

I'm so glad you are joining us in the special time of focus for the new year! Together we will pursue God, set ourselves apart for him, listen for His will and His way. I believe this will be a powerful season and has the potential to set the tone for your entire year.

We will begin on January 1 and conclude on January 21. My encouragement is for you to view this few weeks as a launching pad into what God has in store for you, for your family, your future, this church and our city. It can be a great time to start a new habit: daily Bible reading, prayer, fasting or consistent church attendance. It's a great time to give up a destructive habit: gossip, smoking, over-eating, porn, spending too much, alcoholism... and the list goes on right?

As you page through this journal each day there will be something for you to take in and an opportunity for you to make a journal entry about what/how you sense the Holy Spirit and the Word of God are speaking to you. Each day has an action point included for you to participate with.

Along with extra time in prayer during this season, the church leadership will be fasting. We will be participating in what is called a "Daniel Fast" (see next page) with intermittent days of liquid only -- no food. The purpose of fasting IS NOT to "twist God's arm" into getting what we want. That is impossible. The purpose IS for us to set ourselves apart in a unique way to let Him speak to us and let us be able to hear with minimal distraction. Without going into a lot of detail, fasting is a spiritual discipline that was practiced in the Old Testament, the New Testament, by Jesus himself, the disciples and the early church. It is not a practice for "super-Christians", it is for any follower of Christ. Fasting has been likened to a "prayer within a prayer."

I invite you to be a part of this fast with us! Maybe you've never done it before, try it! The kingdom of God is about TOGETHER and not ALONE. So this is a great time to try it out. Maybe you can only do a portion of it, or a day here and there. If you are on medication make sure that you are taking in the necessary nutrients so that you are not harming your health in any way. If you cannot fast food, try fasting something else... T.V., Social Media, Alcohol, something.

Let's take this season and, as Mark Batterson says, BUILD ALTARS TO GOD instead of MONUMENTS TO SELF!

LET'S GO!!!

*David Simerson*

Lead Pastor

**Cornerstone Church**

## | THE DANIEL FAST

The intention of a Daniel Fast is not to duplicate exactly what Daniel did but the spirit in which he did it - humility and trust. Try not to get too hung up on what you should and shouldn't eat. Your fast may look a little different than someone else's, and that's fine. These food guidelines are meant to be just that – a guide. They are given to help you create boundaries for your fast.

The Daniel Fast Food List (What is good to eat)...

- *All fruit – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.*
- *All vegetables – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.*
- *All whole grains – amaranth, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat.*
- *All nuts & seeds – almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk. Nut butters are also included.*
- *All legumes – canned or dried; black beans, black eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas.*
- *All quality oils – avocado, coconut, grapeseed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut.*
- *Beverages– distilled water, filtered water, and spring water.*
- *Other – unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk; herbs, spices, salt, pepper, unsweetened coconut flakes, seasonings, Bragg's Liquid Aminos, soy products, and tofu.*

## DAY 1 - January 1

READ: Jeremiah 9

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

This is what the Lord says: “Don’t let the wise boast in their wisdom, or the powerful boast in their power, or the rich boast in their riches. But those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the Lord who demonstrates unfailing love and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth, and that I delight in these things. I, the Lord, have spoken!” [Jer. 9:23-24](#) (NLT)

*Heavenly Father, thank you for all the grace you lavished on us last year, and thank you for the gift of a brand New Year. There wasn't a day in 2017 when you didn't send new mercies and sufficient grace, even when we weren't aware. You steadfastly delighted in us and rejoiced over us with singing, even when we delighted in anything else but you. Because of Jesus' finished work, your love for us is irrepressible, immeasurable, and inexhaustible. Hallelujah!*

*And now, in response to the words you spoke through Jeremiah, this is our prayer for 2018. May it be a year filled with getting to know you better and serving you more joyfully. Though our desire for approval and power, riches and relationships, comfort and control will be unrelenting, may robust and intimate communion with you seize our hearts, schedules, and energy. Our only New Year's resolution is to believe the gospel more fully and gladly.*

*May knowing you—in renewed and fresh ways, compel us to love mercy, work for justice and walk humbly with you this year. May we dance and suffer, work and pray, serve and love, all to your glory. Pour out your Spirit in our churches, and give us an invigorated love for our particular church families, as messy as they may be.*

*May we live each day this year confident of your great love, resting in your sovereignty, and filled to overflowing with hope of the gospel. So very Amen we pray, in Jesus' merciful and mighty name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: What is helping me to truly know Jesus Christ?

ACTION POINT: Strategically schedule what helps you to know Christ more. This means place it into your calendar on a daily or regular basis as an appointment so you are intentional with your time.

