

2015 PRAYER & FASTING GUIDE



A  
Hunger  
*for God*

A D A M M A B R Y





## **A Hunger for God**

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

# Fasting and Prayer Explained

*Devote yourselves to prayer ...*

Colossians 4:2

The Bible often mentions the people of God entering into a time prayer and fasting. In the Old Testament, Moses and Elijah both abstained from food and water for forty days and forty nights. (Deuteronomy 9:9, 10:10, 18:25-29; 1 Kings 19:8.) Jesus himself fasted for forty days in the desert

after his baptism, before engaging in his own public ministry. (Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13.)

Jesus expects his followers to fast and pray. Fasting is mentioned both descriptively and prescriptively as being part of the Christian life. So, we should do it!

## Why Should I Fast?

### ***Jesus Expects us to Fast***

In Matthew 6, Jesus says, “When you fast...,” and then goes on to give instruction how to fast. His instructions assume that his disciples will, in fact, be fasting. Otherwise, there would be no need for him to give any instructions on the matter. But Jesus did more than just instruct about fasting, he actually demonstrated its importance. Before he went into public ministry, he fasted for forty days. Even during his ministry he would often come away from the crowds to pray alone. In short, a long stretch of fasting empowered his entire three-year ministry. If Jesus thought this was the best way to start his ministry, how much more us?

### ***Fasting Kills our Love of Lesser Things***

It’s easy to be preoccupied with the good stuff of life (money, people, job, school, relationships, etc.) and miss the greatness of God. Fasting helps us to remember that, “man doesn’t live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God,” (Mat 4:4). In forsaking food, we forsake that on which we depend for physical life, to remember the one on whom we ultimately depend on for true life. Often during a fast, our idolatry is exposed, giving room for repentance and growth in holiness. We begin to freak out a little bit that we don’t have what we want, which acts like a window into our souls through

which we can see sin. Fasting helps us to feast on Jesus and to put out the fires of devotion to lesser things.

### ***Fasting is an Act of Humility and Consecration***

Humility results in the grace of God. When we humble ourselves in prayer, we have instant access to the heart of God. As we deny ourselves as an act of consecration, we are better able to exercise self-control. We can keep our emotions and desires under control.

... I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. . .  
(Psalm 35:13)

### ***Fasting Fans into Flame our Passion for God***

God does not want us to be halfhearted in our devotion to him. We are not honored when people are half-committed and flaky to us, and neither is God. Fasting causes us to see freshly our dependance on God and thus stirs our affections for him. It causes us to see him as our daily bread, and sweeter to us than honey (Psalm 19). This makes true worship rise from our hearts to God because when we fast all we have is our hunger and God. We've no choice but to fight to feast on the fullness of God without the option of satiating ultimate hunger with smaller things.

### ***Fasting Causes Us to be Generous***

Isaiah 58 shows us that one of God's intentions behind fasting is that we might take the food and resources we're not using during that time and give them to the poor and oppressed. By abstaining from food and the "extras" in life, we're able to be more generous. Consider the words of Scripture:

*...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame*

(Isaiah 58: 10-11)

### ***Fasting Strengthens Prayer***

Scripture gives us examples of fasting strengthening our prayers, thus the common pairing of Christians fasting and praying. When we fast, our minds and hearts become focused, and our prayers are often more filled with fervor and life. That's not to say that our emotional commitment to pray somehow makes God listen better, but it does allow us to pray better, and more in line with God's will. (See Matthew 17:21; Mark 9:17-29; Acts 10:30; 1 Corinthians 7:5.)

### ***Fasting Helps Us Become Sensitive to the Holy Spirit***

When we deny ourselves of our natural cravings, our spiritual antennas become sharper. We become more sensitive to His voice as we divest ourselves of worldly distractions. We are better able to focus on God and submit to His will. This opens the door for the Holy Spirit into our lives

*While they were worshiping the lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

(Acts 13:2)

Here are some additional reasons that Scripture gives us to fast:

- To be Christ-like (Matthew 4:1-17; Luke 4:1-13).



- To grow in holiness (Isaiah 58:5-7).
- To repent from sins (See Jonah 3:8; Nehemiah 1:4, 9:1-3; 1 Samuel 14:24).
- To mourn for the dead (1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12).
- To request God's help in times of crisis and calamity (Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 1:4-11).

## How Should I Fast?

Scripture gives us examples of a few different forms of fasting.

### ***The Absolute Fast***

One type of fast is the absolute fast. In this fast, one abstains completely from all food and water for a certain period of time. Moses and Elijah both fasted in this way (Deuteronomy 9:9, 10:10, 18:25-29; 1 Kings 19:8). This is not a commonly performed fast, and should be done with a great deal of care. **It's not recommended to pursue this type of fast for more than three days, and only to do so under the supervision of your doctor.**

(That is, don't do it unless the Holy Spirit and your physician agree, okay? Great.)

### ***The Solid-Food Fast***

The next kind of fast is a solid-food fast. This is exactly as it sounds – abstaining from solid foods, while allowing yourself to drink water and juice. Some theologians think that Jesus did a fast like this, because the Scriptures don't mention him being thirsty at the end of it (Matthew 4:2).

