

Who's Your



A 21-Day Guide to Prayer and Fasting

Gospel
COMMUNITY
RIVERMONT

INTRODUCTION

***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
Acts 1:8***

As we go through these 21 days of prayer and fasting, there are three reflections from our study in the book of Acts out of which have risen three prayers:

The church in Acts was born out of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke, the author of the book of Acts, goes to great lengths to demonstrate the role of the Spirit in birthing the early Christian movement and in bringing people into relationship with Jesus. In Acts 1:8, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit of God would come upon the early disciples and that his primary work would be to empower them to be witnesses. From Peter’s sermon in Acts 2, all the way through Paul’s ministry in Rome in Acts 28, it is the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of ordinary people that brings about gospel multiplication all across the world.

So, these 21 days of prayer and fasting are aimed at directing our hearts to pray for a movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives like we’ve never seen before.

The Holy Spirit empowers disciples to be witnesses.

As we have studied the book of Acts this summer as a church body, we saw over and over again Luke’s description of followers of Jesus as “witnesses.” It was the Spirit of God who animated them to share what they had *seen* and *heard*. That is what sharing the gospel is—being witness to what we have seen and heard. Have we personally experienced the work of God in our own lives in such a way that it has transformed our lives? If so, then it’s just a matter of time, and a little training, before we become effective witnesses. But if we have not experienced the work of God in our lives, then no training or teaching will be enough to motivate a powerful witness. The gospel is the good news that Jesus is alive and making all things new. And that’s news worth witnessing to!

So, our prayer these 21 days of prayer and fasting is that we would experience the presence and power of God in our lives, be renewed in our love for him, and be transformed by his love for us.

The Holy Spirit transformed lives, and the gospel multiplied.

In the story of the birth of the Christian movement, it is often ordinary people who are filled with the Spirit of God and empowered to tell their Jesus-story to those around them. And it is through these powerful stories that lives are changed, cities are transformed, and the gospel multiplies. Followers of Jesus don’t have to be impressive. We need mostly to be dependent on the Spirit and faithful to His calling to be his witnesses wherever we go.

So, our prayer these 21 days is that God would bring at least one person to each of our mind’s who does not know Jesus. We are praying that the Lord would give us opportunities to engage with that individual in real and powerful ways, that through our relationship and loving witness to them, they would come to know, love, and follow Jesus.

So, we ask you: Who’s Your One?

God has called us to be witnesses, but we cannot declare what we ourselves have not experienced. In everything God says and does, he is revealing who He is. He wants to be known. As we go through these weeks of prayer and fasting, our prayer is that God will open our eyes to see Him and all that He is doing while giving us opportunities and boldness to be witnesses to those He has put in our lives.

How to Use This Guide

Weekly Structure:

Week 1: Upward → Week 2: Inward → Week 3: Outward

These 21 days are a journey in all three of these directions and in that order.

Week 1 is a journey upward as we set our full attention on who God is and what He's like. The aim for Week 1 is that we would be deeply renewed in our love for God and transformed by spending time with Him. If we have not experienced the grace of God as good news ourselves, we will never have a consuming passion to tell those around us. We just won't.

But, if we have deeply experienced the beauty of God by the outpouring of the Spirit in our lives, and if we have experienced the grace of God, it will become our desire to make a vocation (our primary purpose) of telling the story of God in every way we can.

If God is beautiful to us, we will tell the whole story to the whole world. If he is not, we will not. This is why we must first journey *upward*.

Week 2 is a journey inward, as we ask the Lord to search our hearts, expose the ways in which we pursue lesser loves or other gods, and to transform our hearts. We don't simply want to see the gospel multiply in the lives of others, but in our own lives as well. Perfection is not the goal, but ongoing transformation is. Jesus said that His Father's will is that we bear much fruit, and so prove to be disciples of Jesus.

Discipleship is first the work of being with Jesus and being transformed by the Spirit. That is why we must journey *inward*.