## DAY 2 - January 2

READ: Romans 2

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. Tit. 3:4-6 (ESV)

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? Rom. 2:4 (NASB)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col. 3:12 (NIV)

*Heavenly Father, these Scriptures compel me to thank you for being so kind, gentle, and patient with me. And they also compel me to praise you for the gospel. I'm grateful you don't love us to the degree we love others, but to the degree you've made Jesus' righteousness ours—which is 100%. This good news is my peace, joy, and hope.*

*It's also rocket fuel for change. Father, your kindness leads me to repent of the ways I love poorly—in thought, word, and deed. As this New Year begins, I repent of "irritable spirit syndrome," nourishing disappointments, and holding onto old hurts. I repent of not being as quick to forgive, heal, and move on as you intend.*

*I repent of over-believing people's inconsistencies and under-believing the gospel. I repent of letting myself get more irritated and "bugged" by certain personality types than staying in awe of your mercy and grace for me. Though our culture is getting more cynical and critical, that's not who I want to be. As far as my contribution goes to 2018, I want to major in kindheartedness and healing words.*

*So, Father, as I reach for the garments of grace in the closet of the gospel —"compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience," I trust you for power to love others as Jesus loves us. Bring glory to yourself this year, as I bring my convicted and grateful heart to you. So very Amen I pray, in Jesus' tender and loving name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: How has encouragement helped me?

ACTION POINT: Encourage someone today with a specific encouragement.

### DAY 3 - January 3

READ: 1 Peter 1

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. 1 Pet. 1:1-2

*Gracious Father, early into 2018, we praise you for the gift of community—for your placing us in a forever family of sisters and brothers. It's a tremendous joy to begin this New Year together in Christ—adopted by your grace, shaped by the gospel, and indwelt by the Spirit. Bring much glory to yourself as you transform us and liberate us for your redeeming purposes, in the coming months.*

*Show us how to more fully engage with our corporate calling as your beloved people. None of us can do without the other. You've given gifts to each of us for the benefit of others; even our brokenness, weaknesses and burdens are not our own. They too are to be shared. Yet our selfishness, and the busyness and drivenness of our culture, conspire to make it easy for us to think only of ourselves. But the gospel contradicts all such isolated and independent living.*

*You chose us by your foreknowledge, redeemed us by your Son, and set us apart by your Spirit to demonstrate the reconciling and redeeming power of the gospel, in our cities and among the nations of the world. Indeed, you've called us to live as strangers in this world, not as strange people. If there's to be anything offensive about us, may it only be the gospel of your grace.*

*Renew our churches and help us plant new churches which make the gospel beautiful and believable. May we live as good citizens of heaven and the cities where you've placed us. May our neighbors be glad we are among them. Help us to offer a meaningful glimpse of the future we share because the gospel is true.*

*Lord Jesus, it's only because you were obedient to death—even death upon the cross—that we can offer back an obedience of grateful faith. Live and love, in us and through us, all year long to your glory. Be magnified in our hearts, revealed in our cities, and revered among the nations of the world. So very Amen we pray, with great anticipation, in your most worthy name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: How is the Holy Spirit changing my life for the good? What changes am I seeing, or are others seeing in me that they mention to me?

ACTION POINT: Go to Cornerstone tonight for the 7pm Worship Night!

## DAY 4 - January 4

READ: Philippians 1

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. [Phil. 1:3-6](#)

*Dear Heavenly Father, unlike Paul, I'm not enduring an inconvenient Roman imprisonment, as I fellowship with you this morning; rather, I'm enjoying a comfortable chair and cup of coffee in my home. But very much like Paul, I treasure a tapestry of friends who share one huge thing in common—an utter delight and partnership in the gospel. Thank you for friends who want to know Jesus better, become more like him, and make him known everywhere.*

*Father thanks for writing us into your story of redeeming grace and transforming love. Many of us were rescued from gospel-less religion, others from some expression of paganism or hedonism, or materialism or moralism. But whatever our "ism," we now rest fully and gratefully in the finished work of Jesus.*

*Indeed, as this New Year is just underway, I praise you for the gospel, Father. Though each of us matters, Jesus is the point. Thank you for rescuing us from dreams that didn't include you, religion that didn't require Jesus, and from anything that kept us allergic to grace. Thank you for the freedom we now enjoy to boast in Christ and in our weaknesses, and to pretend less and depend more.*

*And, Father, thank you for promising to complete the good work you began in us and in our world. Help us increasingly see the connection between the two. Now that you've freed us from all guilt and condemnation, free us for more engagement and servanthood in our communities. Intensify our joy in giving ourselves away to others. Stoke the flames of our compassion, for the least and the lost. Give us laser vision of Jesus and of the coming City of God, that we may live and love to your glory. So very Amen we pray, in Jesus' merciful and mighty name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: Write down 2-5 specific areas/issues you are bringing to God during this 21 day fast?

ACTION POINT: Partner in the gospel by praying for new missionary to Cambodia, Michael Reinel!

## DAY 5 - January 5

READ: Psalm 23

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.