### ***The Partial-Fast***

The final kind of fast that Scripture shows us is a partial fast. Daniel, for example, fasted from delicacies, meat, and wine for 21 days (Daniel 10:3). Other kinds of partial fasting may be from television, social media, or hobbies, allowing one more time to devote to prayer and reflection.

## How Should I Prepare?

### **Prepare Your Heart**

Jesus gives us pretty clear instruction on fasting and prayer.

*Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.*

*And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

*And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

(Matthew 6:1, 5-6, 16-18).

So what is Jesus after? He's not after everyone in the world knowing how holy we Christians are because we fast. He's interested in our hearts really and truly being turned to him. In fact, he goes out of his way to tell us not to advertise the fact that we are fasting. Don't look sleepy, hungry, or annoyed that you can't eat. Don't excuse yourself from lunch saying, "Sorry guys, I've got to go pray." Simply fast, devoting the extra time to prayer and the extra resources to generosity. That's it.

### ***Prepare Your Mind***

Fasting is not the same as a hunger strike. A hunger strike is when someone refuses to eat to get someone else to bend to their will, capitulate, or do something for them. Prisoners go on hunger strikes. Oppressed people go on hunger strikes. Ghandi went on hunger strikes. Christians do not go on hunger strikes to get God to notice them.

When we fast, we are not doing it to get God to notice us, love us more, or move him to do what we really want him to do. Christians are not prisoners, oppressed people, or manipulators of their God. Christians are blood-bought saints whom God loves enough to sacrifice his own Son. Therefore, Christian fasting is categorically different from a hunger strike.

We fast to align our hearts with God's heart. We fast to suppress the noise of the natural man to hear the still small voice of God. We fast to kill sin that we might live to God. We fast to pray better. We fast to love better. We fast to give better. We fast to refresh our spirits in the Holy Spirit. We fast as a form of freedom in God, not as a form of oppression under God.

### ***Make a Plan***

If you plan nothing, that's probably what you'll achieve. To have a

successful fast, take a moment to decide what kind of fast you will take. How long will it be? What kind? What are your prayer goals? What will you do when you really want to cheat? Setting goals will allow you to be successful.

### ***Ask God for Strength***

Fasting is not a willpower exercise. It is a humble, dependent activity that we take to remind us that we really do need God for everything. So, ask God to empower your fast. Ask him to be more satisfying than the food you're missing. Ask him to show up in your fast.

### ***Set Prayer Goals***

During a fast, it can be beneficial to set certain goals in prayer for which you will pray every day. These can be church goals, like growth, prayer for pastors and leaders, or for your small group. It's also good to set personal prayer goals, like personal holiness, mortification of sin, and opportunities for evangelism.

### ***Consult a Physician***

If you are pregnant, nursing, or ill, the more extreme forms of fasting won't be right for you. Please use wisdom and consult a physician if you have any sickness or concern about participating in a fast.

## **During Your Fast**

### ***Give Yourself Time to Pray***

If you spend your fast so busy that you really don't have any extra time to pray, you may have simply not eaten, rather than really fasted. Put time to pray in your schedule, and go after those God-given goals which God has

laid on your heart.

### ***Commit to Change***

Whatever God tells you or puts His finger upon, apply it immediately.

If you need to make restitution, immediately contact people you have broken relationships with. If there are habits that need to change, make the adjustment immediately. Ask your group leader to hold you accountable.

### ***Pray with Others***

When fasting as a church, we really want you to take time to pray with others. Your friends in your group, classes, or teams will be praying. Join them.

### ***More Practical Tips***

- Avoid medical and even natural herbal drugs. However, if you are under medication, these should only be withdrawn upon the advice of your doctor.
- Limit your physical activity and exercise. If you have a workout routine, adjust it accordingly.
- Rest as much as you can.
- Maintain an attitude of prayer throughout the day. Intercede for your family, pastors, church, nation, our missionaries, world missions, etc.
- Drink plenty of water.
- As your body adjusts, be prepared for temporary bouts of physical weakness as well as mental annoyances like impatience, irritability, and anxiety.

# After Your Fast

## ***Slowly Reintroduce Food***

When your fast is over, don't rush out to the nearest buffet and practice the sin of gluttony. Your body may not like that very much. It's wise to slowly reintroduce foods like fruits, soft vegetables, and grains. Often times, people will break fasts with soup and salad, or a smoothie.

## ***Continue to Pray***

Don't let your prayer life end on the day you finish the fast. Build from the momentum you gained during the fast. Let it transform your prayer and devotional life. Carry the newfound passion with you throughout the year.

## ***Be Expectant!***

Be in faith and believe God to answer your prayers soon! Don't give up, persevere in prayer even if you don't see the answers immediately. Make sure you keep the copy of your prayer points. You can check it at the end of the year and see how God has answered your prayers. It can be your thanksgiving list at the end of the year.