Week 3 is the culmination of both our study in Acts all Summer long and these 21 days of prayer and fasting. This is the week which **takes us outward**, on mission with Jesus into the lives of others. And it is during this week that we are specifically praying by name for the one person God has brought to mind in our lives who doesn't yet know Jesus. We will pray for opportunities and for boldness. We will pray for this person or persons to come to know, love, and follow Jesus.

Following Jesus is all of grace and is the work of the Spirit. No formula or clever gospel presentation can do a thing to change a person's heart. Only the Spirit of God illuminating the gospel through the witness of ordinary Christ-followers can do that. That is why we journey *outward*, saturated in prayer.

Daily Structure

This prayer guide is designed to cover five out of seven days each week. Each day starts with a simple prayer that begins with, "Lord, open my eyes to see..." something different each day. That simple prayer is followed then by two minutes of silence as we quiet our hearts before God and meditate on that prayer.

Those moments of silence are followed by Scripture, devotional thoughts, a prayer and, often times, a reflection. Each day follows this basic structure. In the end, this is a guide, not a prescription. So we would encourage you to listen to the Lord, immerse yourself in prayer and in Scripture, and be obedient to whatever the Lord is calling you to.

Fasting

Fasting can take on many forms. **The idea of fasting is to give something up in order to intentionally do or prepare for something else.** In the tradition of the people of God, fasting's purpose is to give something up in order to intentionally pursue the Lord through prayer, scripture, silence, and solitude. It is a time of consecration, in which we set ourselves apart in a unique way for a period of time. It is a way of tangibly surrendering ourselves to the Lord and waiting on Him in prayer. In the end, we fast from lesser things in order to feast on the Lord himself.

Traditionally, fasting from food has been the norm; however, for each person, there may be other forms of giving something up which are more effective.

Here are some suggestions for daily/weekly fasts:

Fasting by Week:

Consider fasting only one meal a day each week. Week one, perhaps do healthy liquids only for breakfast. Then week 2, fast during lunch. And week 3, fast during dinner.

Consider fasting from one thing, mixing it up each week. For instance, consider fasting from internet/tv/movies for week 1, then perhaps caffeine for week 2, and then perhaps sugar/dessert during week 3.

Fasting by Day:

Consider simply giving up one activity each day, and keeping it consistent all throughout the fast. For instance, consider fasting from sleep by waking up an hour early or staying up an hour later in order to spend more time than usual in prayer, scripture, and solitude with Jesus.

Consider doing what is known as the [Daniel Fast](#) for the entire 21 days, which restricts one's diet to only foods grown naturally and no meat. *(It is recommended that you consult with a physician before doing any significant food fasts in order to practice fasting in a healthy, sustainable manner.)*

Or perhaps consider fasting from all social media or internet for entertainment for these 21 days.

What we choose to fast from does not have to be extravagant, it only needs to be intentional and replaced with the pursuit of God in prayer, scripture, and solitude. If you have questions about how or what to fast from, let us know by contacting us at info@gospelcc.org.

Week 1: Upward

God as Creator Week 1, Day 1

O Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see you in creation.

Read Psalm 95

In the opening line of the Bible, God reveals Himself as the Creator. Throughout the rest of the Bible, he is referred to as the Creator of heaven and earth and everything in it. When Job was wrestling with who he thought God was, God spoke to Job and reminded him that He is the Creator.

Most of us already believe that God is the Creator, but do we understand the weight this truth holds?

As Creator, no one ever instructed Him in the way things should go. He did not seek counsel for anything that was made. He perfectly pieced together all of creation—from the beautiful to the practical. He knows the elements of the flower that allows it to pollinate and bloom and also how being present in a scenic field can take one's breath away.

He put that amount of design into our relationships as well. He designed the roles of husband and wife, father and daughter, sibling and friend. He also designed us to be in relationship with Himself. As Creator, He knows what holds us back from each of these relationships and how they can best be cultivated.

God has revealed Himself as Creator and through his creation, he is giving the whole world a glimpse of what he's like. The Scriptures teach us that all of His divine attributes are evident by looking at nature (Romans 1:19-20). He's big, beautiful, creative, and brilliant. Creation tells the story of an unmatched Creator without rival. There's no one like our God. The brilliance of God's wisdom and the authority which He displays through creation demands a reverent awe and humble submission from all of us. He is the ineffable designer, worthy of all praise. Yet so often, we turn away from our Creator to worship the creation (Romans 1:25). As we go through the next few weeks, let's pray that we discover God, the Creator, and learn to honor and worship Him as He deserves.

