

Journey Family Fast

A 21 Day Devotional

Worship Schedule

Thursday, Jan 30 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Tuesday, Feb 4 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Wednesday, Feb 5 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Thursday, Feb 6 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Tuesday, Feb 11 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Wednesday, Feb 12 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Thursday, Feb 13 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Tuesday, Feb 18 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Wednesday, Feb 19 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Thursday, Feb 20 – Journey Church Prayer Room – 7:30pm

Written By
The Journey Church Family

Welcome to The Fast

Today, you will begin a 21-day journey into the heart of God by putting off the desires of your flesh and draw your attention to the desires of the Spirit inside you. We are so very excited for you and for what you will learn and encounter over the next three weeks! This booklet will serve as a guide for you through this journey. Inside, you will find 21 different devotionals, written and created by members of your own Journey Family. There are spaces to journal or draw beside each devotional. Feel free to make this book your own! This is your own personal journey with God, so you have permission to write or draw whatever it is God is speaking to you.

As you begin this new season with us, we would like to remind you of a few rules:

1. Comparison kills! This journey is between you and God, so do not compare yourself and the way you decided to fast with others. More extreme fasts do not yield better results, and no one is “holier” than others because they are hungrier. Similar to tithing, it is the heart of the person who gives that God sees, not the quantity of their giving.
2. No matter how many times you “fail”, keep going! If you break your fast the first day, this does not ruin your fast, and God is not angry! We are all just children, learning to walk in the arms of our Father. Sometimes we fall, but He is there to sweep us up and put us back on our feet. He is proud of you for trying! If you “fail”, you did not ruin your experience. Allow Him to pick you back up and try again!

Please see the F.A.Q. section if you have any questions. May God bless you on this new journey! We are praying for you!

F.A.Q.

1. What is fasting?

Fasting is the intentional denial of food for yourself as a way of denying your earthen vessel (your body) to realign your desires with that of your spirit.

2. Why do we fast?

We fast in order to allow our spirit to regain control of our desires, rather than our desires controlling us. We fast for our own benefit so that we have an easier time realizing how loved by God we truly are! We DO NOT fast to earn God’s love or as a way to get what we want out of God.

3. Are there different types of fasting options?

Yes! There are many different ways to fast. Here are some examples.

- Skipping one meal a day
- Not eating after 5pm
- Daniel Fast
- Not eating two days a week

There is no correct method of fasting, and some methods may not work for you and your daily life. Pray about the right fasting method for you, and we encourage you to discuss your fasting options with your doctor if you have any medical concerns.

4. What is the Daniel Fast?

The Daniel Fast is the fast that was done by the Old Testament Prophet, Daniel. It is essentially a vegan diet, being entirely plant based, with a few added restrictions, such as no added sugar, breads made with yeast, and processed foods. Water is the only allowed beverage.

For additional resources and recipes, visit www.Daniel-Fast.com or search Daniel Fast Recipes on Pinterest.

Recipes for Daniel Fast

Stir-Fry Vegetables with Brown Rice

Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 20 minutes | Total Time: 30 minutes |
Yield: 4

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 3 green onions (finely chopped)
- 3 tablespoons fresh ginger (minced)
- 4 cups fresh broccoli (chopped)
- ½ pound fresh green beans (chopped)
- 2 carrots (peeled and sliced on diagonal)
- 1 bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 4 cups greens (chopped (kale, bok choy, spinach, collards, etc))
- 1 can sliced water chestnuts (drained)
- 3 cups cooked brown rice
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 ½ cups peas (if frozen run under water to thaw)
- ½ cup toasted sliced almonds

Instructions

Heat a deep skillet or wok over medium heat for about 1 minute.

Add oil and heat for 1 minute.

Add green onions and ginger. Sauté for 5 minutes.

Add broccoli, green beans, carrots, bell pepper, and garlic.

Stir fry for 8-10 minutes.

Add greens and toss for about 2 minutes or until greens are wilted.

Stir in water chestnuts, brown rice, soy sauce, peas, and almonds.

Serve as a complete meal

Tip: Serve this dish as a complete main dish along with a side of sliced fruit such as oranges, pineapple or mango. This is also a great recipe to double and then use the leftovers for lunch. Merely heat in the microwave or eat at room temperature

Southwest Roasted Potato Vegetable Salad

Prep Time: 10 minutes | Cook Time: 1 Hour | Total Time: 1 Hour 30 minutes
| Yield: 4

Ingredients

- 2 lbs baby red potatoes, halved
- 1 corn on the cob, husk on
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 orange bell pepper, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon ancho chili pepper powder
- 1 tablespoon coarse salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill, minced + extra roughly chopped to garnish
- Green onion, thinly sliced to garnish
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Toss potatoes, bell peppers, cumin, ancho chili pepper, salt, pepper, minced dill, and olive oil until coated on a roasting pan. Spread the vegetables out into a single layer, leaving an empty space for the corn on the cob.

