DAY SPRING PRAYER GUIDE

Dear Reader,

If there was one thing that we desire for Heartland Church, it is that we would be a sincere people of prayer! After all, every great revival, move of God and movement was birthed out of a prayer movement. Find praying people, and you'll find God's hand.

Since I can remember, Heartland Church has given the beginning of our year to 21 days of prayer. This year, my challenge to you and our rally cry is to "Pray First." In every situation, whether good or bad, let's try to pray before we act. Many times people act first and then want God to bail them out of that situation, but prayer should be our first response, not our last resort.

Understanding the necessity of prayer is not enough. In order for it to become a part of our life, it needs to become something we look forward to doing. I'm convinced most people don't enjoy prayer because they have never been taught how to pray. That's where this simple prayer guide can help. Enclosed is my personal effort to give you a guide to help you develop a devotional life with Jesus using Bible reading, journaling and prayer.

This is our attempt to make prayer more personal, and this booklet is designed to bring joy into your time with God. When you discover the beauty of daily conversation with Him, you'll experience the presence of God that will change your life.

Once you learn how to pray, prayer can become a part of everyday life. And then...

Before the day begins—
Before you go to bed—
Before you go to work or school—
Before you send that text—
Before you eat, drive or travel—
When bad things happen—
Before bad things happen—
In every situation—PRAY FIRST!

Prayer changes everything!

Pastor Dusty Dean

HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE:

In this guide, we're going to help you understand how to pray more effectively and to hear God more clearly. The first 7 days are devoted to hearing God while the second 14 days are all about your prayer life.

While this guide will help give you specific topics to pray about, we want you to use it as a daily devotional as well. As a result, here is a specific guide of the sections that will be included each day and how you can effectively use these sections to help you grow spiritually.

SECTION 1: DEVOTION THOUGHT

The devotional thought is an aspect of leadership that we all face and will help you jump in to today's thought. (Recommended Time: 1-2 minutes)

SECTION 2: SCRIPTURE READING

The Scripture reading is a passage of Scripture that we want you to study. You will notice that we only reference the passage and do not include it. That is because we want to encourage you to open a physical Bible, preferably not an electronic form, and read the text. (Recommended Time: 5-10 minutes)

Once you have read the passage, reread it a second time and use a highlighter or pen to underline key words that stand out to you in the text.

SECTION 3: JOURNALING

The third section is a place for you to journal. Here we want you to write your observations about the text as well as how you believe the Holy Spirit is challenging you to grow you in the specific area. You can get as detailed as you like in this area. (Recommended Time: 5-10 minutes)

SECTION 4: PRAYER

The final section will give you a daily prayer challenge to consider in your personal prayer time. However, in addition to the daily prayer challenge, we also encourage you to take the time to consistently pray daily about a short list of items that you will write down on the next page. Pray the daily Scriptures over your own life, pray about the daily challenge and then pray for your specific list that you will have written down for the duration of the 21 days. (Recommended Time: 5-10 minutes)

When using all four of these steps, each day can take as few as 15 minutes and as long as 35-40 minutes. By doing these steps, this will help you to not only pray over the 21 day period, but also to build a healthy and habitual devotional and Bible reading life as well.

PERSONAL PRAYER TARGETS:

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Pray for those in authority and those under your authority.

MY GOVERNMENT

President: _____

National Leaders: _____

State Leaders: _____

City Leaders: _____

MY FAMILY

Spouse: _____

Children: _____

Parents: _____

Siblings: _____

Extended Family: _____

MY CHURCH

Pastors: _____

Small Group Leader: _____

Small Group Members: _____

MY LIFE

Employer: _____

Co-Workers: _____

Employees: _____

Teachers and Professors: _____

THOSE I AM INFLUENCING

Close Friends: _____

THOSE WHO NEED GOD

MY NEEDS

HOW DO I PRAY SCRIPTURE?

One of the most powerful things that you can do is pray Scripture. Yet I've found that when I challenge our church to make this a daily habit, most people don't know what I'm talking about. As a result, I want to share with you four practical methods to pray the Scripture—none of which require special tools or advanced theological training.

1. THE PERSONALIZE-IT METHOD

Simply substitute your name (or the person's name you are praying for) in the place of pronouns or nouns in Scripture.

For example, if I were personalizing John 3:16, I'd write something like this: "For God so loved Dusty, He gave his one and only Son so that Dusty would not perish but have everlasting life."

Or, for Philippians 1:6: "He who began a good work in Dusty Dean will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Put your name in the text, and you'll strengthen your faith and encourage yourself.

You can also re-write the verse as if God is talking directly to you. For example, Philippians 1:6 would be: "I, who began a good work in you, Dusty, will carry it on to completion."

2. THE PRONOUNCE-IT METHOD

The "pronounce it" method of biblical meditation is an easy method for meditating on Scripture — and getting every ounce of spiritual nutrition you can out of it.

You start with a verse and read it over and over again. Each time you read the verse, you emphasize a different word. It's the simplest way to start unlocking Scripture. You can do it even if it's the first time you've ever opened up a Bible. It's simple but amazingly powerful. Each time you emphasize a different word, you get a different perspective.

Take the first part of Colossians 3:16 for example. The verse says, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you" (NLT).

The first time you read the verse, emphasize the word "let." "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you." What does it mean to let? It means "give permission." I open the door; it's my choice. We have to choose to let the Word of God dwell in us richly.

