

## Daily Devotional

### Day 1. Tune In

**John 10:22-30:** *Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."*

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

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

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

- In this time of fasting, what is your mind tuned to?
- What distractions do you need to remove so that you can focus on God?
- Prepare your heart to hear the voice of God, and ask God to help you remove distractions that keep you from focusing on Him and hearing Him clearly.

### **Additional reading:**

**Psalm 34:18:** The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

**Isaiah 66:2:** Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. "These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.

**Isaiah 64:8:** Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

## **Day 2. Unwavering in Faith**

**James 1:2-7:** *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.*

What do you expect when you pray? When we pray with earnest expectation, we are exercising our faith. The earnest prayers of people walking in step with God can produce powerful results, and the most earnest prayers come from us recognizing our need for God.

There can be a natural tendency to shrink back when praying for the seemingly impossible, but we must remember that nothing is impossible with God. If we know the promises that God has given us, and understand His character and the principles by which He works, we can pray with confidence and trust Him for the answer. The Kings James Version of the Bible refers to it as being “unwavering in your faith.” What has caused you to waver in your expectation with God? James reminds us that faith and wavering are actually contradictory – he says “nothing wavering”. Know that God never wavers in His love for you. You can trust Him completely.

- What are you trusting God for in this season?
- How can you line up your expectations with the Word of God when you pray?
- Find promises in His Word that answer your need and write them down today.

### **Additional reading:**

*Matthew 17:20: He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”*

*Romans 8:28: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

*Romans 12:2: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

### **Prayer:**

Lord, please help me to stand firm in my faith as I walk with You. You are my strong tower. I know I can trust in You. Guard and renew my mind, body, soul and spirit in Christ Jesus according to Your will. May each one line up with the Word of God. May my life be filled with faith and expectation that You are working all things for good. Give me faith to move mountains, knowing that You have promised to do the impossible so that You may be glorified. May my life, thoughts and expectations reflect Yours, my King and my God.

### **Day 3. Spiritual Food**

**Psalm 34:8:** *Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the one who take refuge in Him.*

Your Bible, God's Word, is life-giving, spiritual food. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Psalm 19 says this about God's words: "They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb." Proverbs 4:22 says, "For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh."

God's Word is life changing, miracle working, alive, holy, true, perfect, empowering, encouraging, trustworthy and healing. It guides us, gives wisdom, judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart, is a mighty weapon and is to be treasured! Jesus was the Word made flesh, our bread of life. When we open the scriptures, we begin to know Him better.

In John 4, we read about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. When Jesus met her, His disciples had gone into town to get food. When they returned with the food, they found Jesus' hunger satisfied. They were confused by this, wondering if He had eaten while they were gone. But Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." Jesus was sustained spiritually by doing His Father's will. He then told them in John 6:27, "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."

We are spiritually nourished by feeding on God's Word and by doing His will. Ask God to open your spiritual eyes and ears to receive His Word as life-giving and sustaining. Drink deeply from His Word. Listen for His voice. Obey His promptings. Trust Him to sustain you as you pray and fast. Believe that God's Word is "sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb." He will do more than you can imagine.

- How can you create time to be in God's Word?
- Do you believe that it will nourish you and bring life to you?
- Ask God to meet you personally through this time as you seek Him. He desires to teach you. He delights in you.

#### **Additional reading:**

John 4:1-34: The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

John 6:35: Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 6:63: The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.

Matthew 24:35: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

John 1:1,14 (KJV): In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.



Psalm 19:7-10: The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

Ephesians 6: 10,11,17: Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

**Prayer:**

Lord, thank You for nourishing me with Your Word. It is life to my body and soul. Help me to realize the power of Your Word in my life. Open my eyes and ears to know You better as I spend time in the scriptures. Teach me, renew me and make me strong in You. Help me to keep Your words in my heart and to do Your will. Show me how to use Your Word to bring renewal to my life and to bring others to You. I trust You to sustain me. You are more than enough.