Place the corn on the cob, husk still on, in the empty space.

Put the pan on a middle rack in the oven and bake for 30 minutes.

Remove the corn on the cob and set aside.

Put the pan back in the oven and cook for another 30 minutes, or until potatoes are tender.

While vegetables continue to cook, remove the husk from the corn and slice off the kernels.

When the potatoes are tender enough to be pierced with a fork, remove the pan from the oven.

Stir in the corn kernels and add the remaining fresh dill and green onion to garnish.

Slow Cooker Coconut Quinoa Curry

Prep Time: 20 minutes | Cook Time: 4 Hours |

Total Time: 4 Hours 20 Minutes | Yield: 8

Ingredients

1 medium sweet potato peeled and chopped
1 large broccoli crown cut into florets
1/2 white onion diced (about 1 cup)
1 15oz can organic chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 28oz can diced tomatoes
2 14.5oz cans coconut milk (either full fat or lite)
1/4 cup quinoa
2 garlic cloves minced (about 1 tablespoon)
1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger
1 tablespoon freshly grated turmeric or 1 teaspoon ground
2 teaspoons wheat free tamari sauce
1 teaspoon miso or additional tamari
1/2 – 1 teaspoon chili flakes

Instructions

Add all ingredients to a slow cooker, starting with 1 cup water.
Stir until everything is fully incorporated.
Turn the slow cooker to high and cook 3-4 hours until sweet potato
cooks through and the curry has thickened.

Thai Noodle Salad

Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 15 Minutes |

Total Time: 30 Minutes | Yield: 6

Ingredients

6oz dry noodles (brown rice noodles, pad thai style, or soba
noodles)
4 cups mix of cabbage, carrots, and radish, shredded or grated
1 red bell pepper finely sliced
3 scallions, sliced
1/2 bunch cilantro chopped
1 tablespoon jalapeno finely chopped
1/4 – 1/2 cup roasted, crushed peanuts

Thai Peanut Sauce

3 thin slices ginger – cut across grain, size of a quarter
1 fat clove garlic
1/4 cup organic peanut butter
1/4 cup fresh orange juice (1/2 an orange)
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice (1 lime)
2 tablespoons soy sauce
3 tablespoons agave or honey
3 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
1/2 – 1 cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt

Instructions

Cook pasta according to directions on package.
Drain and chill under cold water.
Blend the peanut sauce ingredients together until smooth.
Place shredded veggies, bell pepper, scallions, cilantro, and jalapeno
into a serving bowl. Toss with cold noodles.
Pour peanut sauce over veggies and noodles.
Taste and adjust with salt, garnish with roasted peanuts, cilantro, and
lime.

Black Bean Burger

Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 15 Minutes |

Total Time: 30 Minutes | Yield: 4

Ingredients

1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped onion
1 cup canned black beans rinsed and drained
1 cup canned great northern beans rinsed and drained
2 tablespoons flaxseed meal
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon cumin
1/4 teaspoon salt

Instructions

Mash beans in a large bowl, leaving about 1/4 of the beans whole, and set aside.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.

Add onions and cook until soft and translucent.

Place cooked onions in bowl with beans.

Add flaxseed meal, garlic powder, cumin, and salt to bowl.

Return skillet to medium heat and add teaspoon of olive oil.

Scoop 1/3 cup of bean mixture for each burger.

Flatten with a spatula.

Cook 5 minutes or until bottoms are browned and slightly crispy.

Flip, and cook another 5 minutes.

Juicing/Smoothie Recipes

Green Juice

Juice the following:

2 Granny Smith Apples

1 Orange (peeled)

1 big handful of spinach

1 big handful of kale

Carrot and Beet Juice

Juice the following:

About 6 Carrots

1 Beet

1 Orange (peeled)

Banana/Peanut Butter Smoothie

Using a blender:

1-1.5 Frozen Bananas

1 Big Scoop of Peanut Butter

6-8oz Dairy-Free Milk

1/4 Cup Oatmeal

Strawberry-Banana Smoothie

Using a blender:

1-1.5 Frozen Bananas

1 Cup Frozen Strawberries

6-8oz Dairy-Free Milk

1/4 Cup Oatmeal

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Yahweh I Am

Eric Van Houten

Where do I begin?

It has already started; I have no beginning.

How do I know when to stop?

It will never end; I have no end.

What reality is this?

Absolute reality, no emptiness...only me God.

Do I stand alone?

Never, I am omnipresent. I am independent.

Can I depend on you?

Everything depends on me.

Are others like you?

Nothing compares to me.

Will you fade? Will you turn? Will you always love?

I am a constant, I am for you, I am in love with you!

Who are you?

I am THE STANDARD, the truth, beauty, & right.

What if I waiver, will you?

My actions are always right & true.

Is there anything more?

I am important, I am worthy.