Then, read the verse again and emphasize "word." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." That means I need to get God's Word in my mind.

Then, emphasize the third word of the verse, “Christ.” You’re not dwelling on what some philosopher, guru, or talk show host has to say. You’re dwelling on the words of Christ! I don’t want to let the word of the world dwell in me, but I do when I spend my time watching TV instead of reading God’s Word.

Then you focus on the word “dwell.” “Let the Word of Christ dwell within you.” The word “dwell” means “to hang there for a long time.” It’s not rushing through God’s Word so you can get on with the rest of your day. To let the Word of Christ dwell in you is to let it live within you.

Then you stop and emphasize the word “in.” It’s good to have the word of Christ around you. You can put the Word of God on a plaque or a bumper, but it won’t change your life until you let it in your life.

Then focus on the word “you.” The Bible isn’t just God’s Word for your pastor, a seminary professor, or your Sunday School teacher; it’s God word for you! The Bible is instruction for every single believer.

Finally, emphasize the word “richly.” What does that mean? It means the opposite of poorly. In other words, richly means lusciously, extravagantly, and profoundly. God doesn’t want his Word to be a poor substitute in your life. He wants it to create beauty in your life.

See all the great jewels you discovered in this passage just by focusing on one word at a time? You didn’t need a seminary degree or a great library of reference tools. You can do this!

3. THE “PRAY-IT” METHOD

In this method, you put whatever passage you’re studying in first-person and pray it back to God. Using this method, you don’t have to wonder whether you pray or read the Bible first during your quiet time. You do them together! And, you know your prayer will be answered because it’s in Scripture.

Here’s how you might do it with Psalm 23: “Thank you, Lord, for being my shepherd. Thank you for making me lie down in green pastures. Thank you for leading me beside quiet waters. Thank you for restoring my soul. Thank you for guiding me in the paths of righteousness for your name’s sake.”

Stop and think about the prayer for a bit. Has God ever made you lie down? Sometimes we don’t have enough sense to rest or relax. Sometimes God forces you to lie down. Sometimes he makes you lie down in green pastures because you are not taking care of yourself. That’s something to thank God for!

Have you ever felt down and depressed and were restored by God? Does

God lead you down right paths? Of course! Psalm 23 provides a great opportunity to thank God for what he has done in your life.

Meditating on Scripture using the pray-it method will open up a whole new world to you in God's Word.

YOUR FIRST LOVE

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 22:34-40 | Psalms 42:1-3 | Ecclesiastes 4:12*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

We talk often at HC about the priority of “first” in the life of a believer. I really believe it’s true. God wants to sit at the center of your life and He wants to be first in your life. As we begin, I want to invite you to read Matthew 22:34-40.

Our greatest privilege is to hunger after God and seek Him with all our heart. There is nothing else more fulfilling than living wholeheartedly for Him in this life, but so few live lives that provoke us to this kind of sweeping lifestyle.

What’s interesting is how inspired our culture is by people who live passionate and sacrificial lives. One example is 64-year-old long-distance swimmer, Diana Nyad, who broke the record with a 53-hour, 110 mile Cuba-to-Florida swim. Against all odds, including jellyfish, age, distance and sharks, she came on shore welcomed by crowds snapping photos, with the simple message, “We should never give up. You are never too old to chase your dreams.” Diane was passionate, radical, and determined. It was on national news. A newspaper article said that this was an inspiration to Baby Boomers everywhere!

Why is it acceptable to inspire people through a passion for swimming but not a passion for our savior? Shouldn’t we as Christians influence the world through our commitment and passion for Christ?

I want to encourage you to ask God to give you a Psalms 42 like passion! Challenge yourself right now to commit yourself to moments of prayer and intense focus on the Lord during this fast. Decide where your place of prayer will be. Decide how you’re going to make Him a priority.

Are you willing to create space in each day over the next 21 days for time alone with Jesus? Are you willing to set yourself apart in 2019? If so, what is your plan?

JOURNALING:

What issues and questions are you wrestling with as you begin this fast?

What part of your life are you needing to hear God speak to you

PRAYER:

Ask God to show you the specific assignment He has for you in this season of your life right now. Make sure you drink a lot of water to aid you physically over the first few days of this fast and know that you aren’t alone.

CREATING SPACE

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 6:1-24 | Psalms 71; 42:1-3 | Luke 5:34*

READ:

I would love for you to take the time to read Matthew 6:1-24 to start your devotional today. As you do this, underline in your Bible every time that you see the word “when” in the Scriptures. When you are finished, come back and read the devotional thought.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

I find it incredibly interesting that when Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit, He asked them to wait in the upper room. In doing so, He made sure that they were waiting in a place outside their normal routine of life. Receiving the Holy Spirit was really relegated to two simple asks: 1) Get to an unfamiliar space 2) wait.

In Matthew 6, Jesus talks a lot about creating space. And throughout the verses, He doesn't say “if” but instead says “when.” He assumes that, as His children, there would be a longing and a desire to create space in our lives only for Him and His rewards.

Make no mistake: The time that you are spending is so important because it's exactly that kind of space that Jesus referenced in Matthew 6. When you give, pray or fast, you are creating space for God to do amazing things in your life.