## D A Y O N E

# A Hunger For God

*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*

John 6:35

## Read

[ ] John 6

[ ] Psalm 63:1

[ ] Ezekiel 7:19

[ ] Jeremiah 2:13

Most of us wake up every morning hungry. That's when we eat breakfast. Literally, "Break" and "Fast," these two words speak about the meal that breaks the fast of the evening during sleep. Not eating all night makes the body hungry. Perhaps you feel as if you've not been experiencing Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life. We can feed ourselves on the junk food delights

Day One — A Hunger for God

of this world – vain ambition, lust, pride, success – and feel full, for a while. Today, however, we invite you to feast on God. As you begin your fast, start by examining your heart for the ways you fill your life with things and people other than the Jesus Christ.

Take hold of the  
eternal life to which  
you were called ...  
Fight the good fight  
of the faith  
- 1 Tim 6:12

Part of taking hold of the eternal life (1 Tim 6:12) is first letting go of all those things which do not bring life. God is there, full of overflowing love and satisfying grace, and ready to give to you more delight in his Son than you've ever experienced. You have but to turn your back on sin, and ask the Savior to once again come and satisfy you with his presence,

his word, and his power. He is a good God, and he loves you.

In Jeremiah's day, the people of God had forgotten that they were to be constantly enjoying God. They were to look to him for provision. They were to turn to him from sin. They were to act out his desires in the world. By enjoying God, they were going to attract the world to the presence of the One for whom the whole world was made. As you begin your fast, turn from your small pleasures, fleeting sins, lesser joys, and false gods. Turn to Jesus. He awaits you with the richest of fare, and the kindest of gazes.



## Reflect

1. Based on John 6, who is Jesus? What does he want us to do?

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2. What was the sin of God's people in Ezekiel 7:19? In Jeremiah 2:13?

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## Respond

- Ask God to reveal some lies of the enemy you may have believed that need to be replaced with the truth. Ask him to show you where you have enjoyed sin more than Him. Spend some time searching the Scriptures and praying.
- One way we satisfy our hunger for God is by meeting him in the Scriptures. On a scale from one to ten, how are you doing with reading your Bible? Make the necessary adjustments and ask God for grace to be consistent in your Bible reading (Psalm 1:2; Joshua 1:8).

## Pray

- Pray for yourself, that Jesus will be the highest of your affections, and knowing him the goal of your life.
- Pray for others you know, that the lies they believe will be replaced with the truth, and that they would forsake small pleasures for true

Day One — A Hunger for God

satisfaction in God. Pray for friends and family to believe the truth of the gospel.

- Pray for our city, that the big lies would be exposed and that a gospel renewal around the truth of God's word would happen soon.

D A Y T W O

# A Hunger for Scripture

*Open my eyes, that I may behold  
wondrous things out of your law...*

Psalm 119:18

## Read

[ ] Psalm 119

[ ] 2 Timothy 3:16

Perhaps you are among those who feel good about knowing God, but feel challenged by reading the Bible. For some, the Scriptures just seem hard to read. For others, it's difficult to know where to begin. Both of those are very

real, practical challenges. But first, let us deal with the challenge of our own desires – we must *hunger* for God’s word if we are to feast on the presence of God.

Psalm 119 is a long song all about God’s word. The Psalmist declares the goodness of it. It is like a lamp to the feet, like honey on the honeycomb, and like wisdom from Heaven. Don’t you want to experience the Scriptures like that? If God has spoken to us, wouldn’t we want to hear it? Of course! Once we see the benefits of feasting on God’s word, our hearts take a greater delight in it. Here are some of the joys of the Scriptures:

- Promises - The Bible is filled with promises you can believe for your life, the lives of others, and our world.
- Correction - If you’re heading the wrong direction, don’t you want to know? The Scriptures tell us what is sin, and what won’t lead to our flourishing so we may repent and correct course.
- Knowing - If you fall in love with someone, their words matter to you. The Scriptures are God’s words to us (2 Tim 3:16), and are profitable for showing us who God is, and what he is like.
- Wisdom - The Scriptures make the simple wise.

Those practical challenges of knowing where and how to begin reading the Scriptures are real, but very solvable. A good Bible reading plan and some practice will avail much. Don’t let them get in the way of feasting on God’s word. As you fast today, take time during normal mealtimes to read the Scriptures and reflect on the text. Ask God to illuminate your understanding.

## Reflect

1. According to Psalm 119, what is the word of God like? What most surprised you about this text?

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2. What are the Scriptures? (2 Timothy 3:16)?

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## Respond

- What challenges hinder you from reading the Bible? Take a moment to make a plan for when, where, and what you'll read. If you need help looking for a good Bible reading plan, visit <https://www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans> for help. Or, consider buying a One-Year Bible, with daily readings for each day of the year.
- Share your plan for reading with your community group for accountability.

## Pray

- Pray for yourself - Pray that you would feast on God's word. That God's words would be for your a source of life, wisdom, and life change.

Day Two — A Hunger for Scripture

- Pray for others - As you read God's word, look for promises for others in your life. Pray for the sick, the lost, and the broken based on the promises in God's word.
- Pray for our city - The Scripture tells us to pray "thy Kingdom come." Pray this prayer over our city.