I am yours, I am your disciple, I am because who you are.

Week 1

The Character of God

The prodigal son is a story about a lot of things. There's so much in this short parable that can exemplify God the Father's unconditional love, and shows how He runs to meet us where we are, and about how His forgiveness and love can never be exhausted. While that stuff is all true and beautiful, I personally most often internalize the point of view of the older brother. I imagine the pain and hurt he must've felt when his younger brother selfishly demanded his portion of inheritance, and the disgust he harbored while his brother was out squandering the wealth he had pried away from their father. In the moment when he's told why and for who there is a celebration, I feel his self-righteous anger. I can relate to his feelings of injustice for watching such favor be poured onto someone who is, in his view, far less worthy than himself. I understand the brother's struggle because I can easily spiral down an emotional path of jealousy and resentment toward those around me who have received the fruits of something for which I feel they haven't worked very hard (or seemingly not as hard as me, at least). But that has always been a lie.

The truth for the older brother (and for me) is that instead of complaining that all his hard work has never even earned him a young goat's worth of favor, if he could set aside his pride and become aligned with his father's heart, he too could be enjoying the fattened calf just the same. Now that I think about it, in a strange way both sons are guilty of feeling entitled to something from their father. One for wealth, the other for favor...

I think in the end, it doesn't matter who receives a blessing of wealth or favor, or whether or not it was earned, because we can all share in the same measure of joy! We need only align ourselves with our Father's heart and truly celebrate with those who have received a blessing.

All four Johns were written by John the beloved disciple. 1 John is a “lifetime” book to me to be peeled back layer by layer over a lifetime and although short is a difficult book to understand completely. It carries a lot of mystery for me personally because John speaks in these powerful sort of finalities that don’t seem exactly linear...like you could outline this book in a lot of different ways and it is very easy to take snippets out of this book to misinterpret. I believe 1 John especially needs to be read and received as a whole so you can understand John’s intention more fully with his condensed blasts of truth.

I believe it is also worth noting that 1 John and much of the New Testament were written in response to false teaching. False teaching wouldn’t be worth responding too if it weren’t convincing and persuasive and having a big impact on people. We live in a culture filled with false teaching that at times can make us or Christianity feel small or even wrong. Jesus understood that what He was doing and His teaching flew in the face of culture. The disciples, and especially John, knew that what they taught and saw with their own eyes were wildly competing with what the culture in their day believed. In 1 John 4:12, John is saying where life’s real purpose and meaning come from, what they are, and what is true about the nature of our reality. He is saying the nature of reality is in the invisible.

The main point of 1 John, according to my outline, is this balancing act of “How love is made COMPLETE in us and how we are made COMPLETE by living in Love.” I believe 1 John makes it clear both are necessary. We must try to BOTH receive and allow love to be done to us and bathe in the ocean of His love as well as give love outward and away. Both are the COMPLETION of His love.

What do you do when things happen that you cannot comprehend or find answers for?

What is it that brings peace to you in the midst of these moments?

What do you know to be true?

These questions have been ones that I have been personally asking myself within the past few weeks. Unlike ever before, I have found myself to become fearful over thoughts of maybe an old experience occurring again, someone getting hurt, not being able to succeed in an area in which I once felt confidence in, and even sometimes feeling the need to act as if I have answers to things that I do not have the answers to, or yet, can even comprehend. I think in one way or another, every person has asked one of these questions at some point in time. As humans, maybe, we find it easier to try and deal with these thoughts and fears on our own. Maybe, as Christians, we feel that if we think these things then it resembles a lack of faith or understanding of God and so it is easier to bury them instead of asking others in the midst of confusion or fear. Maybe, there is potential that we even feel the same way about God.

When reading through this passage and thinking about the deeper meaning of it, the answer came pretty clearly to me and that is this. We have been talking about the importance of declaring things over our lives, and speaking into existence the plans that God has for us. This is what I have chosen to do with this verse. When feeling a sense of anxiety or uncertainty, maybe instead of letting my thoughts run wild, I will say this and allow God to cover me in his love and shelter, rather than attempting to do it on my own. God's heart is for us to feel empowered and loved, not fearful and panicked. God's love can shelter and become a fortress from the storms of life, but if we leave that shelter and go try to find one on our own, we might end up under a tree with bare branches and end up feeling the brunt of that storm anyway. Trust in Him. Trust that he hears your prayers and your uncertainties, and that he is the one who will give you rest.

What idols do you have in your life?

What are some things distracting you from your relationship with God?

With a God so loving, so powerful, so beautiful and great, how could he not be the first place in our lives? With work, school, family, and friends it can be easy to get caught up in everyday life. I can think of many times in my life where I have placed my plans, my relationships, my hobbies, and my worries above my relationship with him and my trust in him. There is no one like our God. The creator of the universe, the lover of our souls, the only one who sustains us.