*Dear Lord Jesus, you are my shepherd, my very Good Shepherd. You give me everything I need, and more than I want. All I need in life is you, plus what you choose to give me.*

2 He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams.

*Even the most difficult places in life are like green meadows as long as you are there; and in the desert seasons of my life, and the drought like conditions of my heart, you quench my thirst and give me a peace I can't get anywhere else.*

3 He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.

*By your grace I've learned to pretend less and boast in my weaknesses more; for when I come to the end of my strength, wits, and rope, you always meet me there—granting me rest in my weariness, and strength for my tired body and heart. Thank you for marking my path and determining my steps.*

4 Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

*Jesus, you never promised us a stress-free life or an easy journey "home"; but you have promised never to leave or forsake us—even in the darkest valley. That's all I really need to know—that you're close and that you love me, and that you won't let anything happen to me outside of your perfect plan for my life.*

5 You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.

*Jesus, you're taking us to the feast of all feasts—the wedding feast of the Lamb; but long before that Day, you, yourself are my portion, banquet and feast—my nourishment and satisfaction. Though enemies threaten, you feed me, anoint my life with your grace and Spirit, and cause my cup to spill over with blessings, for the benefit of others.*

6 Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

*Absolutely nothing will keep me out of heaven; and, just as certainly, nothing can possibly separate me from your goodness and unfailing love. Until the Day I long for more than any other arrives, I rest in your love and trust in your grace. Thank you for your promise to never stop desiring, pursuing, and caring for me. So very Amen I pray, in your glorious and powerful name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: How does this Psalm relate to everyday life?

ACTION POINT: Set aside a few extra minutes today to think about this Psalm.

## DAY 6 - January 6

READ: Romans 8

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. 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 8:26-28

*Dear Father, this is one of those days when I could create a long prayer list and methodically go through it, but I'm not sure I would really be praying. I could go through the motions, but to be quite honest, it would be more ritual than reality... more about me, than the people and situations I'd bring before you. I'm feeling a bit distracted this morning, scattered and not very focused.*

*It's one of those days I'm glad the gospel is much more about your grasp of me than my grip on you. It's one of those days I'm grateful your delight in me is not contingent upon my delight in you. It's one of those days I'm very thankful for the prayer ministry of the Holy Spirit.*

*Gracious Father, I have no problem or reluctance in acknowledging my weakness this morning. In fact it's freeing to know your Spirit doesn't abandon us when we're weak, but helps us in our weakness. Just as Jesus constantly prays for us, the Holy Spirit faithfully prays in us with "wordless groans." Though I don't understand everything that means, I do get the part about you searching our hearts and you knowing the mind of the Spirit, and that brings me great comfort today.*

*No one knows our hearts better than you, Father. And you search our hearts to save us, not to shame us... to deliver us, not to demean us... to change us, not to chide us. You know my dignity and my depravity, my fears and my longings, my struggles with sin and my standing in Christ. No one but you knows how little or how much of the gospel I actually get.*

*And at this very moment your Spirit is praying inside of me... perfectly tuned into my needs and in total harmony with your will. I cannot measure the peace that brings. I surrender right now, Father. I will gladly groan to your glory. I know you are at work for my good in all things, including this season.*

*All I have to do is look at Jesus and know these things are true. You have called me to life in him and you will complete your purpose in me... and in each of your children... and in the entire cosmos. I do love you, I would love you more. So very Amen, I pray, in Jesus' merciful and faithful name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: Am I willing to ask the Holy Spirit to pray through me... Why or Why not?

ACTION POINT: Take some extra time to "wait" in the Holy Spirit's presence.



## DAY 7 - January 7

READ: Acts 2

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. Psalm 95:1-3 (ESV)

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the Day of his return is drawing near. Heb. 10:25 (NLT)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42 (NIV)

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the calling, privilege, and importance of worshiping together on the Lord's Day. Because it's a calling, we dare not dismiss it easily or take it lightly. It's a privilege because it's you we get to meet with, in a most heart-encouraging, soul-renewing, life-transforming way. And according to you, Father, our gatherings will become increasingly important, as the Day of Jesus' return grows closer and closer. Help us to take your admonition seriously.*

*Father, may we, as your beloved children, give you, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit the worship of which you are alone worthy. Feed our minds with your Word; fill our hearts with your gospel; empower our worship by your Spirit. May we gather, not as selfish consumers—looking to be pleased, but as true worshipers—longing to be consumed.*

*We pray for those who lead us in your worship and those who bring us your Word. Theirs is a great stewardship and responsibility. May the gospel be powerful in their hearts and fresh on their lips. May they see and savor Jesus, that we might do the same. Free them to honor and glorify you, and empower them to love and serve us.*

*Father, through our corporate worship, we pray you will be blessed, revealed, and magnified; and that we will be humbled, gladdened and transformed. As we lift Jesus up, we trust you to take us low and draw the nations in. So very Amen we pray, in Jesus' loving and worship-worthy name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: How is engaging with the Church changing my life and others?

ACTION POINT: Make sure and be a part of the church for this weekend's service!