## Day 4. Cultivating Spiritual Hunger

**Mark 1:12-13:** *Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.*

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

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

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

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

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

- Are you disconnected from the things that nourish your body and soul?
- What do you need to deny yourself so that this can be a powerful time in your life?
- Take time to pray and read God’s Word during the time you would normally do what you are fasting from. God will honor your heart and commitment.

additional reading:

Matthew 5:6: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Matthew 6:19-21: Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2 Timothy 2:20-22 (NASB): Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master,



prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

**Prayer:**

Lord, give me a spiritual hunger that I have never known. Increase my thirst for righteousness, for purity, for holiness, for You! Break the power of sin and worldly habits that keep me from You. Pour Your cleansing, living water through me and make me a vessel that You can use to refresh others. Make me an instrument of Your healing and compassion. Use me in Your service. Help me to remember the brevity of my life and to store up treasures in Heaven.

## Day 5. Fasting with Prayer

### Removes Unbelief

Matthew 17:18-21: And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, that if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there', and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

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

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

- What is it that you need faith to believe God for?
- Align yourself with God's Word and will during this fast. Ask the Holy Spirit to free you from your unbelief.
- Pray with confidence, knowing "nothing will be impossible for you."

additional reading:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5: For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Mark 9:24: Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

prayer:

Lord, I confess my unbelief. I am weak, but You are strong. Increase my faith. Remind me of the relevance of Your Word for my life. I know it is powerful. Help me to use it to strengthen my spirit and to war against Satan and his efforts against me. Help me to take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ. Make me an overcomer as I receive in faith the victory You have for me. I do believe. You are not finished with me yet. I praise You for Your grace and goodness to me.

## Day 6. Reliance on God

**Romans 7:18-20 (NLT):** *And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong, it is sin living in me that does it.*

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

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

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

- Are there areas in your life causing an internal struggle?
- Make a decision today that you will yield to the Holy Spirit and lean on His strength, not your own, to overcome obstacles of sin and selfishness in your life.
- Surrender and release those areas to God, knowing He will help you.

### Additional Reading:

Hebrews 10:16: "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."

Colossians 3:12-14: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

I Corinthians 13:2-13: If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but





when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 4:22-32: You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Prayer:**

Lord, give me the desire to please You in all things. I confess I want to do things my way. Forgive my stubbornness and pride. Help me to choose Your way. I humbly ask You for grace and a willingness to yield to the Holy Spirit who lives in me. May my life reflect Your will for me. Help me to put away childish things and to put on love. Help me to stop actions that are harmful to me and others. Today I put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Give me grace to forgive as You have forgiven me. I love You.



## Day 7. Fervent Prayer

**James 5:16b:** *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

Fervency speaks of our level of intensity, passion and persistence. Many times, we can lose our passion in prayer or stop praying for certain things altogether because we lose heart or give up. But God invites us to keep them before Him and trust Him for an answer in His time. (Matthew 7:7-11)

The Old Testament prophet, Elijah, practiced a lifestyle of fervent, intense prayer and he witnessed incredible miracles in his lifetime as a result. In 1 Kings 17:17-24, we read of a woman whose only son became ill and died. When Elijah heard the news he quickly took action and did what he knew best – he fervently cried out to God. Elijah fully believed that God could bring the boy back to life, and he didn't pray just once. It is recorded that he prayed three times for the boy's soul to return to him. He prayed fervently, repeatedly and he wasn't going to give up. Verse 22 reads, "then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived."

God honored Elijah's obedience and fervent prayers and brought the boy to life. God hears your prayers as well and will bring an answer in His perfect timing. But don't be discouraged or disheartened if the answer is not exactly what you expected. Commit to praying to God with passion and persistence, trusting the answer will come in God's perfect way and in His perfect timing.

As we close out this first week, continue to pray fervently for the main areas of concern in your life. Trust God to bring an answer as you journal your thoughts and inspirations through this time.

### **Additional Reading:**

Matthew 7:7-11: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Matthew 6:9-13: This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Ezra 8:23: So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

Psalms 141:2: May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

Matthew 21:22: If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

Acts 2:42: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Romans 12:12: Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Ephesians 6:18: And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.



Philippians 4:6: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Colossians 4:2: Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

1 Peter 3:12a: For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.

**Prayer:**

Lord, teach me to pray. You have given me the gift of partnering with You in prayer. Stir my heart to prayer and give me ears to listen as You speak to me in the quiet places of my heart. Increase my faith as I trust You for the answers to my prayers. Thank You for hearing me. I seek Your face and humbly, persistently ask that You will do a mighty work in my life. Use my prayers to bless and encourage others. Teach me to praise You in my prayers. You are worthy of my praise.