## D A Y   T H R E E

# A Hunger for Holiness

*Be holy, for I am holy ...*

Leviticus 11:44

## Read

[ ] Isaiah 6:1-8

[ ] Romans 12:1

[ ] Ephesians 4:24

[ ] Hebrews 12:14

Holiness is one of those abstract words which we may find difficult to understand. Yet, the Scriptures command us, "Be holy." It's pretty important, therefore, that we understand what this concept is all about. First let's ask, what does it mean to say that God is holy?

God's holiness has at least two angles to it. First, it means that God is totally free of all evil and sin. That is completely unlike us. While we are sinful, God is no way is – he is holy. Second, God's holiness means that he is totally and completely good – perfect in every possible way.

So, when we consider the commandment, "Be holy for I am holy," (Lev. 11:44) it means that we are to (a) repent and turn away from all sin and evil, and (b) grow in godliness and holiness.

Today, look at your heart for those areas of unholiness – areas where you are sinning against God, and running away from his will. Or, perhaps there are areas of your life you simply have yet to submit to him. This, too, is sin. We can think of sin in two ways: things we should not do that we do (sins of commission), and things we do *not* do that we should do (sins of omission). Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what areas of your life that need to be brought before God.

But don't stop there. Think on all the goodness of God – his love, grace, kindness, generosity – and ask the Lord to grow you to become more and more like him. Ask him for the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Ask him to make you more and more like him today. Ask him to make you holy, as he is holy.

## Reflect



1. According to Isaiah 6, what was Isaiah's problem?

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2. From what sins do you need to repent?

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3. How can you grow in holiness?

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## Respond

- Pray today that you would hunger and thirst for righteousness, not for sinfulness. Ask the Lord to shape your conscience to reflect his, your morals to be his morals.
- With one or two trusted brothers or sisters in Christ, share your struggles with sin and ask them to pray for you.

## Pray

### Day Three — A Hunger for Holiness

- Pray for yourself - Pray that you would be free from sin today. Ask the Lord to give you grace to kill the sinful desires in your own heart, and to set you free to love and follow him.
- Pray for our church - Ask the Lord to make our church a holy people who run from sin and who look progressively like Jesus.
- Pray for our city - Ask the Lord to free us from the bondages our city experiences to sin. Pray for your workmates, friends, business, and school. Pray for love of holiness to come over our city.

D A Y F O U R

# A Hunger for Fruitfulness

*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and  
so prove to be my disciples.*

John 15:8

## Read

[ ] John 15:1-5

[ ] Genesis 1:28

[ ] Psalm 92:12-14

[ ] Matthew 3:8

## Day Four — A Hunger for Fruitfulness

God has made us all for a purpose. No matter what our jobs, our life stage, our age, background, color, or language, all God's people are called to bear fruit – to get work done for the Kingdom.

It is a common misconception that being a disciple of Christ is all about prayer, worship, and Bible study. While it is true that those Godward disciplines are important, they are not the point. The point of those disciplines is that we might glorify God and enjoy him forever. But they're only half the equation. God doesn't save us to take us out of the world, but to send us into it as agents of his Kingdom – little colonists of a Heavenly culture here on the earth.

In short, we are called to bear fruit. Are you hungry to bear fruit for God, or do you find it hard, difficult, and of little interest? Today as you fast, pray that God would give you open doors to preach the gospel to someone. Pray that he might give you spiritual sons or daughter into whom you might pour some of the life that others have poured into you. Matthew 28:18-20 gives us the command, "Go make disciples." But this is really just the restatement of the first command to "be fruitful and multiply." (Gen 1:28) Pray that you would bear fruit for the kingdom.

Not only that, but pray that you would be fruitful in the job into which you are called. Pray that your decisions and influence would be Kingdom decisions and Kingdom influence. Pray that your home, school, office, or career would be marked not just with worldly success, but with Kingdom fruitfulness.

# Reflect

1. According to John 15:1-5, how do we bear fruit?

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2. According to John 15:8, how do we prove to be Jesus disciples?

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3. Take a moment and list out the names of individuals that God is putting on your heart to pray for. Who among these might you lead to faith in Christ, or disciple?

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# Respond

- Continue to think about what it means to be fruitful, where you are. It's easy to say, "When I become a better Christian, then I'll bear fruit." But the fact is, one can't really grow in Christ without attempting to bear fruit for him.
- What do you fear about attempting to be fruitful for Jesus? Confess those fears, and ask God to make you a bold and brave fruit bearer for him!

# Pray

- Pray for yourself - Ask the Lord to make you fruitful. Pray John 15:1-5 over your life.
- Pray for our church - Pray that God would make our church fruitful, and that we would bring God much glory even as we bear much fruit together.
- Pray for our city - Ask God to give our city the fruits of righteousness. Those parts of our city that are fruitless and bearing bad fruit, ask him to prune them. Ask him to grow the fruits of righteousness, faithfulness, holiness, love, and peace.