## DAY 8 - January 8

READ: Ephesians 3

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom all fatherhood derives its meaning, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. [Eph. 3:14-19](#)

*Dear Heavenly Father, Paul's prayer moves me to gladly bow before you today, not floundering in fear, but marinating in your mercies; not groveling in my guilt, but groaning in your grace. For you're the father I always wanted—the Father from whom all fatherhood derives its name and meaning. As the Spirit applies the gospel to my heart, I trust and ask you to "re-parent" me, Father.*

*I want to know you better and better and better as Abba, Father—the most caring, engaged, and loving parent ever. Free me from the illusion that my earthly parents could've ever been enough. Apply your healing grace to the wounds and holes in my childhood. You were there, even in the lack. You were there, even in the brokenness. Father, I also need you to re-parent me as a parent. Help me become a more grace-engaged parent of my children, at every stage of their lives. You've already forgiven me for the years I spent parenting by fear and control, and guilt and pride. Now I pray for the redeeming of those years, through the inexhaustible riches and the measureless power of the love of Jesus.*

*Free us to process more of our family story with kindness and hope. What failures do I need to own? What stories do we need to share with each other? I praise you that your name is Redeemer and that your mercies are new every morning. Father, be pleased to do well beyond all I can ask or imagine. So very Amen I pray, in Jesus' tender and triumphant name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: How does the love of God the Father encourage you today?

ACTION POINT: Text a friend something to encourage them today.

## DAY 9 - January 9

READ: 2 Corinthians 1

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. 2 Cor. 1:8-11 (NIV)

*Heavenly Father, there are some freedoms of grace I have a hard time remembering and celebrating. Accepting my limits and insufficiency is a prime example. The "cult of competency" is bad religion, but it has numberless worshippers. Forgive me for not wanting to need the gospel, your Spirit, and a "gospel posse" as much as you say I do.*

*Thank you for the little bit of Paul's story chronicled in this text. Thank you for an apostle of grace who boasted in his weaknesses that Jesus might be the hero. Thank you for the model of a lover of God who was utterly dependent on the God he loved. I want to follow Paul as he followed Jesus.*

*So, Father, as this day begins, I forsake the illusion of my sufficiency and cast myself, and my cares on you—"the God who raises the dead" (2 Cor. 1:9). I'm not facing deadly perils, but I am walking with people I can't fix and injustices I can't right, lingering wounds that need healing and addicts who need recovery, an aging process that humbles me and a schedule that challenges me.*

*Grant me grace to embrace my limits, joy for boasting in my weaknesses, and the peace of resting in Jesus. I know you to be the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; I want to know you that way much, much more. So very Amen I pray, in Jesus' kind and grace-full name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: Regularly reading the Bible is helping me... (fill in the blank).

ACTION POINT: Think of a way God could use your weakness to help someone and act on it. "God never wastes a hurt." ~ Rick Warren

## DAY 10 - January 10

READ: Matthew 5

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:13-16

*Dear Lord Jesus, the longer I live in this broken world, the more I find myself fantasizing about running off to Switzerland with my family, to live in a community of chalets with a few other “healthy” families, to disengage from the culture, eat good food, enjoy the Christian life and wait for the second coming of Jesus. For starters, I know I couldn’t afford to pay for such a selfish fantasy. But more importantly, this isn’t the life for which you saved me, nor the lifestyle to which you called me... and all of my brothers and sisters in Christ.*

*Jesus, you’ve called and commissioned us... your much-loved bride, your greatly-beloved church, to live as the “salt of the earth.” We’re not garlic, paprika or sugar, we’re salt. Salt preserves and fends off decay. Salt heals and soothes, it has medicinal value. Salt brings flavor and enhances other flavors. And salt only works when it’s out of the saltshaker... my own prayer convicts me, Jesus.*

*I’ve learned all these important things from the faithful men and women you’ve woven into my life in the journey of getting to know you better. The issue I’m wrestling with today is my own “saltiness,” and that of my friends. How does a believer lose their saltiness, Jesus? What’s involved in flavor-loss, heart-drift, and passion-leak? How do we turn a glowing lamp into a dim little candle? How do we go from preferring life as a “city on a hill,” to life as an ingrown community under a bowl?*

*Come, Holy Spirit, come! Always be restoring and refreshing me, and my friends, in the joy of your salvation for us in the gospel. Don’t let us lose our saltiness. Don’t let our lamps run out of oil. Don’t let us disengage from our calling.*

*Jesus, I never want to think about retiring, just refueling, renewing and refocusing... until you return to finish making all things new. So very Amen, I pray, in your exalted and matchless name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: Write the name of someone you are praying for to know Christ.

ACTION POINT: Watch for an opportunity to reach out to this person in kindness.