I've learned how important it is to “make room” for God in my life by creating space in my day to talk to Him and read His Word. I make room for more of God's presence when I honor Him in my actions and attitudes and “move over” by submitting my will to His. I create more space for God when I choose to accept the love He offers above my feelings of inadequacy that seek to crowd that love out.

And I do this because I know that God's presence is always available to me. And to you.

JOURNALING:

What specific verses from Matthew 6 really stood out or spoke to you?
Why is it important for you to create space for God to speak to you?

PRAYER:

Ask God to help give you patience for the process of waiting on Him.

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 6:25-34 | Joel 2:12-14 | Isaiah 58 | Luke 6:40*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Today, our primary scripture reference leads us to the topic of gratitude. As you begin this new year, it goes without saying that all of us have so much to be thankful for. But did you know that your level of gratitude could have a direct effect on your attitude?

I believe that just because things happen TO us doesn't mean that they have to happen IN us. Paul counted his trials pure joy and I believe that you have a choice when it comes to the way that you see the things in your life.

Some people are like thermometers—always alerting us when things aren't right and constantly a victim to the “temperature” in the room, which is never perfect. But others are like thermostats. These people don't fall prey to the temperature in the room, they DETERMINE the temperature in the room. Their words, their thoughts, their actions all set the atmosphere.

Which one are you? It's so important to remember that as a disciple of Jesus, you are bringing light into every room that you enter. The Holy Spirit lives inside of you. But, as the Bible passage teaches, you make the decision whether you hide the light or let it shine.

Today, I want you to take inventory for a few minutes. The third day of fasting is often the hardest. The headaches, the cravings and the fatigue are often the worst on the third day, but if you can make it through the first three days, you'll see those begin to subside. So let's focus on the things that matter most on this day!

JOURNALING:

Look back at the last year of your life. What has God done for you that you can celebrate? This past year, were you more of a thermometer or a thermostat?

PRAYER:

Ask the Lord to search every part of you and wait on Him in gratitude, prayer, adoration and worship. He will speak to you if you take the time to listen. So listen.

DISTANCE

Scripture Reading: *Psalm 139* | *Jeremiah 31:3* | *Acts 17:26-27* | *John 17:3*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

I've had the privilege of having a front row seat to hear some of the amazing songs that Phillips, Craig and Dean has recorded over the years. Some of them have spoken to me more than others, but one of my favorite songs that they've ever recorded is "When God Ran." If you've never heard it before, I encourage you to YouTube or Spotify it and listen to the words. It's a powerful song that paints a picture of a God that pursues His people. It's taken from the story of the Prodigal Son in Scripture where a father runs to greet a son that was once lost.

Perhaps you've never felt close to God. Or maybe you've had seasons of intimacy, but you've allowed the cares of life to pull you away from that closeness with Him. Many times, when we decide to return to Him, to go back to our first love, we believe that we must span a great distance to get to where He is. We think this distance can be bridged by hard work, lots of good deeds, going to church, and a religious life. But in reality, God is never far from you.

Maybe 2018 was a year where you felt great distance from God. I want you to know that all that is required is a simple turning back, a decision to shift your focus. A simple prayer of confession and a sincere plea for closeness and God is instantly right there. Really focus on Psalm 139 today in your reading, especially verses 7 and 8. And, take a moment and read and meditate on the following verse:

"I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness." (Jeremiah 31:3)

Keep pressing in during these 21 Days of Prayer. Try to come to a Saturday prayer service from 9am-10am. I believe that as you pursue him, you'll realize that he's never stopped pursuing you. I'm praying for you. I'm believing for a new closeness with God like never before in your life in 2019.

JOURNALING:

Are there times when you feel distant from God? Have you felt that way recently? What contributes to your feeling distant? What would have to happen for that distant feeling to change?

PRAYER:

Take a moment and confess anything that needs to be confessed. Ask forgiveness and allow the Lord to show you His mercy and grace. Remember to journal what you hear God speak to you during this time. It will be of great value when you reflect back over the 21 day period.

CLARITY IN VISION

Scripture Reading: *Ephesians 6 | 1 Peter 1:16 | Acts 9:1; 26:19*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Yesterday, you began to process the idea of returning to God. As you begin to return to him in a fresh way, many times, God will allow you to experience His presence and power in a fresh and clearer way. I can't tell you how many times that as I've rededicated myself and drawn near to God, He has given me a fresh vision of Jesus. I've discovered dimensions of His character and His wisdom that I never saw before. I believe that through these 21 days, the same thing is going to happen for you.

Many people have an "upward" vision of God—he's distant, he's far, he's on his throne, he's looking over all of creation and perhaps, he's involved in the every day workings of this earth. While this view of God shows His size, it does not show His intimacy. You need more than just an "upward" vision of God, you also need an "inward" vision of who God is.

When you combine an upward vision with an inward vision, you are made aware of how intimately He wants to walk through this life with you. You learn how He wants to speak to you and walk with you through all of life's good and bad moments. AND, it's only after you have an upward and inward vision of who God is that you are able to get an "outward" vision for what God has placed you on the earth to do—his plan for your life.

When you get a true vision of who Jesus really is, then you can begin to see him and walk in faith. The job of the enemy is to get your eyes off Jesus and onto the conditions around you, because as long as you are looking at Jesus, the enemy knows you can do the impossible.

Ephesians 6 is our focal chapter today. Read it and highlight the parts that are the most meaningful.

JOURNALING:

In your relationship with Jesus, would you say that you have an inward vision of who God is, or only an upward vision of who God is?