D A Y F I V E

# A Hunger for Faithfulness

*...faithful with little, ruler over much...*

Matthew 25:23

## Read

[ ] Matthew 8:5-13

[ ] Mark 9:23-24

[ ] Luke 16:10

[ ] Psalm 86:15

God is faithful. He always does what he says, and never goes back on his word. Faith is not blind, therefore. Faith is fully aware of God's faithfulness. Faith is simply trusting God, who has shown himself completely

trustworthy. Today, we hunger for faithfulness – to know God’s faithfulness, to trust him, and to be more faithful ourselves. Let’s take those in turn.

How do we see more and more of God’s faithfulness? One of the best ways is to find him in the Scriptures. In the Bible we see a story of God’s unstopping, never-ending fidelity to his people, even when they constantly rebel against him. His faithfulness is finally demonstrated as he sends his son, Jesus, to live, die, and rise for us, his people. God is truly a God whose faithfulness never has and never will run out.

Because we can see how faithful God has been to us, we can trust him. As we fast today, we’re asking God to make us increasingly faithful – to fill us with more trust in him, his promises, and his plans. Aren’t you hungry for more faith in God? Don’t you tire of constantly reverting back to self-reliance for life, future, and faith?

Finally, let’s ask God to fill us with faith. In Matthew 8, we see Jesus meet a centurion whose faith made him marvel. May it be this way for us. May we come to the Lord with our needs, our heart longing for the lost to be saved, and world yearning for the church to be the church, and ask him for faith to believe all of his promises. May we all believe God for great things.

## Reflect

1. Why did Jesus marvel at the centurion’s faith in Matthew 8? How does that challenge your faith?

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2. What is most challenging for your faith? How can you bring that concern before God and see it overcome?

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3. Take a moment to list out some of your big faith goals for 2015. Pray over them, and ask God to give you more faith to see God come through on his promises to hear and answer.

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## Respond

- Search your heart. What in your life is challenging your ability to trust God right now? What are you going to do about it? What excuses do you use to get off the hook for believing God? How will you escape the trap of self-reliance and move toward the happy place of God-reliance?
- Put yourself in the shoes of the centurion. How would you have felt? Why do you think it seemed to him quite reasonable to trust Jesus in that moment? How does this inspire you?
- We don't just want to be people of faith, but we want to be faithful people. Faithfulness means that we're trustworthy, just as God is trustworthy. Have you been flaky or unreliable in any areas of your life? What changes can you make today to be a trustworthy man or woman of God?

## Pray

- Pray for yourself - Ask the God for more faith. Repent of self-reliance and small faith. Repent also of the ways you've been untrustworthy. Ask God to make you a faithful man or woman of faith.
- Pray for our church - Pray that God will make our faith in him ever-increasing. We are trusting him for bigger and better things in 2015 – more disciples, more growth, the planting of new churches, and the expansion of missions. We need faith to see all of that happen.
- Pray for our city - Ask God to grant the gift of faith to many in our city. Pray that he would cause the unbelieving to believe, and those of weak or small faith in him to trust in him more and more.

## D A Y   S I X

# A Hunger for our City

*Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you...*

Jeremiah 29:7

## Read

[ ] Jeremiah 29:4-7

[ ] 1 Timothy 2:1-2

[ ] Jonah 4:11

[ ] Revelation 21:1-4

The people of God were in exile. They lived in a city filled with different beliefs from theirs – most of which were horrible. They were a minority, life was challenging, and they wanted to go home. That was the situation for the Jews during the Babylonian exile. And what was God's word to them? To pray for their city, to seek its welfare, because as the city prospered, so would the people of God.

## Day Six — A Hunger for the City

As Christians, we are to care about our city because God has placed us there. We are told in Scripture that it is *God* who appoints the times and places in which we live, that we should seek him. (Acts 17:26) We should seek the welfare of our city because Jesus taught us to pray the Kingdom of God to come on the earth just as it is in heaven. Ask a result of our church growing, our groups growing, and our people growing, our city should be growing to look, sound, and act a little bit more like Heaven.

In Timothy, we see Paul instructing his son in the Lord to pray for the leaders of his day. Today as you fast, pray for our mayor, our city counsellors, our governors and the state legislature, other city officials. Pray for those with influence and power to use it justly, for God's glory and the good of all people.

Let us be people are hungry to our city meet Jesus. Pray for Boston to be littered with community groups, service projects, and people filled with the Holy Spirit and the hope of the gospel. Ask God to give us the people of our city, that we may bring them the truth, grace, and changing power of the gospel.

## Reflect

1. How does this lesson challenge you to care more about this city?

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2. In Jonah 4:11, how does God feel about Nineveh? In Revelation 21:1-4, what do you notice is coming down from Heaven? How does this help you understand God's feelings about cities?

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3. Many people come to the Boston area not to invest in the city or her people, but to simply get a degree, a job, or a notch on their resume. How can you leave a mark on Boston, even if you don't plan to live there your whole life?