## DAY 11 - January 11

READ: Psalm 127

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Ps. 127:1-3 (ESV)

*Dear Heavenly Father, yet again we turn to you as the designer and builder of all things, including the lives of our children and grandchildren. Thank you for reminding us that our children are a gift, not a project.*

*At times you've had to use a gospel wrecking-ball on my parenting style, in order to build something more lasting and beautiful. That process continues. But even when I'm overbearing or under-believing, disengaged or too enmeshed, I'm so thankful to know that you remain faithful and loving.*

*Continue to rescue me from relational "laboring in vain"—assuming a burden you never intended parents to bear. Father, only you can reveal the glory and grace of Jesus to our children. Only you can give anyone a new heart. You've called us to parent as an act of worship—to parent "as unto you," not as a way of saving face, making a name for ourselves, or proving our worth.*

*It's the height of arrogance to think our "good parenting" accounts for the best of what we see in the lives of our children; and it's a lie from hell to assume that our "bad parenting" is the sole reason for the things that break our hearts. Free us, Father, free us, and forgive us. Oh, the undue pressure our children must feel when we parent more out of our fear and pride than by your love and grace.*

*Since our kids are your inheritance, Father, teach us how to care for them as humble stewards, not as anxious owners. More than anything else show us how to parent and grandparent in a way that best reveals the unsearchable riches of Christ. Give us quick repentances and observable kindnesses. Father, we want to love and serve our children, "in line with the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:14). So very Amen we pray in Jesus' faithful and powerful name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: How is Christ being glorified in my parenting or my relationships?

ACTION POINT: How can I demonstrate God's love to my family today?

## DAY 12 - January 12

READ: Romans 1

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” Rom. 1:15-17 (NIV)

*Dear Lord Jesus, I share Paul's eagerness to preach the gospel today; yet my target audience isn't Rome, but my own heart, because we believers need the gospel just as much as non-believers. I praise you for convincing me that there's nothing more than the gospel just more of it. Our comprehensive need of grace is met by your inexhaustible supply of grace. Out of your fullness, we continue to receive grace upon grace upon grace (John 1:16), for which we exclaim, “Hallelujah!”*

*Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, holiness, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). I trust you as my substitute before I own you as my example. You are the second Adam, not my second chance. Indeed, you fulfilled the demands of the law for us (Rom. 10:14), and now you're fulfilling the beauty of the law in us (Rom. 8:4). Because God has hidden my life in yours, he cannot love me more than he does today, and he'll never love me less (Col. 3:1-5). Your life for me is my guarantee of redemption; and your life in me is my “hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).*

*And now, regenerated, sealed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; John 7:37-39), I know God as Abba, Father—who has adopted me and loves me as much as he loves you (Rom. 8:15-16; Eph. 1:5; John 17:23). Nothing can separate me from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39), and nothing can separate me from the God of love (Heb. 13:5). My citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and my inheritance is the new heaven and new earth (Matt. 5:5).*

*Lord Jesus, these are not just verses and doctrines, but my life and joy, peace and liberty. Because the gospel is true and powerful, I want to live and love to your glory, until the Day you return to finish making all things new. So very Amen I pray, in your merciful and mighty name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: Review your list from Day 4 of areas of specific prayer and continue to pray for them throughout the 21 Days.

ACTION POINT: Pick a verse from the prayer above that is helpful to you, write it down and memorize it so you can meditate on it this week. Also - GO TO CHURCH THIS WEEKEND!

## DAY 13 - January 13

READ: 1 Timothy 6

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 1 Timothy 6:17-18

*Dear Heavenly Father, I praise you for the gift of another day. May I steward it well... to your glory and the benefit of others.*

*Your command for us not to put our hope in money, stuff and wealth is not only well-founded, but incredibly loving. Apart from the wisdom you give we would be held hostage to the foolishness of men. Indeed, even your commands are gracious and your warnings are the wooings of hope.*

*Father, I want my hope to be in you, and you alone. For your worth is not tied to anything but your changeless, priceless, matchless glory. And as the God of unsurpassing glory you've also chosen to be the God of all-sufficient grace—stunningly generous in the way you relate to us in the gospel, and in everything else. What do we have that we have not received from your hand and heart? You've joyfully given us everything we need for life and for godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), and whatever you give us, you give for our enjoyment.*

*In times of excess or scarcity, you want us to enjoy what you give us. Indeed, you commend, even command, our enjoyment. Whether it's a banquet or a biscuit; whether it's a symphony or the song of a chickadee; whether it's a trip to Cape Town, or a drive across town for a cup of coffee, enjoyment is not only good, but godly.*

*Even as you command our enjoyment, you also command our generosity. But the two really aren't two different things, are they? How can we fully enjoy anything without freely sharing it? The more I understand the gospel the more I believe this, Father. The greatest joy is not found in fearful hoarding, but in cheerful giving—first and foremost in your giving of Jesus to us and for us. Your utter delight is seen most clearly in the generosity of the gospel.*

*Father, no matter what this crazy economy continues to do, may the measure of our enjoyment be demonstrated in the gladness of our generosity. So very Amen, we pray in Jesus' benevolent and bountiful name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: What does it mean to steward my resources for God's good?