How would you rate your spiritual life on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being non-existent and 10 being as good as you can possibly imagine it. What would it take to move that score closer to a 10?

PRAYER:

Jesus is with you. The enemy wants to do all that he can to rob you of peace, which is why this season of fasting is critical for you. Use your time today and ask God to give you a new vision of who He is today.

A SECOND TOUCH

Scripture Reading: *Mark 8:22-26 | Proverbs 29:18 | John 2:6-10 | Matthew 2:1-5*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Helen Keller was once asked, “Do you think there is anything more tragic than to be born blind?” And her answer was, “Yes. To be born with sight, but no vision.” There are many people who have lost their vision. There are many people who don’t know where they’re going. Do you know where you are going?

If you’re not careful, you will be satisfied with a touch from God that gives you vision, but not clarity about what you’re supposed to do. You will find yourself asking, “Why am I here? What is God’s plan for my life, and for my family? What is God’s purpose for my life?”

There is something called “The Second Touch,” and the key is that you become so hungry that you say, “Lord, I appreciate the first touch. I appreciate when you saved me and I appreciate when You gave me light that I’ve never seen before. But now I’m serving You, and I need You to touch me a second time and clarify my vision.”

Read the entire story in Mark chapter 8 and focus on verses 22-26. Highlight parts that are most meaningful for you.

One last thing for today: There might be some reading this that feel like a vision seems impossible because life feels like you are in a depressed, miserable, or difficult place. Many times we go through “divine misery” before we experience “divine change.” Disappointments come when people reject you or tell you “no.” Don’t fold up and cave in saying, “Well, the whole world is against me.” Know that you’re in a place where God’s about to take your “divine misery” and give you a “divine change.”

JOURNALING:

How would you describe the concept of a “second touch” in your own words? What does the phrase, “being in the Lord’s presence” mean to you personally?

PRAYER:

Use your time today to simply get into the presence of God. Ask God to give you that second touch in your life. Worship and pray for more of His presence in your life.

****Reminder:** *Tomorrow is our Saturday morning prayer service from 9am to 10am. We are worshipping and praying together every Saturday of the 21 Days of Prayer! Please consider coming.*

JOY

Scripture Reading: *Psalms 32, 51, 16:11 | Luke 15:20-24 | Hebrews 13:5-6*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Did you know joy is your right as a believer and follower of Jesus Christ? But the enemy wants you to feel beat-up and condemned for things you have done in the past. He wants to rob you of your God-given right to joy. We all have to hide in the wounds of Calvary. We have all fallen short of the standard. We have ALL rebelled against God's authority over our life. But we are also blessed because our sins have been forgiven.

A lot of Christians don't understand the power of God's grace. They are forgiven and they are on their way to heaven, but they think they have to pay for what they did by being sad and beating up on themselves when nothing could be further from the truth. Grace wins! But until you acknowledge and accept that, you will allow the enemy to steal your joy.

Read all of Psalm 32 and Psalm 51. Remember to take note of anything that stands out to you as you read.

JOURNALING:

Where would you rate your joy on a scale between 1 and 10, with 1 being nonexistent and 10 being as good as it can possibly be? What would it take to move that score closer to a 10?

PRAYER:

If you are not full of joy, then you are not full of the Word of God. He wants you to have joy, whether you believe you deserve it or not. Psalm 16:11 says, "In His presence is fullness of joy!" Take some time today and ask God to give you more joy in your life.

A CHURCH TO CALL HOME

Scripture Reading: *Psalm 92:12-15 | Proverbs 18:1 | Jeremiah 29:12-14*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

“A Christian without a church is a spiritual orphan.”

I want you to consider the makeup of a seed for just a moment. In order for a seed to become all it was created to become, it has to go into the soil or, to use another word, it has to be planted. If a seed goes into the ground and the right nutrients are given to it and the sun shines on it, it has no choice but to GROW. That’s the picture of your life.

When you become a believer in Jesus Christ, you become part of the Church (capital C) but we all need to be part of a church (little c). The local church is the place where we, as Christians, are planted. You can’t grow if you aren’t planted. Because if you are planted and if the atmosphere and nutrients are right, you will flourish.

We live in a time where the enemy is working overtime to pull people away from God’s house and His purposes. You must make a commitment to a local church to be planted, whether it’s this one or another (there are probably 30 churches in DFW that I love and could easily plant myself in). We hope it’s this one, but that’s less important than you being planted somewhere!

If you’re already planted, remember that every time you uproot yourself, you delay the process of growth. I’m not saying that there aren’t times to move fields, but I am saying that if you find yourself doing this often, then it might be time for a little bit of introspection.

If you aren’t planted, then what’s stopping you? Take a step this new year and make a commitment. In this time on the earth, the local churches of this world need people with made up minds to stay and plant themselves in the house of God where there is love, peace, safety and blessing for our families and for us!

JOURNALING:

Are you planted in a local church?

How are you seeking out growth through your church and the people that are in it currently?

PRAYER:

Take a few minutes today and lift up your pastors, church leaders and the church overall. Pray for the vision and for fresh revival to sweep over it.