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## Respond

- List three things you can do in the next few weeks to care more about your city. How can you pray for and act in our city?
- List out the places and spaces you live and work in our city – your job, school, neighborhood, gym, etc. Then, pray for the people and areas on your list. Ask the Lord to show you areas of need, people who are hurting, and to open your eyes to the world around you, and how he might want to use you as an agent of the Kingdom of Heaven, not just a resident of the city of Boston.

## Pray

## Day Six — A Hunger for the City

- Pray for yourself - Ask the Lord to give you a heart for our city. Whether you're here for just a few years or for the rest of your life, you are commanded to care for the city. Pray that God would open your heart.
- Pray for our church - Ask God to make our church a church of great Kingdom influence in Boston. Ask the Lord for growth, and that he would bless our efforts to plant churches all over Boston. Ask the Lord to send laborers here, and for the resources and wisdom to see those laborers bear fruit in Boston.
- Pray for our city - In all these things, pray for the city of Boston. Ask God to work mightily among us.

D A Y   S E V E N

# A Hunger for the World

*Go into all the world, and make disciples of all nations...*

Matthew 28:18-20

## Read

[ ] Matthew 28:18-20

[ ] Romans 10:14-15

[ ] Habakkuk 2:14

[ ] Revelation 7:9-12

As we conclude our fast, today we focus on a hunger for the nations. The fact is, we simply struggle to care about the world as much as we do ourselves. We are struck with crisis fatigue at all that is wrong with the world,

and the feeling of powerlessness to do much about it. But, that feeling is not reflective of reality, because there is much we can do to about it.

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave his disciples (us) the Great Commission – to go into all the world and make disciples. He commands us to pray, to give our money, and to even go ourselves to see the nations of the world meet Jesus and worship him as the Savior. How do we do that?

First, we pray. We ask God to give us a heart for the world around us. We refuse to give in to the feeling of hopelessness, because we remember that the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. (Rom 1) Since our church is a part of a family of churches committed to reaching every nation, we have a wonderful context for our heart for the world to turn into practical action steps. And the first of those steps is to pray.

Second, we give. We can give our money to missionaries, causes, and organizations that are committed to bringing the gospel to those parts of the world that do not yet have it.

Finally, we can go. God may be calling you to the nations of the world, either for the short-term or for the long haul. What more glorious thing can we imagine than to be a part of God's gracious bringing of his Kingdom into the world as we faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in every nation.

## Reflect



1. According to Matthew 28:18-20, what is our responsibility as Christians?  
Does it sound optional?

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2. What is the picture of worship that you find in Revelation 7:9-12?

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3. How is God challenging you to play a role in missions?

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## Respond

- Visit [TheJoshuaProject.org](http://TheJoshuaProject.org) and have a look at the information there about the unreached peoples of the world. Pick a few of them, and begin to pray for them.
- Visit [EveryNation.org](http://EveryNation.org) and check out the various missions we have going on in our movement. Ask the Lord to speak to you about how you might become more involved.

## Pray

- Pray for yourself - Ask the Lord to give you a heart for the nations of the earth. Consider partnering with missionaries.

Day Seven — A Hunger for the World

- Pray for our church - As our church continues to grow, pray that God would call some from among us as missionaries across the world. As.
- Pray for our city - The nations of the world live in our city! Ask God to give us open doors into the internationals in our city. Pray that there would be a revival among them.

## A P P E N D I X 1

# Prayer Journal

This year, we are calling on you to join us in a week of prayer and fasting for yourself, our church, our city, and our world. Taking a week to seek God together, deny ourselves, and cry out to Him is a critical step to seeing the truth, grace, and changing power of the gospel permeate our lives. Take a moment to reflect on your personal goals in prayer this year. As you're fasting and praying, regularly pray through these things. Writing them down will help you thank God for his faithfulness when He answers!

## Personal Prayer Goals

Spiritual Revival • Physical Healing • Prosperity and Provision • Rich  
Generosity • Sanctification • Hunger for God's Word

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## Family Prayer Goals

Salvation for Family • Restored Relationships • Children and Family

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## Church Prayer Goals

Salvation • Protection for Pastors and Leaders • Growth and Fruitfulness •  
For Disciples to be Made • Provision • Your Community Group

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## Ministry Prayer Goals

Prayer for Your Community Group • Salvation of Colleagues and Friends •  
Growth in Knowledge of God's Word • Spiritual Gifts •

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## School/Career Prayer Goals

Excellence • Promotion • Influence • Leadership • Salvation of Bosses,  
Colleagues, Professors, etc.

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Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree  
about anything you ask for, it will be done for you  
by my Father in heaven.

- Matthew 18:19



A P P E N D I X 2

# Faith Confessions

One of the most powerful disciplines a man or woman of God can learn is how to confess the word of God over their lives. Confession means “to say with.” When Christians confess the Scriptures, they are saying with God what God says about them, the world, and himself. Here are a few faith confessions to help you along the way as you fast and pray.

Try to read these out loud. You may be surprised to find how wonderful the promises of God's word actually are. All of these confessions are direct quotations from Scripture, with references. They are arranged into different topics so you can begin to see some of what the Scriptures say about each one. As you read these, our hope is that your faith will be built, and you'll come to know a bit more clearly what God's word says about God, you, and the world in which you live.