ACTION POINT: Buy a perfect stranger a coffee, a meal, some groceries or gas today reflecting God's generosity to us.

## DAY 14 - January 14

READ: Ephesians 6

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

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 saints. Ephesians 6:18

*Heavenly Father, how we praise you for the gift of the Holy Spirit—who has marked us as yours and who makes us like Jesus. What comfort, assurance and peace we have in knowing that nothing can separate us from your love; nothing will disconnect us from your will; nothing is left up to chance. You will bring to completion the good work you have begun in us and in your world—and you will do so by the power and presence of your Spirit. For so glorious a gospel, so grand a salvation, and so great a hope, we worship and adore you.*

*As we lean into this day, we gladly give ourselves to the work of your Spirit in us and through us—in particular, our calling to “pray in the Spirit.” We would surely despair if we had to pray in the smallness of our strength, or on the basis of our godliness, or by the limitations of our perspective.*

*So Father, in the name of Jesus, by the power of the Spirit, for the revealing of your glory, we bring our prayers and requests to you. Do exceedingly beyond all we can ask or imagine. Startle us with your faithfulness. Shock us with your goodness. Astonish us by your generosity. We won't mind being embarrassed by our lack of faith if it will highlight the greatness of your love.*

*We bring you our children and the children of our friends. Make the gospel beautiful and believable to them, Father. May we neither despair of our failures nor rely on our parenting for their salvation. Capture them and free them for your purposes and praise.*

*We bring you our churches. Bring renewal, bring restoration of first love, bring deep repentance. Free us from our boring ingrown-ness, our paralyzing pettiness, and our predictable sameness. Stir us up, shake us up, and send us out. Make us like gospel fountains, for our cities and communities.*

*We bring you our friends. Wounded hearts, broken marriages, strained relationships, depleted finances, destructive addictions, failing health... Holy Spirit, bring your resurrection power to bear. Work miracles in our midst, for the fame of Jesus and the glory of God.*

*We bring you ourselves. Nobody needs the gospel more than us, more than me, Father. Gentle us, refresh us... let us hear you again, singing over us in Jesus; let us experience your great and transforming delight; quiet our restless hearts with your irrepressible love. So very Amen we pray, in the Spirit and in Jesus' name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: How is daily prayer changing my life?

ACTION POINT: Spend 5 extra minutes praying for someone else today and message them that you prayed for them.



## DAY 15 - January 15

READ: Matthew 8

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases." Matt. 8:14-17 (NIV)

*Dear Lord Jesus, you are a most wonderful, merciful Savior. We praise, bless and adore you for everything you are, and for everything you've done for us. By your life, death, and resurrection, you have completely secured our salvation and you guarantee the completion of our salvation. Everything about us matters to you—spirit, soul, and body; and every aspect of our being stands in need of your cleansing, healing, and liberating grace.*

*In the Scriptures we see your healing heart and hand at work; and by the gospel, we know one Day we will be completely healthy and whole. In light of that Day, Jesus, our cry in this day is simple, humble, and earnest: Lord Jesus, please bring your healing power to bear for those we love and cherish.*

*For our children: Jesus, renew their minds with your gospel; capture their hearts with your love; heal their emotions and bodies by your power. It's hard to see our kids suffer, and accept our inability to make things right. Grant us grace, as we seek to love and serve them.*

*For our friends: O, for the Day of no more cancers and heart disease; no more tumors or terrors; no more asthma or Alzheimer's; no more addictions or even obsessions; no more mental maladies or emotional diseases; no more bodies that wear out or pain that cries out. Jesus, please heal those who are dear to us, or grant them a wondrous measure of your sufficient grace (2 Cor. 12:9).*

*We know you don't despise our asking; and we know you do all things well. We know you are writing stories larger than our understanding; we know, and still we ask, Jesus please bring healing to our kids, friends, and to us. So very Amen we pray, in your worship-worthy and trustworthy name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: Who do I know that needs healing?

ACTION POINT: Create a list of those who need healing and start praying for their healing 1-3 times a week.

## DAY 16 - January 16

READ: Daniel 1

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine. [Daniel 1:8](#)

*Heavenly Father, I see Daniel as a model of gospel-saturated living. Your sovereign grace was at work in every season and circumstance of his life. Daniel's love for you is both greatly encouraging and deeply convicting. May the gospel bring me greater freedom to live and love as this man did—with passion, conviction, wisdom, and hope.*

*Daniel is a testimony to your commitment to redeem your people from every nation —not by a new generation of committed Daniels, but by the work and presence of the greater Daniel, Jesus, himself. You intend to bring the transforming power of the gospel to bear wherever you send your people, including Babylon; for a Day is coming when the knowledge of your glory will cover the whole earth—not a single square inch excluded.*

*With a better understanding of the gospel, here's my prayer: Father, help me and my friends make the kinds of commitments Daniel made so we can live as instruments of your transforming presence wherever you've placed us. You're not asking us to do anything for Jesus, but everything with Jesus. Deepen our worship. Enrich our communion. Whether it's in secular academies and fiery furnaces, or in the "safe" precincts of our local churches and own homes, all we need to know is that Jesus is with us and for us.*

*And keep us wise to the particular "defilements" that wage war against our hearts and your story—not just the things in "Babylon," but also the things in the dark continent of our hearts. We don't just need the gospel to protect us from the alluring temptations outside of us, but also from the residual foolishness inside of us. Make the wine and bread of King Jesus' table so satisfying that every other buffet will seem like cold okra and sour milk. So very Amen we pray, in Jesus merciful and mighty name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: What wages war outside to bring me down? What wages war inside me to bring me down? Will I surrender this to Jesus?