THE POWER OF AUTHORITY

Scripture Reading: *Numbers 22 | Ephesians 6 | Hebrews 10*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

“I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.”
– Matthew 8:10

Today and tomorrow, we’re going to examine the subject of authority as it pertains to our love for Christ. In the text above, the centurion came to Jesus and told Him of his servant who was paralyzed and in terrible suffering. He came to Jesus because he believed He could heal him. He told Jesus of the matter, and Jesus was willing to come with the centurion. But the centurion would not have it. He knew that Jesus, being under the authority of Heaven itself, did not have to see the servant to help him. The centurion understood authority. He understood that he himself had certain rights that his position granted him to have power over situations and people. He also was a man under authority. The centurion understood Jesus’ position and what power that position held in Heaven – the power to heal his servant if He chose to exercise that authority.

When Jesus saw that the centurion understood this principle of authority and that He did not have to visit the servant to heal him, He acknowledged the centurion’s faith. Jesus knew it took great faith to understand authority and whether He had the authority to do what was being asked.

Being under authority is so important! We must realize God’s people are protected—we are blessed! But Satan will try to sneak in with a subtle approach, undetected, and pull you out from under the covering of the blessing of the Lord. This is why it is so important to not only walk in God’s ways, but to walk in community with His people. You cannot go it alone.

God will put you in a place where He can bless you, and the enemy knows that as long as you stay under the covering of the Father’s house, then the enemy cannot destroy your life. When you come out from under the authority God has appointed for your life, that’s when the enemy will release his attack.

Read all of Numbers 22. Highlight parts that are most meaningful for you.

JOURNALING:

How would you rate your church experience on a scale from 1-10? A 10 signifying it meets all your needs and you truly love every single part of it, and a 1 signifying great dissatisfaction with your church.

What would it take to change your church experience to a 10, as it relates to the responsibilities of the church? What would it take on your part to make your church experience more positive?

PRAYER:

Ask God to help you continue to let Godly authority be a part of your life.

THE POWER OF AUTHORITY PART II

Scripture Reading: *Luke 7 | John 12:47-50*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Today, we're continuing our conversation about authority. Throughout the first several days of this devotion, we've talked about returning to our first love and rediscovering the passionate relationship that we can have with Jesus all over again.

But one of the biggest hurdles that stops that rekindling dead in its tracks is the struggle with authority and wanting to be your own boss. Sadly, many people never really live out God's best for their life because they have authority issues. You're not alone. It's a part of our original sin. Lucifer and one-third of the angels rebelled against God and tried to overthrow him because of authority. Lucifer was number two in heaven, but he wanted to be number one and wasn't willing to stay under authority.

Even Jesus modeled the power of authority to us. At one point in the Gospel of John, he says, "For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." (John 12:49-50).

Think about the authority that God has put you under. If you will remain under what God has put over you, then God will put under you the many things that you are to have authority over. Alignment is everything in the kingdom of heaven. I truly believe that without it, you cannot walk in true blessing! Why? Because when we operate under authority, we have the blessing of the one over us! I want to encourage you that if you are feeling attacked, it could be that there is an authority issue in your life somewhere. Don't let it continue!

JOURNALING:

Are there any areas of your life right now where you are having authority issues? What can you do to move closer to submitting to authority in your life?

PRAYER:

Take time to pray today about choices you may have made that are keeping you from experiencing God's presence and power in your life. Ask the Lord to show you steps you can take to reconcile those choices.

SURRENDER

Scripture Reading: *Joel 2 | Psalm 47 | Colossians 3*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

I want to take a moment and celebrate you today! You've reached the halfway point of this 21 Day Fast. I'm proud of you and want to encourage you to keep going and not stop!

Over the last few days, we've taken hard and long looks at the parts of our lives where we are struggling with authority. I'm convinced that a lack of authority keeps us from fully returning back to Jesus as our first love. However, the truth is that before we can ever really give God the full authority He deserves, we must remove the barriers that stop us from fully yielding our lives to Him. Many times, these barriers are walls of pride and independence. I talk to so many people whose biggest problem in their faith isn't their love for God, it's their reliance on God. Reliance takes faith and faith requires that we surrender to Jesus.

At one point in the book of Joel, Joel says to "rend your heart and not your garments." The rending of the clothes in scripture was an expression of extraordinary uncontrollable emotion, chiefly of grief, terror, or horror. It is not mentioned as a part of ordinary mourning throughout scripture. It was reserved for a time of deep emotional turmoil. Joel does not forbid such extreme outward behavior of repentance, as long as it is accompanied with the inward affections. Because it is what takes place on the inside, the rending of the heart, that leads to true repentance and emptying yourself of sin and love for sin. In other words, your experience with God should "cut to the heart." It should lead to a deep desire to give up everything else and follow after God with your whole heart!

I want you to consider this idea of surrendering today. Surrendering to Jesus is not easy. It's risky, it requires all of you and for many people, it's scary. But I want to encourage you that it's the best decision that you could ever make. Today, I want you to go deep into the recesses of your heart and consider whether you are completely surrendered to God.

Your Scripture reading is pretty heavy today, but it's important so take the time to read the words of the Scriptures carefully.

JOURNALING:

What's your understanding of the phrase "rend your heart" found in Joel 2?

If Satan were to try to keep a separation between you and Jesus, where would he focus?

PRAYER:

As you finish the first half of the fast, pause and give thanks to Jesus for sustaining you this far. Then take a moment and recommit to finishing the race. Feed your spirit!