Lord, I pray that as we fast you would reveal to us the areas in our lives that we have put you in the back seat. Help us to let go of the things that are distracting us and keep you in the center of our lives. Remind us of your power and your goodness. Nothing is too big for you to handle and nothing can fulfill us as you do. Help us to fully dedicate our lives to you every day. We need you because without you we are nothing. Lord be our center. In Jesus name, amen.

Light in the natural sense is that tangible source such as the beautiful sunrise as it crests the horizon at the start of another day. While this is a miraculous sight you can see, you can still be in darkness as you stand there feeling the morning sun. Darkness is the absence of light that may be changed by that sunrise, yet something is missing.

The fact that God is *pure light* reveals an intangible source of light that is supernatural and connects God to man. For if I believe in the Father and yet not stay in His presence will find darkness around me but, as darkness is the absence of light, I declare that with God there shall be no darkness. Believers need not fear the darkness, since the blood of Jesus will cleanse away our darkness and we will be renewed with pure light as we stay in the kingdom.

As I read these verses one thing became clear to me that we cannot stay out of darkness by ourselves. Walking in the kingdom together, we share the light so that we may stay farther from the darkness.

What is your source of light?

Do you know how to get out of the darkness?

How long has it been since you felt the angst of your sin, the helplessness of your struggle, the weight of your shortcomings, and the disparity of your efforts? Are you like the Israelites caught between who they were and who they wanted to be? Do you long to live in the promise land and experience God's blessing. Or do you waiver and forget, not remembering God's goodness? Do you find yourself in exile waiting to be restored?

Who is this God who doesn't stay angry, but actually delights in showing mercy?

The Old Testament has many names for this God. (72 in the Bible)

Adonai: the plural name for Lord, referring to his trinity.

El Shaddai: the all sufficient one, the almighty

El Roi: the God who sees me

Elohim: God the creator, who creates by the spoken word

Yahweh Yireh: the God who provides (as he did for Abraham when he was to sacrifice Isaac).

Yahweh Ropheka: God the healer, who heals the brokenhearted.

Yahweh Shalom: the God of peace, who helps you not to fear

Yahweh Tsur: the God who is my rock and is never changing

If you're like me you can remember a time in your life when the God who sees me made me feel wanted, or the God of peace has held my hand in a time of fear, or the God who heals has repaired my brokenness. What name of God do you seek? The sufficient one, the never changing rock, the provider, or even the creator who speaks life into you when you feel separation or do you just seek his face as Moses did?

Who is a God like you?

You needn't look too far...He has numbered the hair on your head.

We are amazed on a daily basis of Gods goodness. It is never-ending, even in times when we have trouble seeing it. There will be times in our lives that we look back on and say to ourselves, “Wow, God was really present during that time” or “Wow, God really does know what he’s doing and I didn’t even see it”. We shall fully accept what God says is true and the promises He makes. He does not faint or grow weary, He promises he can handle whatever we may bring to him. God makes us strong and when we feel weak, we shall patiently wait for the promise of increased strength.

If there is a time of doubt or troubling times, we shall repeat “Have you not known? Have you not heard?” for these words shall be reminders of what is to come...what is promised! I pray that we all find peace in these words and let them be like blankets to our souls that we can wrap up in and snuggle close to God. This is what he is after anyway, he wants to be close to us and for us to be close to him. This is like a love letter from God, signed I love you....to the ends of the earth.

Before Jesus

Eric Van Houten

Before Jesus I was an empty vessel

Before Jesus I was a friendly sheep

Before Jesus I was a good dad with the right intentions

Before Jesus I was a leader wondering why.

During my walk with Jesus

I discovered my vessel was filling up with compassion, love, humility & honor

During my walk with Jesus

My wool coat was turning into feathers & could see near & far.

During my walk with Jesus

God was actually showing me how to father great.

During my walk with Jesus

Managing tools that I had are gifts from the Father.

During my walk with Jesus

Leadership is Destiny that you were born with.

After Journey School of Ministry

My vessel is full. I am amerced in the ocean of God's love & my cargo flows outward.

After Journey School of Ministry

I now can fly, confident with Jesus. Proud like an EAGLE.

After Journey School of Ministry

"I want to be as great as a dad as God is to me". (Marcus Wengard)

After Journey School of Ministry

It doesn't matter where I go. Favor will follow me.

After Journey School of Ministry

I carry Jesus torch, with his light flamed by the Holy Spirit, Given by God!

Leadership is compassion, love, humility, honor and every word Jesus has spoken.

Week 2

The Character of Jesus

This passage of scripture always makes me want to fall down on my face worship. Jesus is “the image of the invisible God. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. All things were created by Him and for Him.” Wow. Not only did Jesus create everything and everyone on earth, but also in heaven! The Supremacy of Christ indeed. And yet, He is accessible to us. Supreme over all of heaven and earth but available to you and me in intimate relationship, it’s hard to wrap my head around that. Verse 17 in this passage speaks of what I think every heart intuitively knows, “He is before all things and in Him, all things hold together.”