ACTION POINT: Talk with a trusted, Christ-following friend about how you can live as overcomers with Christ.

## DAY 17 - January 17

READ: 1 Samuel 16

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1 Sam. 16:7

*Heavenly Father, whether we still have the undiminished vision of an eagle, need the benefit of glasses or contact lenses, or are, literally, physically blind, there is a way of seeing that we all need and can all have as the gospel does its work in our lives. Your words to Samuel have lasting import and multiple applications.*

*Even if we could see with 20/15 or 20/10 vision, if we're only focusing on the “outward appearance” of people and things, we're still not seeing as you intend. Our plea is profoundly simply: Open the eyes of our hearts, Lord. Show us more of Jesus' beauty and bounty; and as we see Jesus more clearly, help us to see everyone and everything else from his perspective.*

*Help us to see people with gospel eyes. Father, when we only see people with the distortions, prejudices and limitations of our fallen hearts, we don't really “see” them. When it's easier only to see the things in people that disappoint, irritate or inconvenience us, make their dignity, brokenness and your image in them much more obvious to us.*

*Forgive us and free us when we only see people in terms of how they might harm or help us. Expand our depth vision so we can see where people fit in your larger story of redemption and restoration. Help us to see what you see in our spouses, our children, our friends, our neighbors, strangers... even in our enemies.*

*Help us to see hard providences and difficult circumstances with gospel eyes. Let us see you in the whirlwind, in the loss, the storm, even in the betrayal. May our humble cry for a changed heart become much louder than our demanding cry for temporary relief. May an earnest cry for mercy (for ourselves and others) be much more regular than a self-righteous cry for justice.*

*Help us to see pain and suffering with gospel eyes. Father, sometimes seeing all the crucibles, crises, and cruel stories of life... they make us want to run, hide, fix, or deny. Help us to see with the eyes of Jesus when overwhelming needs are staring us down, and tracking us down. Give us a tantalizing and hope-engendering vision of the new heaven and new earth; and help us to see how our glorious future impacts the crazy, broken present. So very Amen we pray, in Jesus' powerful and healing name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: What kind of a dream do you sense God stirring in you? Write it down in three sentences or less.

ACTION POINT: Get a journal to continue logging daily prayers and Bible verses that stand out to you.

## DAY 18 - January 18

READ: Psalm 4

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

There are many who say, “Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!” You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. Psalm 4:6-8 ESV

*Heavenly Father, what a great attitude-checking, faith-focusing passage. We want to affirm with the Psalmist that nothing has to change for us to experience your joy in the core of our being—not people or politics, our wealth or the weather, our suffering or our “situations.”*

*We don't love you simply because you make our “grain and wine” to abound. We reject Satan's assumption that the only reason we, your children, love you, is because you buy our affections with “the good life.” (Job 1:9-11). Your name is Abba Father, not Sugar Daddy.*

*We love you because you created us for your glory and redeemed us by Jesus. Indeed, we love you because you first loved us, and gave Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement and propitiation for our sins. We're grateful for the many creature comforts you've given us, but we adore you for the acceptance and affection you have lavished on us in the gospel.*

*Many angrily throw questions like these in your direction: “Who can show us any good? Where is your God now? How can you say God is good? Where was your God when....? How could your God possibly...? Why doesn't your God...?” Yet, Lord, we lie down and sleep in the peace of your Fatherly sovereignty, for you alone, O LORD, make us dwell in the safety of your inexhaustible grace.*

*There's no safer place, in life or in death, than to be in Christ. Because you've hidden our lives in Jesus, not a hair can fall from our heads, not a breath can be taken from our lungs, not a beat can be missed by our hearts apart from your sovereign purposes and pleasure. And should we die in the next hour, our hearts will forever proclaim, “Our God has done all things well!” So very Amen we pray, in Jesus' beautiful and bounteous name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: What has God been working on most during this 21 days?

ACTION POINT: Make sure you have a translation of the Bible that is understandable for you. If you need a Bible go to your app store and download YOUVERSION. And use the New Living Translation of the Bible (NLT).