## Knowing God

I love the house where You live, O Lord, the place where Your glory dwells. (Ps. 26:8) One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. (Ps. 27:4) My heart says of You, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. (Ps. 27:8) As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (Ps. 42:1-2) I have seen You in the sanctuary and beheld Your power and Your glory. because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You. I will praise You as long as I live, and in Your name I will lift up my hands. (Ps. 63:2-4)

How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. (Ps. 84:1-2) Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. (Ps. 84:10)

I do not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deut. 8:3) I will not depart from the commands of God's lips; I



will treasure the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. (Job 23:12)  
When God's words come, I will eat them; they are my joy and my heart's  
delight, for I bear the name of the Lord God Almighty. (Jer. 15:16)

I will listen to the voice of Jesus. As he calls me and leads me, I will follow  
him, because I know his voice. (John 10:3-5) I love Jesus and will obey  
him; he loves me and will show himself to me. He and the Father will come  
and make their home with me. (John 14:21, 23) No longer do I relate to  
God on the basis of the experience of others. Instead, whether I am the  
least or the greatest, I myself will know God. (Jer. 31:34) Because Jesus has  
gone before me, I will approach God's throne with confidence. (Heb. 4:16)  
As I come near to God, he will come near to me. (James 4:8) Though I was  
once far away, I have been brought near to God through the blood of  
Christ. (Eph. 2:13) Jesus himself dwells in my heart through faith. (Eph.  
3:17) He will be with me always, to the very end of the age. (Matt. 28:20)

## Identity in Christ

God is not a man that he should lie. Therefore, whatever he says about me  
is true. (Num. 23:19) God has blessed me with every spiritual blessing  
through his Son Jesus Christ. Before the creation of the world he chose me  
to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined me to be  
adopted as his son through Jesus Christ. God has lavished His grace on  
me and I am redeemed and forgiven. I have been marked in Christ with a  
seal, the promised Holy Spirit who is deposit guaranteeing my eternal  
inheritance. Because of God's abundant goodness, I will live for the praise  
of His glory. (Eph. 1:3-14)

## Appendix 2 – Faith Confessions

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. (Gal. 2:20) I have been washed, I have been sanctified, I have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. 6:11) I am a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come! (2 Cor. 5:17) I am the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21) I have been set free from sin and have become a slave to righteousness. (Rom. 6:18) I am God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for me to do. (Eph. 2:20) There is no longer any condemnation for me because through Jesus Christ the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom. 8:1-2) Because the Son has set me free, I am free indeed. (John 8:36)

I have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Pet. 1:23) Because I am born of God, I will overcome the world. (1 John 5:4) I am part of a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and I belong to God. (1 Pet. 2:9) I know God and He knows me. (Gal. 4:9) He has lavished his love on me and called me a child of God. (1 John 3:1) When Christ appears, I will be like him. (1 John 3:2) Christ is not ashamed to call me his brother. (Heb. 2:11) Even while I was God's enemy, Christ died for me. (Rom. 5:8) Nothing will be able to separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus my Lord. (Rom. 8:39)

I am no longer a foreigner, but a fellow citizen with God's people and a member of God's household. (Eph. 2:19) My citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20) The Spirit himself testifies with my spirit that I am God's child. And since I am God's child, I am also and heir - an heir of God and co-heir with Christ. (Rom. 8:16-17) I am not just Christ's servant, I am his friend. (John 15:16)

According to God's word I am strong, the word of God lives in me, and I have overcome the evil one. (1 John 2:14) I am more than a conqueror.

(Rom. 8:37) God did not give me a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. (2 Tim. 1:7) Thanks be to God! He gives me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:57)

## Stewardship and Generosity

I renounce the love of money, which is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Tim. 6:10) Instead I store up for myself treasures in heaven. For where my treasure is, there my heart will be also. (Matt. 6:19-21) I cannot serve both God and money. (Matt. 6:24) I will use worldly wealth to invest in people, so that when it is gone, I will have relationships with eternal significance. (Luke 16:9) I will be trustworthy in handling money so that I can be trusted with true riches. (Luke 16:11)

I will not rob God in tithes and offerings. I will always give my whole tithe. As I test God's promise, he will throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that I will not have enough for it. Others will look at me and call me blessed. (Mal. 3:8-12)

It is not my power or the strength of my hands that produces wealth for me. It is the Lord my God who gives me the ability to produce wealth. (Deut. 8:17-18) As I obey God's commands, I will be blessed. My children, home, and career will be blessed. (Deut. 28:3-6)

I will be generous and give to others, knowing that a good measure will be given to me. For with the measure I use, it will be measured to me. (Luke 6:38) I will refresh others and will myself be refreshed. (Prov. 11:25) I will sow into others generously, knowing that I will reap generously. (2 Cor. 9:6) I will give cheerfully, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Cor. 9:7) And God will make all grace abound to me, so