GOD'S WORD

Scripture Reading: *Isaiah 6* | *2 Samuel 6*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

We're continuing down another step in the process of returning to Jesus with all of our heart. Today's focus is recommitting ourselves to daily time in God's word. Do you spend time reading God's word each day? Each week? Once a month? Ever? If you read the Word of God far less than you would like, there are two things that I know are true: You are not alone, and you are not receiving all the Lord has for you. To know the mind of God, you must look into His Word.

Scripture says, "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:8).

Read Isaiah 6 and 2 Samuel 6. Highlight parts that are most meaningful for you.

JOURNALING:

How often do you read your Bible? How often would you like to read your Bible?

What keeps you from spending time in God's word?

What would a plan of action look like to tackle this in your personal life? Create a plan!

PRAYER:

Sometimes, we must be honest with God and ASK Him to give us the desire for the things that are important to Him! Ask Him to give you a love for His word! Talk to Him and tell Him what's hard about it for you. Your honesty and willingness to communicate with Him matters!

PRAYERLESS LIVES

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 21:21-22 | Matthew 6:5-8 | 1 Timothy 1-4*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

It's impossible to have a first love life with Jesus when you have a prayerless life. There have been some very real seasons of my life where I was exactly that—prayerless. When I say that, I don't mean completely prayerless. When you aren't communing with God in prayer, prayer feels burdensome, boring and maybe even futile. So how do we change this? What's wrong?

I want you to know that prayer is the native language of faith and if that's true and we're struggling with prayerlessness, then the first thing we need to do is look for a faith problem. There's a faith breakdown somewhere and, until we get that fixed, our problem will remain.

Often our first attempt at fixing our prayerlessness is to try and be "more disciplined" in prayer. We look at heroes, mentors, and peers who seem to have vibrant, powerful prayer lives and figure the solution might be doing what they do or did. If we get up earlier and use a more effective list or app or acronym we'll fix our problem. Methods are necessary and beneficial, but "more discipline" is a false hope if faith is the problem.

Think of prayer as a train. Faith is the engine of prayer, God's promises are the fuel, and discipline is the rails. Prayerlessness is almost always due to a stalled engine. For prayer to get going again, we first need to fire up our faith engine again with fuel from God's promises.

You see, discipline doesn't power the train of prayer. Faith powers the train as you trust God's word. But discipline will guide the train. The rails of planning, structure, and methods are necessary. But the best time to address those is when you've stoked your engine, because when faith is firing you want to move forward in prayer and you are more likely to be led by the Spirit to choose the rails that are best for your prayer train.

Tomorrow, I'm going to share with you some ways to fight prayerlessness, but for now, read the verses below.

JOURNALING:

What stops you from having a vibrant prayer life?

If prayer is the native language of faith, how do you think your faith is right now?

PRAYER:

Ask God to stir your faith and help you build a committed prayer life! You can't do it alone!

PRAYERLESS LIVES PART II

Scripture Reading: *Lamentations 3:21 | Proverbs 30:5 | Mark 9:24*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Yesterday, I shared a little bit about prayerlessness and how I believe that many Christians face this issue in their lives. Remember: the very first thing that we have to address is the cause of a faith deficit in our lives. Prayerfulness can't grow without an environment of faith. So here are a couple of suggestions for doing that:

- 1. Recall God's past grace:** I put this first because in the experience of man, when faith is ebbing low and you're not even sure why, remembering how God has been faithful to you in the past primes your faith engine to trust in God's future grace for whatever is causing your current unbelief. "This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope" (Lamentations 3:21).
- 2. Find the leak:** Where is the leak in your fuel tank? If the fuel of faith is God's promises, then there is a promise(s) that you are not believing. Look for fears, doubts, indulgent sinful habits, unresolved anger, bitterness, disappointment, etc. Often these don't take long to find. But sometimes they are tricky because something has tapped into a buried past experience that is still muddled in your mind. If this is the case, ask trusted believers to help you figure it out. But when you identify it, name it. Get it clear.
- 3. Repent of unbelief:** A lack of faith is sin. It's dishonoring to God whose every word is true (Proverbs 30:5). We must repent of unbelief. But God loves to help our unbelief (Mark 9:24) turn into belief. In fact, sanctification is largely a process of growing towards trusting in the Lord with all our hearts (Proverbs 3:5). Like he did with Thomas, Jesus holds out to us his scarred hands to remind us that our unbelief is paid for and says, "Do not disbelieve, but believe" (John 20:27).
- 4. Fuel your faith engine with promises:** God's promises are the fuel that fires the engine of faith. Get your eyes off of the focus of your unbelief and get them on the promises that God wants you to believe instead. This is often not as hard as it feels like it's going to be. It's amazing how powerful God's promises are. You can feel completely different in a half hour after recalling God's past faithfulness and remembering some promises without any change in your circumstances. The difference is believing.

JOURNALING:

When it comes to priming your faith, which of these tools speaks to you the most?

PRAYER:

Put whatever tool you wrote about above into action! Use your prayer time to make it so!

A UNIQUE PURPOSE

Scripture Reading: *Joshua 5 | Hebrews 2 | Jeremiah 1*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Welcome to the final week of the prayer guide! This is when you will start to sense that the end is closer than ever. Over the last 14 days, we've dealt with some really powerful principles and have spent time with the Lord eliminating some of the roadblocks that the enemy uses to attempt to keep you from returning back to God over and over again in meaningful ways.

