

HUNGER + VISION



PRAYER AND FASTING
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Aletheia Church

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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 of 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. But, why should we engage in this ancient Christian practice?

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 freshly see 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 (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. We will also be hosting prayer meetings each day for you to join!

More Practical Tips

- Avoid medical and 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

Hunger for Him

*O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where
your glory dwells...*

Psalm 26:8

Read

[] Psalm 119

[] Psalm 26

[] Mark 1:35

[] Ephesians 1:3-10

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 — Hunger for Him

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.

St. Augustine famously wrote, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee, O Lord," (Confessions I.1). Today, we begin our fast by asking God to become so large in our hearts and minds that he crowds out everything else that beckons for our attention. We're asking God to take hold of our minds, and give us clear sight of His face, and his worth... to satisfy our restless hearts with his presence.

Paul reminds his readers that God has actually chosen us, prior to any choice or desire we had for Him. What good news! Today, when you fast and pray, you're not bothering a far-off God who doesn't like you. You're turning aside from other good things (like food, entertainment, etc) to spend time with the God who chose you.

As a church, we must remember that we're called to a great adventure – to know God, and make him known as we become the kind of disciples who are so captivated by God's goodness, that making disciples isn't a task... it's a joy.

Friend, God loves you. He chose you. He is more glorious than we can imagine. So today, before we come at him with all our asks, let's just start by coming to *Him*. He's worth waiting on.

Reflect

1. How does reading all of Psalm 119 make you feel about God?

2. Re-read Ephesians 1:3-10, slowly. How does knowing what this section teaches alter your view of God? Of yourself?

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.
- 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).
- What one thing could you begin doing to walk in closer awareness of God and His presence?

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 satisfaction in God. Pray for friends and family to believe the truth of the gospel.
- Pray for our church to grow in our knowledge of God, and that we would be more effective at making disciples of Jesus who know God, too.
- 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

Hunger for Vision

Write the vision, make it plain...

Habakkuk 2:2

Read

Habakkuk 2:1-3

Acts 13:1-3

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Acts 26:12-19

Vision matters.

Yesterday, we took time to pray, fast, and seek God. We want to be the kind of people who know him, and love to know him more. Yet, when we come

into relationship with him, he changes us. We can't stay the same once we learn to sit with Him. Being with Him means we start to see what He sees, and want what He wants.

Every organization worth its salt has a vision. Starbucks has a vision “To inspire and nurture the human spirit - one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time.” That’s a lot of vision just for a coffee shop. What vision is occupying your imagination? What’s the picture of the future that’s looming large in your dreams—that’s motivating your work, or fueling your stress. As we pray and fast this week, pray that God would bring *his* vision of the future into your view. Pray that *God’s* dreams would become your dreams, and the dreams for our church.

At Aletheia, we have a great mission: to make disciples who bring the truth, grace, and changing power of the gospel for the glory of God and the good of all. In addition, we’ve got a great method, the four E’s: Engage the lost, Establish them in the faith, Equip them for following Jesus and making disciples, and then Empower them to go do it.

But what’s our vision? What are we dreaming of when we say yes to God’s mission, and labor with him to make disciples? Here are some things we want to see:

- New disciples of Jesus being made of every race, class, color, creed, and generation.
- Men and women established in the Word of God, being shaped by a biblical worldview, raising great families, filled with the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- A culture of equipping and empowering others to make disciples, eager to give power to the next generation of godly leaders.

- New churches planted in every major city and town in New England, impacting the campus and the community.
- Campus ministry flourishing on every campus in New England.
- Spirit-saturated diversity that embodies true biblical justice and reconciliation and looks like a preview of Heaven.
- Disciples of Jesus who love the glory of God more than anything in this world, ready to go and fulfill God's call anywhere, at any time, no matter the cost.
- A culture shifting around us toward the culture of the Kingdom of God through the work of making disciples who bring the truth, grace, and changing power of the gospel.

By God's grace, we're going to see this happen!

Reflect

1. What was God's instruction to Habakkuk in chapter 2:1-3? Why?

2. What is the current vision that your life is driving toward? Do you think that's God's vision, too?

3. How does our church's vision sound to you? Does it resonate with you? What part do you find most exciting?

Respond

- Pray that God would give you his vision for your life.
- Pray that God would allow the elders, pastors, and staff leaders of our church to be captivated with his vision for the future of our church... and that he'd bring it to pass.
- What is standing in the way of these visions?
- What role is God calling you to play in his vision for our church?

Pray

- Pray for yourself - Ask the Lord to speak to you about his vision for your life? Take some time to wait on him, listen, and write it down.
- Pray for our church - Ask God to bring this great vision to pass in our church. Ask him to speak to our leaders.
- Pray for our city - Ask God to open the eyes of our friends and neighbors to his vision for their lives and for our city.

D A Y T H R E E

Hunger for Fruit

*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

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

Day Three — Hunger for Fruit

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 daughters 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.

Now, fruit-bearing things get pruned. Sometimes that is painful. Are you open to the Lord bringing out his gardening shears and coming at your life with his loving pruning? It can be painful, but if we wish to be fruitful, we must be willing to bear the pruning.

Today, 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?

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

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 believe to disciple toward faith in Christ?

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 O U R

Hunger for Kingdom

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

Matthew 28:18-20

Read

[] Matthew 6:25-34

[] 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

[] Matthew 24:14

[] Revelation 12:10-11

As we conclude our fast, today we focus on a hunger for God's kingdom to come here, just as it is in Heaven. The fact is, we simply struggle to care about God's kingdom more than our own. We are struck with crisis fatigue

Day Four — Hunger for Kingdom

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 about it. We are Kingdom citizens, sent here as ambassadors of God's coming, good Kingdom (2 Cor. 5:20). If we're going to see God's Kingdom arrive in greater ways, what must we do?

First, we pray. We mustn't give in to the nagging fear and anxiety that the news cycle, sin, and accusation perpetuate. 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 engage in Kingdom work ourselves. God may be calling you to the nations of the world, either for the short-term or for the long haul. Perhaps you've been wondering, "what more can I do?" Perhaps even during this fast, the Holy Spirit has been whispering to you about greater involvement in Kingdom work. Whether you're a student or businessperson, single or married, young or old, God loves to get us engaged in his work in the world.

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?

2. What is the declaration in Revelation 12:10-11 all about? How does it make you feel?

3. Re-read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Is there any sin in your life that would keep you from being part of God's Kingdom? What has God done about our sin?

4. How is God challenging you to get involved in more Kingdom work?

Respond

- Visit 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 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 his Kingdom. Consider partnering with missionaries.
- Pray for our church - As our church continues to grow, pray that God would call some from among us as missionaries across the world.
- Pray for our city - The nations of the world live in our city! Ask God to give us open doors for the gospel and open eyes to see his Kingdom come here in our city!

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

Family Prayer Goals

Salvation for Family • Restored Relationships • Children and Family

Church Prayer Goals

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

Ministry Prayer Goals

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

School/Career Prayer Goals

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

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.

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 the deposit guaranteeing my eternal inheritance. Because of God's abundant goodness, I will live for the praise of His glory. (Eph. 1:3-14)

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

Appendix 2 — Faith Confessions

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 an 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, nor 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 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 a 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 appointed 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 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

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smallest I will become a mighty nation. In the proper time, the Lord will do this swiftly. (Is. 60:22)