## Appendix 2 — Faith Confessions

that in all things at all times, having all that I need, I will abound in every good work. (2 Cor. 9:8) As I live to produce a harvest of righteousness, I will be made rich in every way so that I can be generous on every occasion with the result that others will give thanks to God. (2 Cor 9:11)

I do not consider godliness to be a means to financial gain. But, godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Tim. 6:5-6) I will learn the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. (Phil. 4:12-13) My God will meet all my needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:19)

## Enjoying God

This is the day that the Lord has made; I will rejoice and be glad in it. (Ps. 118:24) God has given me a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (Is. 61:3) The joy of the Lord is my strength. (Neh. 8:10) God has filled my heart with greater joy than when the lost get what they chase after (Ps. 4:7)

I have set the Lord ever before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body will also rest secure, because God will not abandon me to the grave, nor will he let me see decay. God has made known to me the path of life and fills me with joy in his presence, with eternal pleasures at his right hand. (Ps. 16:8-11) I will be glad and rejoice in God's love, for he has seen my affliction and has known the anguish of my soul. (Ps. 31:7)

I will obey Christ's commands so that His joy may be in me and that my joy may be complete. (John 15:10-11) I rejoice in the hope of experiencing

the glory of God. (Rom. 5:2) I also rejoice in sufferings, because suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope. (Rom. 5:3-4) I rejoice because I have been reconciled to God. (Rom. 5:11) I will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 15:13) The fruit of God's Spirit in my life is joy. (Gal. 5:22)

I will rejoice because Christ is being preached throughout the world. (Phil. 1:18) I will rejoice in the Lord always. (Phil. 4:4) I will consider it pure joy whenever I face trials of many kinds, because I know that the testing of my faith develops perseverance, making me mature and complete. (James 1:2-4)

I will greatly rejoice in the midst of any grief because God, in his great mercy, has given me new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade - kept in heaven for me. I am shielded by God's power through faith until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet. 1:3-6) I am filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy because I am receiving the goal of my faith, the salvation of my soul. (1 Pet. 1:8-9)

## Purity

I make a covenant with my eyes not to look at any lustfully. (Job 31:1) I will not commit adultery in my heart. (Matt. 5:28) I will keep my hands clean and my heart pure so that I may ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in his holy place. (Ps. 24:3-4) I will not allow a hint of sexual immorality to be in my life. (Eph. 5:3) I will set before my eyes no vile thing. (Ps. 101:3)

My body is not meant for sexual immorality. it is meant for the Lord. My body is member of Christ himself. Therefore I will never use it for ungodly activity. My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in me. I am not my own; I was bought at a price. Therefore I will honor God with my body. (1 Cor. 6:13-20) I will also honor the covenant of marriage and keep the marriage bed pure. (Heb. 13:4) Above all things, I will guard my heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (Prov. 4:23)

I will set an example for others in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity. (1 Tim. 4:12) I will not allow any unwholesome talk to come out of my mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs. (Eph. 4:29) I will put away perversity from my mouth and keep corrupt talk from my lips. (Prov. 4:24)

## The Life of the Mind

I love God's Word. I meditate on it all day long. His commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on his statutes. I have not departed from God's laws, for he himself has taught me. (Ps. 119:97-100, 102)

I will love the Lord my God with all my mind. (Mark 12:30) I will conform no longer to the pattern of this world. I will be transformed by the renewing of my mind so that I will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing, and perfect will. (Rom. 12:2) Because I have the Spirit of God, I will make right judgements - for I have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:15-16) The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6) I will not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, I will present my requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all

understanding, will guard my heart and my mind in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)

My heart is not proud. I do not concern myself with things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul. (Ps. 131:1-2) I take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5) I am not wise in my own eyes. (Prov. 3:7) But I trust in the Lord with all my heart and lean not on my own understanding. (Prov. 3:5)

## Fruitfulness

Jesus has chosen me and appointment me to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. (John 15:16) Christ is the vine; I am the branch. If I remain in him and he in me, I will bear much fruit. Apart from him I can do nothing. If I remain in him and his words remain in me, I can ask whatever I wish and it will be given to me. This is to the Father's glory, that I bear much fruit, showing myself to be his disciple. (John 15:5-8)

All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to Jesus. Therefore I will go and make disciples of all nations. (Matt. 28:18-20) I will be fruitful and multiply. (Gen 1:28) The things that I have learned I will entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Tim 2:2) I am obligated to all men and am eager to preach the gospel wherever I go. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. (Rom. 1:14-16) All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing. (Col. 1:6)

I will not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time I will reap a harvest if I do not give up. Therefore, as I have opportunity, I will do good to all people. (Gal 6:9-10) I will stand firm and let nothing move me, always giving myself fully to the work of the Lord, because I know that my labor in

## Appendix 2 — Faith Confessions

the Lord is not in vain. (1 Cor. 15:58) If I sow in tears, I will reap songs of joy. (Ps. 126:5) Even if I am the least I will become a thousand; even if I am the smallest I will become a mighty nation. In the proper time, the Lord will do this swiftly. (Is. 60:22)