With that in mind, I want to now guide you away from the road blocks and focus on returning to your purpose and calling. We say often around HC that we want you to KNOW God, FIND freedom and then DISCOVER purpose (before ultimately fulfilling your greatest purpose: MAKING a difference).

I can't tell you how often the enemy tries to steal purpose and calling away from people in their lives. The simple fact is that you have a purpose for being here! Who are you and why are you here? The first key to knowing who you are is knowing who God is. The people that God uses the most are the people that are most dependent on Him. The less dependent you are on God, the more confused you'll become.

As we jump into this third week, I want to say this to you: God has appointed you to be a life changing person! The design of your life is unique completely to you. The circumstances you are in are unique to you. He'll put you in places that He will not put any of yours peers.

Take note of your experiences. They're often a clue of your purpose and what God has been up to. As you take inventory of the main things that you have experienced in your life, for good or bad, He will reveal clues about what He wants you to do in your future.

JOURNALING:

What are some of the most significant things that you've experienced in your life that are unique to you?

How could God use those things in a meaningful way for His glory?

PRAYER:

We all have our plans that we've given to God, but have you started by submitting your plans to God for HIS plans for your life? Start this final week by laying your list of expectations before the Lord and allow Him to just speak to you about His plan.

A GOD GIVEN VISION

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 12 | Psalm 25

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

I want to start by asking you a question? When was the last time that you considered God's vision for your life?

A God-given vision is a powerful thing, but a lot of people mistake goal setting for vision. There's nothing wrong with having goals, but a vision is not a goal that you set in your carnal mind. A true vision originates from God. It's something that God puts in your spirit. Vision is something that the Holy Spirit deposits into you and says, "This is the highest you! This is My call and My dream and My vision for your life." And it's always bigger than what you think you can do. It's always greater than your ability to perform it without the power of the Holy Spirit.

What is your vision?

I'm convinced that if your vision can be accomplished merely by your hands, then it probably isn't from God. I truly believe that God given vision happens only through the supernatural hand of God. What is it you're believing God for? What is that if God doesn't do it, it won't happen? Is there something you've prayed for in secret because you couldn't work up the courage to even tell someone? I want to challenge you to believe that all things are possible. Please remember that vision is a powerful thing and there is nothing that is impossible for God.

Read 2 Corinthians 12 and Psalm 25. Remember to highlight the places that speak to you specifically today.

JOURNALING:

What makes your heart beat faster? Is there a vision the Lord has shown you?

What would you attempt if you could not fail?

Are you willing to let the Lord plant a new vision in you?

PRAYER:

If you answered yes to that final question, take a moment right now to pray and let the Lord know just how available you are to Him. Are you all in?

A PLACE TO BE PLACED

Scripture Reading: *Deuteronomy 12* | *I Kings 17:3-4* | *Psalms 92:13*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Write this down: God is in the business of people placement. All throughout the Bible we see evidence that God puts people where He wants them. In Genesis 2:8, we read about the very first placement in history – God put Adam in the Garden of Eden. In fact, the whole verse reads, “now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden and there He put the man He had formed.”

Before God put Adam there, He prepared the garden. He made sure that Adam’s needs would be met by the resources within the garden. That’s how good God is! But sometimes God may put someone in a less-than-pleasant environment. God put Jonah in the belly of a fish and later sent him to preach God’s Word to a city full of people Jonah hated. But as a result of Jonah’s preaching in Nineveh, the whole city repented and turned to God!

Proper placement in life is critically important to our effectiveness and success. It’s important to know that you can’t just go out in life anywhere you want to go, doing anything you want to do just because you feel like it. If you are a child of God, He has a plan for your life. He has a place where the plan will unfold. Many times, people struggle because of their resistance to move to the next thing, or even the next place God has for them. They decide where they will live and what they will do, to their own folly. And then there are those who are quick to jump to the next best offer or financial gain.

I have seen people who were really involved and connected in their church, leave because they were offered more money if they relocated. We must cultivate sensitivity to the voice of God in these matters. If God is calling you to a new place, many times it will be preceded by a genuine discomfort in the place where you are. Proper placement demands death to pride and sensitivity at the feet of Jesus in prayer.

Read Deuteronomy 12. Take time to take notes as you go, and always put a month and year next to any notes you take or verses that minister to you.

JOURNALING:

Do you feel like you are living in the proper placement in your life?

Do you feel content in your current circumstances?

PRAYER:

Contentment calls for being content in every situation of life. But calling, purpose and placement are different. If there are areas of your life where you have discomfort, ask the Lord to give you insight.

HEAR HIM

Scripture Reading: *Isaiah 63:1 | Jeremiah 1 | II Timothy 2:15*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

One of the keys to learning about purpose is to understand that God is speaking. He's speaking to you right now. We can always depend on what He says to be right. God speaks to us in many ways that include but are not limited to: His Word, nature, people, circumstances, peace, wisdom, supernatural intervention, dreams, visions, and what some call "the inner witness," which is best described as a "knowing" deep inside our hearts. He also speaks in what the Bible calls a "still, small voice," which I believe also refers to the inner witness.

God also speaks through the conscience, through our desires, and in an audible voice, but always remember that when He speaks, what He says is always right and it never disagrees with His written Word. We rarely hear God's audible voice, though it does happen.