## DAY 19 - January 19

READ: John 15

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. John 15:9-11(ESV)

*Lord Jesus, this isn't a "game changer" passage; it's an everything-changer. How can it be? How is it possible that you love us to the degree, and with the delight, the Father loves you? We are riddled with unbelief.*

*Thank you for commanding us to abide in your love—a most glorious and essential command to obey. It was your obedience that earned the fullness of God's love for us, and it's our obedience that frees us to enjoy every good thing we have in you.*

*Because you perfectly fulfilled the law for us, God's commands are no longer a burden to us (1 John 5:3). By them we understand how to love others as you love us; and how to live at the pace of grace and by the rhythms of the gospel; and how to steward our freedom and invest our moments.*

*Hallelujah, we're not under the weight and condemnation of the law; we're in you and under grace (Rom. 6:14). Hallelujah, we've been set free from performance-based living, for a life of whole-hearted loving. Take us farther up and farther into the ways and means of grace, Jesus.*

*May your Word, and everything it teaches us, increasingly become more precious to us than fine gold, and sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb (Ps. 19:10). Indeed, your Word warns us of the insanity of sin, and woos us unto a life of beauty and peace (Ps. 19:7-13). May the joy we find in obeying you be a close second to the pleasure we have in being loved by you.*

*And now, as we lean into the demands, delights, and disappointments of this day, we rest in this blessed assurance: We are yours, Jesus, and you are fighting for our joy. So very Amen we pray, in your magnificent and merciful name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: Review your list from Day 4 of specific areas you are praying about during the fast. Have you seen any movement in those areas?

ACTION POINT: Go to "Discover Plans" in the YouVersion App and find a Bible reading plan you can start when this guidebook ends. Because YOU'RE JUST GETTING STARTED!

## DAY 20 - January 20

READ: 2 Kings 6

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 2 Kings 6:15-17

*Heavenly Father, there are times when the "odds" feel quite stacked against the possibility of your transforming kingdom making significant advances in our broken world... in our local communities... or even in our families. With the naked eye, the enemies of your mercy, grace, and peace seem to greatly outnumber your "troops." Serving you feels quite overwhelming at times, even fruitless.*

*But, Father, just when I take on the lonely self-righteous martyr look... once again, you open the eyes of my heart and show me the way things REALLY are. You're such a patient and merciful God...*

*It is vital to know that because of the gospel, "those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kings 6:16). I'm excited to know this probably involves a bunch of angels, just like in Elisha's day, but I'm even more comforted to know it involves the whole Godhead-you, Jesus and the Holy Spirit!*

*Father, the "odds" are never really stacked against your covenant purposes and your transforming kingdom. You're not "trying" to do anything. You never have to resort to plan B. You're not hedging your bets. You are God, and there is no other god...*

*So help me, my friends and your servants throughout the world, not to become weary in seeking to live out the implications of the gospel of the kingdom, for we will reap a harvest at the proper time, if we do not give up (Gal. 6:9). And the gospel is all the motivation, hope and power we need not to give up. So very Amen, I pray, in Jesus' comforting name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: How does today's prayer encourage you in your faith, family, work, school, future, church, city?

ACTION POINT: Begin thinking about what LIFEgroup you will take part in to continue growing in 2018.

## DAY 21 - January 21

READ: Jude 1

PRAYER/BIBLE MEDITATION:

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 24-25

*Heavenly Father, the older I get the more I care about finishing my journey well, in this life; and the more I realize finishing well is neither automatic, nor easy. I so wish that with more years came less temptation. I so wish that getting weaker physically magically meant we get stronger spiritually—kind of a gracious tradeoff. But that's not the way it works. The gospel is the end to all merit, but not all muscle.*

*Every relationship, and a variety of circumstances, reveal that I still need Jesus today just as much as the first day you placed me safely in Christ. Thus I abandon myself to the promises which overflow in this passage—this little waterfall of mercy and grace with which Jude finishes his letter. They are a balm to my being and hope to my heart.*

*I praise you, Father, that the most important grasp in the gospel is yours, not mine. I don't trust in my love for you, but in your love for me. You will keep me from falling away from you; and when I do falter, fall, and fail, you will lovingly pick me up. You don't love me more when I "do it right"; and you don't love me less when I don't.*

*As hard as it is to imagine, especially in my times of weakness, one Day you will present me before your glorious presence without fault and with great joy. How many times do I have to hear that good news for my heart to really believe it? Without fault and with great joy . . . without fault and with great joy . . . without fault and with great joy! Father, in response to so great a salvation, may my heart passionately proclaim, with myriads of angels and countless believers, "to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority, in this life and in the life to come!"*

*Lord Jesus, trusting in the life you lived for me as the second Adam; the life you gave for me as the Lamb of God; and the life you now live through me, as my hope of glory, I will finish well—without fault and with great joy . . . without fault and with great joy . . . without fault and with great joy! So very Amen I pray, in your glorious and loving name. (Everyday Prayers-Scotty Smith)*

JOURNAL QUESTION: What is your next step that will help you harness what has happened in this 21 Days of Pursuit?

ACTION POINT: Talk about one thing that you are taking away from this 21 Days with a trusted, Christ-following friend.