Do you ever feel like you are falling apart, barely holding it together?

Like one wrong word or look from someone could be your undoing?

Take heart. Run into the arms of Jesus. In Him, you are held together, and He WILL NOT fail you. He knows your name, even the very hairs on your head are numbered by Him. Supreme over all, yes. But also your closest friend. In Jesus, you will stand. He will stand for you.

Have you ever felt like you knew somebody, even though you didn't really *know* them? This is how I feel about LeBron James. I have loved watching LeBron play basketball, from when he was in high school, to when he was first a Cleveland Cavalier, to when he left and came BACK to Cleveland, and so on. I love that he is from Akron, Ohio, and that he continues to pour his finances into that community to give children an opportunity to become successful in life.

I may know a lot about LeBron, but the problem with my relationship with him is that it is, unfortunately, one dimensional. LeBron doesn't know me. Though I know many different facts about him, he knows nothing about me. I may know who LeBron James is, but do I really *know* LeBron? No.

In the same way, some people feel they have a similar relationship with God. They may know different facts about him, but feel that the relationship is one dimensional. They feel that they know information about God, but they are not known by God.

The Passion Translation of this passage refers to "the Word" as *The Living Expression*. This means that Jesus is the breathing, living manifestation of God. Through Jesus, we are given insight into the heart of God, into his character, and into his emotions.

Through Jesus, we get more than just facts about God. We get to see his passion for all of life! And as this passage describes, every single thing came from and through Jesus. The life that we live, and the life that we see, all came from Jesus.

If all things came from Jesus, then this means all things are *known* by Jesus. This includes you and me. Our relationship does not have to be one dimensional. There is an opportunity to know Jesus in the deepest way, because we are known by him in the deepest way. Today, ask and allow Jesus to make himself known to you.

In this passage, Jesus is talking to his followers. To really understand this passage, you need to understand the context in which this conversation is happening. These people followed Jesus from the Sea of Tiberias where he fed the Five Thousand. They had seen him do this wondrous miracle, but Jesus can see their hearts. In verse 26, he tells them that they are looking for him because they ate and were full from the food. In verse 27, he says, “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life.”

Let’s get in the mindset of one of these followers. They have been following this man because they have seen him do things that can’t be explained. They are physically hungry because they’ve left their lives and homes behind to see what he can do. For the first time in a while, they ate until they were completely full. They decide to follow him across the lake, but that takes a few days. They are hungry again. They see Jesus and go to him and are probably thinking about the fact that he can feed them until they are full. Think about when you fast; all your mind can focus on is the next time you can have food. That could have been the feeling these followers were experiencing. Instead of Jesus making more food for them, he tells them that he is “the bread of life.” He is the one that can actually satisfy their hunger and thirst. And, he tells them that if they choose to follow him, he will never leave them. He says he will raise them up at the last day. This promise is a pivotal moment because Jesus promises eternal fullness and eternal life to everyone who believes. I encourage you to read the passage again and think about how incredible this would sound if it were the first time you were hearing of this. As you go throughout your day, remember that Jesus has promised fullness to all of us.

Have you ever been afraid to say something out loud? I've always been one to share my life with people, telling them whatever might help them through a tough time or build faith in an exciting one. However, sometimes I am afraid to say something out loud because it makes it more real. Have you ever been nervous to tell someone you love them? Or afraid to tell someone something you've done? I have.

In Luke 19:18-21, we find Jesus praying in private and the disciples are with him. I wonder if he prayed aloud, but scripture says he asked the disciples a question: "Who do the crowds say I am?" After they reply, Jesus gets more personal, "Who do you say I am?" His questions are intentional to show the gap between the belief of the crowds and the belief of the disciples. Jesus needed them to understand that they are different. They are his chosen twelve. Their faith will be tested in great ways and the seed of understanding their leadership needed to be planted.

Peter answers Jesus' personal question saying, Jesus is "the Christ of God." All the thoughts circling in Peter's mind, all the wondering, all the pieces. They come together into this simple answer. He says *aloud* that Jesus is the Christ. He *speaks out* the truth that has been stirring in his heart as he puts his faith into words. As spokesperson for the twelve, Peter's answer shows their faith and conviction. Then, Jesus tells them not to tell anyone. Why? "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens... a time to be silent and a time to speak (Ecclesiastes 3:1,7)." Sometimes we need to treasure things in our hearts before we share them. This act of obedience was important for the disciples and important in the fulfilment of God's plan for Jesus.

Who is Jesus to you? Take a moment to intentionally answer and speak aloud the truth of Jesus today. Find promises in scripture. Let them take hold. Let them be declared. Let them become more and more real to you.

Philippians 2:6-8

Notes

Lord Jesus, mark this ONE thing. As I follow you Lord, and see how God has loved you. How you have love yourself and how you have love others.