If you look hard enough, you will find that there are clues to your assignment everywhere. Finding your assignment in the kingdom is critical. You are treasured. In God's eyes, you are treasured and valued. He knew you before you were in your mother's womb and He has a purpose for your life or you wouldn't be here.

The first step in finding your assignment is understanding God can talk to you. You need to know that God is still speaking today, and He is still calling people to be a part of His kingdom purpose. He speaks through church services, through preachers, He will speak through circumstances, and through other people. And He always speaks through His Word. You've got to learn to listen and hear God's voice. That's how He puts dreams in you! He will speak to you.

I want to encourage you to ask God to help you hear His voice in any way He chooses to speak to you. He loves you; He has good plans for your life; and He wants to talk to you about these things.

JOURNALING:

Rate your ability to hear God's voice on a scale between 1 and 10, with 10 being "loud and clear" and 1 being "never ever."

Based on today's study, what can you do to move that number closer to a 10?

PRAYER:

Press in ... He's listening. Spend time in silence and listen for the still, small voice of the living God. He will speak if you will listen.

DISTRACTIONS

Scripture Reading: *Luke 14 | Philippians 2:17 | Hebrews 9:27*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

This is it: The final countdown! The last three days of the fast are upon us. I pray that this journey has held great meaning for you. Your life matters to God. You were His idea, and He loves you more than you could ever imagine. But there is another called Satan who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. His primary mode of operation is deception and distraction. And, like Peter walking on the water, his attacks can come at the times of your greatest success.

Jesus told His followers that spiritual distraction begins with hearts that have grown dull, ears that are hard of hearing, and eyes that are closed (Matt. 13:15). Using the illustration of a farmer scattering seed, Jesus compared the seed that fell among thorns to a person who hears God's Word but whose heart is focused on other things. "The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful" (v.22).

You may be experiencing miraculous things in your life, seeing God bless you and move in mighty ways. But I want to warn you, many times that is exactly when the storms come. It's the enemy's job to get your eyes off of Jesus and distract you to stop you from doing what God has called you to do. How easily we can be distracted by many things, whether in our relationship with others or with the Lord.

What's really hindering you from doing what you've been called to do? It's natural things. Cell phones, schedules, people, to-do lists—things that in themselves aren't bad but can become bad for us if they are done out of balance. Don't allow them to keep you from all the Lord has for you.

Read Luke 14 and allow God to speak to you through His Word today.

JOURNALING:

If Satan's plan is to distract you, where are you most vulnerable?

What are some things you can do to avoid falling for the distraction traps?

How determined are you to grow closer to the Lord through the basic disciplines of prayer, worship, church attendance, reading the Word, and connecting with other believers?

PRAYER:

Press in. Listen. Get in His Word. You have but one assignment over these last few days: Finish strong!

GOD'S REVELATION

Scripture Reading: *Revelation 3 | 1 Corinthians 2*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

I believe with all my heart the Holy Spirit is looking for people in whom he can deposit major revelation concerning the future. But before this can happen, we've got to understand all revelation comes from the Holy Spirit. That's why the Bible said, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV).

If you climb up high enough in the realm of God, He will open the windows and show you things not visible from where you are now. The Bible describes Noah's ark as having three levels. I believe it is symbolic and can be compared to this fast. When you fast, you are taking your relationship with God to another level. He will speak to you things that He would not reveal in a casual relationship.

God wants to give you a revelation of who you are and who you can be when His Spirit is upon you! This fast has been a journey up that mountain to a place of revelation and deeper understanding. Press in. Ask your questions. Take time to listen to His voice and meditate on His Word.

Read Revelation 3 and 1 Corinthians 2. Is God speaking to you through these verses today?

JOURNALING:

Take a moment and think about the ways you feel you have grown over the last 20 days.

What are some of the most important things you have heard the Lord say to you?

PRAYER:

Thank God for all that He has spoken to you about over these last 20 days. Remember: Tomorrow is our FINAL prayer service of this 21 day period and it's a big deal. We really want you to join us to pray first! Let's finish this 21 Day period on fire for more of God!

CELEBRATE

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 6 | Isaiah 61*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT:

Twenty-one days ago we embarked on a journey together with one goal in mind: “Return to Me.”

We have talked about the concept of returning to Him and rending your heart, your very soul; bearing it all and laying at the foot of the cross. In week two, we talked about the many obstacles and roadblocks the enemy will usher to try to keep you from Jesus through distraction and deception. And in week three, we talked about returning to your purpose and finding your identity in Jesus—another kind of returning to Him.

Today you celebrate the journey. Today you come before the Lord, probably a little thinner than we were when we started, but grateful for what we have encountered.

Take a moment right where you are to give adoration, worship, and thanksgiving to the Lord.

Read all of Matthew chapter 6 and Isaiah 61. Take your time and allow God to speak to you through His Word. Be sure to highlight or make note of any specific verse that speaks to where you are today.

JOURNALING:

Take a moment to reflect on your experience throughout this fast. Do you feel closer to the Lord than you did on day 1?

Is there a specific passage that has stuck with you? Let this be your “altar” scripture, so to speak, that you can go back to over and over to remember all you experienced during this season with the Lord.

PRAYER:

Rejoice! Just spend the entire time of prayer in worship today! Thank God for all He has done over these last 21 Days. I’m convinced that for some of you, you are going to see the answers to the questions you’ve had. I believe that you are going to see results for what you’ve been praying for! Our God is a faithful God!



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