The love I've experienced means everything to me.

Lord Jesus, mark this ONE thing.

My family, my church, my community of the spirit is everything to me.

Lord Jesus, my renewed heart that I protect and the passion I tend to daily is everything to me.

I will agree to love & be spirited with friends.

I will not be selfish nor try to impress others.

I will humble myself and raise others around me.

I will look out for my and others interest and hold it up.

I will put away my own ambition & humble myself.

I give my life as you did for me.

I give my life knowing of the kingdom, you gave your life and had faith
God would resurrect you.

I give my life to you Jesus.

The name above all names, I kneel in your presence and declare that
Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father.

There is a lot packed into this verse, but the first phrase is what grabbed my attention. The New Living Translation says “The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God”. In other translations, the word brightness is used, and this specific word for brightness occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means “reflected splendor” or the light that emanates from a luminous body as the rays of the sun are its reflected splendor... they are the way in which we see and know the sun. We do not actually see the sun; we see the beams that flow from it. The sun and its beams cannot be separated, but they are still two distinct things. God, Himself, is represented in the bible several times as a luminous being, and just like sunrays, Jesus is the way in which we get to see and know the true character and glory of our Father. They have the same essence, but a person distinct from the Father brightly shines forth in Christ his Son.

The son radiates the glory of God, and yet this glory does not force men to keep their distance as it did in the Old Testament. Remember in Exodus, when God covered Moses with his hand as His glory passed because he could not look directly at the face of God; or when Moses’ face was radiant when he came down from Mount Sinai because he had been in the presence of God, and as a result, the Israelites were afraid to come near him. Unless we want to damage our vision, we cannot look directly at the sun; but we can easily face and soak in the light that streams from it. In the same way, the gift of Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory, and it beckons men, women, and children to draw near. Our lives and our world are dark until Christ enlightens them.

In Christ, we are saved from something, sin and our deserved fate, but we are also saved for now...this year, this week, this day, this moment. Since we are children of the Father, we are co-heirs with Christ and therefore brothers and sisters of the Light. We inherit and share in His radiance. How will you shine His light today? Go and be radiant.
Reflect His splendor in your world.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Notes

It is so easy to fall into a routine, to take for granted all that Jesus went through and paid for on the cross. Our lives get busy and we get distracted and forget to honor His sacrifice.

Am I honoring His sacrifice?

Am I living in the freedom he bought for me?

Unfortunately, I often have to answer that with a big no. We are free!

What does that mean?

We are free from sin! We are free from sickness and disease! We are free from our own weaknesses (His strength is made perfect in our weakness... 2 Corinthians 12:9)! We are free from fear! We are free from punishment! We can be whole! We can be healed!

As we move forward in this fast, I'm asking Holy Spirit to refine me, to show me where I'm not living fully in my freedom. He paid for our freedom. What a slap in the face it is to Him to not walk in that freedom! Abundant life is found in the freedom He bought for us. Let's walk it out together and let the rivers of living water flow through us.

Mirage

Eric Van Houten

I have too many scars to be a disciple

Receive my name.

I am naked & shameful of my being

I have many sins & many valleys

Receive my name.

I am an orphan & worse my parents are astray

Receive my name.

When I look, the table seems full.

Receive my name.

I am broken...

John 14:6 I am the way & the truth & the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus! I accept, I kneel, and I will follow!

Your scars are stripes of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

You are here to take your fathers robe back.

Your sins have been washed clean & now stand with me on Mount ZION.

You are my child whom I love. Your DNA is not the same.

Come sit on my lap & FEAST on the forever living water.

Revelation 21:5 I am making everything new. Write this down, for these words are trustworthy & true.

Week 3

The Character of Holy Spirit

This passage of scripture has excited me for some time. Paul paints this picture of the Holy Spirit searching for “buried treasure”, which are the deep things in God’s heart. And how deep are those things! This creates this thrilling quest to explore the heart of God and search for new adventures.

However, for me, I have often connected wisdom with information. The more information I have, the more wisdom I obtain, and thus I am a smarter, better follower of Jesus. For many years, I struggled moving from head-knowledge to heart-understanding. This was mainly due to my pride. In my pride, I wanted to *earn* my wisdom, not receive it. The problem with *earning* something in the Kingdom, though, is that you are left to your own devices, and unfortunately, you do not get very far.

Through the Holy Spirit, and with humility, we have the opportunity to freely receive the wisdom of God. This wisdom does not look like facts, information, or ideas, though those are all possible byproducts of the Holy Spirit. The wisdom we receive is the heartbeat of God: how does His heart beat, and who does it beat for? The deep things of God that the Holy Spirit searches for are not better analyses on the different theological frameworks. They are greater levels of compassion, empathy, love, joy, peace, and all the fruits of the Spirit. The deeper we allow ourselves to explore the ocean of love that is God’s heart, the closer we are to drowning to our human understandings of reality and adopt the mind of Christ. We begin to think like he thinks, feel what he feels, and see things the way he sees things. May you put off your own understandings today, and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the wonderful, glorious, breathtaking things of God to your heart!

Can we hide from God?

Can we escape God's presence?

Are we ever alone?

Omnipresent-an adjective that means-present everywhere at the same time. God is omnipresent. He is literally everywhere in creation. God is all knowing, all seeing, all feeling, all hearing, all soul and all spirit, and infinite in himself. God never sleeps. God is always there, always aware and we cannot shake off the presence of God. He is with us in our victories and defeats, our darkest moments, and He is with us when we believe all others have left. What a comfort it is to know that when we are in darkness, when we are in distress, when we can't sleep, when we have heavy hearts or when we face our troubles in what we think is all alone, God is with us. No amount of darkness will hide us from God or keep God from us. He sees us, He hears us. He holds our hand in the darkest of nights. He knows what we are facing and no matter how dark our lives become or how alone we may feel, we will never be alone. God is omnipresent!

These verses show how God is ALWAYS with us. God knows everything we have done and will do yet he still stands by our side and loves us more than we will ever understand. Sometimes it's easier to believe that we aren't good enough for God then to accept Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. But God loved us before we knew him and had a plan to save us before we realized we needed saved. We have a father who loves us, cares for us, supports us, strengthens us and guides us. God will never leave us in the dark. He is the light. Little Lucy will continually try to surround us in darkness, attempting to keep the God's light way. But God is always there with open arms waiting for us to run into them. There is nothing more comforting than a hug from your Papa.

I remember as a child singing the song 'This Little Light of Mine' in Sunday school class with the catchy tune and the fun hand moves. As I think about this song now "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine and not hiding it under a bush or letting Satan blow it out" takes on a new meaning to me. God is light. God wants His light to shine so we are not in darkness, but in His presence. We need to keep our flame lite.

Prayer: God give me eyes to see, ears to hear, a mouth to speak and a heart to love.

Trying to be perfect is exhausting. I should know—I spent most of my life thinking I had to be. I put immense pressure on myself to never make a mistake. I quickly became a mess when I fell short. In my mind, I could never measure up to the expectations of others or myself. It was a painful and tiring cycle; a cycle that filled me with great anxiety.

The biggest problem with this kind of brokenness is that it affected my relationship with God. I often felt as if I was letting Him down. Manifesting love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control was daunting because I didn't fully understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Hard as I tried, I could never love enough. I lost patience and ended up being unkind. I was anxiety-ridden rather than peaceful. There was no room for joy when I spent so much time worrying about what was going to happen next.

The greatest freedom I have discovered in my faith journey occurred some years ago. God revealed to me the most important piece that was missing from the puzzle. I have access to the Holy Spirit 24/7 because He resides in me. He empowers me to do the things I can't achieve on my own. He helps me love those that seem impossible. He increases my faith to trust that the details of the future are under His control, so that I can experience peace instead of anxiety. He gives me my Father's perspective.

Does this mean that now I live a life of perfect reactions, behaviors, and thoughts? Absolutely not! I can be a real train wreck some days. I become more aware of the Holy Spirit when He pulls me back into alignment. Instead of veering off to the right, He gently pulls me back to be able to move forward without running off the road and crashing.

God wants us all to be vulnerable to the presence of the Holy Spirit. Once we find our spiritual rhythm with Him, walking in holiness doesn't seem as daunting. We're okay with progress instead of perfection. His perspective changes everything.

This past Fall Season God began to teach me about taking off the limitations in my life. As I spent time in the Word, I began to see some thought patterns that were negative, recognize my dependency on “doing” or “accomplishing” to feel like my life was full of purpose in the moment, and places where I had made decisions out of compulsion which turned into being tied to commitments I didn’t need to make.

Through renewing my mind in the Word, God was cutting the ties between myself and obligations. I started to see the reality of how absolutely helpless all of us really are without the Holy Spirit, so how could any of us legitimately say that what we “do” is where even part of our value or success originates from?!

It’s difficult to run with weights on.

Jesus has already cut us free from every obligation, desire, and compulsion of our flesh that would weigh us down. He freed us from living bound to our own compulsions to follow the leading of Holy Spirit. This season I’m reminded that Satan *drives* the flesh, but Holy Spirit *leads* the spirit. It is completely possible to live by the leading of Holy Spirit and not our flesh. Not only are we set free from all sin, but from the drive to earn favor with God. As His children, we already have His favor. I can’t help but think of Zephaniah 3:17, “...he will exult over you with loud singing.” We have God’s joy and delight over us.

What is a part of your life today that is limiting you from running freely in-sync with Holy Spirit?

Could it be unforgiveness, insecurity, the fear of man, or the need for control?

DECLARE today:

I have been redeemed! (Romans 8:10-11)

I am free from every desire of my flesh! (Romans 8:12)

I am accepted into the beloved! (Romans 8:15)

Listen to: “Good and Loved” – Travis Greene & Steffany Gretzinger

I love the Passion translation of these two verses in Romans. It says:

“And in a similar way, the Holy Spirit takes hold of us in our human frailty to empower us in our weakness. For example, at times we don’t even know how to pray, or know the best things to ask for. But the Holy Spirit rises up within us to super-intercede on our behalf, pleading to God with emotional sighs too deep for words.

God, the searcher of the heart, knows fully our longings, yet He also understands the desires of the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit passionately pleads before God for us, his holy ones, in perfect harmony with God’s plan and our destiny.” Romans’ 8:26-27 (PT)

What could be more comforting and reassuring than that? The Greek word *hupererentugkhano* which is often translated “intercedes” can be best translated as “super or hyper intercedes.” When we don’t know how to pray or what to ask for, we have the Holy Spirit of the Living God hyper-interceding for us! And not only that, verse 27 tells us that the He is doing so “in perfect harmony with God’s plan and our destiny.”

We have a God who is a perfect Father, who loves us more than we can imagine. And He has sent us a Helper, the Holy Spirit, who helps us in all things big and small throughout our days. He even helps translate the groans of our heart into prayers before the Father, that are in harmony with Gods best for our lives. Even when we are struggling and don’t know how to pray, we can rest in Jesus. The Holy Spirit, who knows all things, is at work on our behalf. We are truly the Beloved children of a perfect Papa.

Upon first read, it seems that these verses say that if we will do as Jesus says if we truly love him. We will listen to his “rules”. Does this go against the grace of Jesus? I would say not! What are the “rules” of Jesus? Earlier, Jesus tells his disciples that the two commandments that hold all the others are to love God and to love people (Matthew 37-40). If we bring this truth back into our main passage, it’s possible to reframe the words of Jesus into something like:

V. 12- “...whoever believes in me will” ... *love God and others well.*

V. 21- Whoever loves God and others well, “he it is who loves me.”

V. 23- “...If anyone loves me, he will” love God and others well.

Jesus frames this same idea in another way when talking about helping those who are in need. (Matthew 35-40). When questioned about this, Jesus says that anyone who does those things for others also does them for the king (God). The main point being, if we love others, we have loved him. Going back to the main passage, “if we love him and follow his commandments” (v. 15) [to love God and others] ... Jesus will ask God to send a “helper”, the Holy Spirit.

Being filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit means so much for us as a family of Christians. Not only is he an Advocate for us as other translations say, in addition to bringing rest to our troubled hearts (v. 1) but he is also a revealer of our identity. Jesus says that we are not to be left as Orphans (v. 18). We know that God is our Father and will love us as such, but we are also revealed as a member of an entire Christian family. We can now truly know the faces of our brothers and sisters due to the Holy Spirit inside of us, revealing to us their immeasurable worth and value. It is this point that makes me extremely excited. Our amazing family atmosphere at Journey is not brought upon by ourselves, but rather the Holy Spirit that God sent to be inside of each of us.

God, I pray for more of you and more of your spirit. I want to love you endlessly and my family fiercely. Fill us so that we may do this not by our measurable strength, but by your endless grace. In JESUS name, AMEN!

The life we get to live in God is a life so different and radical to that of this world. Jesus, through His life, death, and resurrection made it possible for us to be Children of the most high God. Now that we are heirs of Gods heavenly kingdom realm we have access to all that is our Fathers! We've got the best Dad in the whole world! We've got the biggest Dad, the most powerful Dad, the most loving Dad! If He's for us, who could ever be against us! There's no problem He can't handle and no thing that is impossible for Him! With his spirit now in us, we are able to live victorious lives. Every challenge or obstacle we come up against, we never have permission to fear. Instead God gives us HIS POWER, HIS LOVE, and HIS MIND!

Verse 8 says 'overcome every evil by the revelation of the power of God'. When God's perfect love invades our lives, fear can't stand because perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18).

What parts of your lives have you not overcome with Gods perfect love today? Has the weight of your circumstances or the mountains that you've not seen move discouraged you or perhaps given you over to fear or anxiety? Meditate on the Fathers perfect love today. Know just how big He is and just how extravagant His love is for you. He will give you HIS power, HIS love, and HIS mind to conquer whatever you are facing. That's His promise! You need only abide in Him. He is with you and He is for you.

Prayer: Father, let me abide in the revelation of your perfect love that casts out all my fears. Thank you for giving me YOUR power, YOUR love and YOUR mind. Fear doesn't deserve my attention or my worship today, but you alone. I will mediate on your goodness and your extravagant love. You alone are worthy of all of my attention.

In case you're hungry for more....

Philippians 4:6-7; 1 John 4:18; Psalm 23:4; Psalm 118:6; Romans 8:31; John 14:27; Psalm 46:2; Psalm 91