Nehemiah 9:6

"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

If possible, spend some time today observing the world God has made. Ask God to reveal to you what His creation says about His character.

O Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see you, God our Creator. Fill our hearts with awe for you. Let us see your goodness and brilliance in the things that you created. Let our awareness of you as Creator cultivate a willing surrender to your authority and wisdom.

Reflect:

What elements of the natural world remind you most of God's character? In what ways?

God Who Wants To Be Known

Week 1, Day 2

Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see you according to your Word.

Read Psalm 19

Yesterday, we sought to know God as Creator. He reveals his majesty and brilliance through creation. But that is not the primary way He chooses revealed Himself. A more accurate revelation of God is His Word, the Holy Scripture. According to Psalm 19, the sky proclaims God's handiwork *and* the teaching of the Lord in his Word is perfect.

In Exodus, when Moses asks God His name, God answers, "I AM that I AM." That answer gives assuredness that God is eternal, constant, and unchanging. He does not conform to each generation's modern sensibilities. He's been the same forever, and will be the same forever. He wants to be known, and he has gone to great lengths to reveal himself to those who want to know him. One of the best ways to get to know and experience God in relationship is by spending time in his Word, the Holy Scriptures.

Although God is perfect, our view of God is not always perfect. No matter how much we know the Bible, there will always be more to discover. Our view of God becomes more accurate as we consistently spend time in God's Word with humility and a teachable spirit. We need to be willing to allow our beliefs to be transformed by who He says He is. ***As we study the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit within us reveals God to us.*** John 16:13 says, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

Psalm 1:1-3

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the teaching of the LORD, and on word he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

O Holy Spirit, give us eyes to see and ears to hear. Lord, give us a hunger to read, meditate, and study Your Word so that we can know you and love you all the more. Lord, give us the humility we need to realize that our view of you is still too small. Ignite a passion in our soul to seek your face. May we be as the one described in Psalm 1 who delights in your Word and meditates on it day and night. Lord, may Your Spirit grant us understanding as we are in Your Word.

Reflect:

Do you have a hunger to be in God's Word? Do you have an intentional plan to be in the Word and growing in knowledge of God? How can you become more intentional in getting to know God through reading the Bible?

God Most High

Week 1, Day 3

Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see.

Read Genesis 14:11-24

It is easy to think that all of the stories in the Bible are about the great men and women mentioned—Abraham, David, Jacob, Noah, etc. If that is the case, it gets really discouraging when you hear their stories in full: adultery, murder, drunkenness, deception—all make an appearance. ***The thing is, these stories were never about the characters. All of these biblical stories make up one story which reveals God Most High.*** We see this in Genesis 14. Right after Abram rescues Lot, he is visited by a king/priest named Melchizadek. He greets Abram by saying, “Blessed be Abram by God most high, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God most high, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”

God made sure Abram knew he was not the one responsible for his own victory. It was God who rescued them and delivered the enemies into his hand. In every story of the Bible, there is only one Hero—God Most High. Every other person plays a supporting role.

The same is true for us today. If we had a narrator describing our lives, we would see that God is still the main character as we play supporting roles to Him. The more we read the Bible with the intention of seeing God’s hand throughout the stories of Scripture, the more we will be able to recognize His hand at work in our lives today. God is always at work in and around us. As we learn to recognize His fingerprints, we have the opportunity to give Him glory by giving Him credit for the things He is doing. ***In everything God does, his intent is to reveal who he is.***

O Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see. Lord, as we read through your Word, reveal Yourself as God Most High on every page. Help us to see You today so that we can give witness of all that you say and do.

Reflect

Can you recall a moment when God helped you in some way? Can you recount times when God has blessed you, comforted you, or provided for you? What has that taught you about who God is?

Jesus Christ, The Son Of God

Week 1, Day 4

Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see Jesus.

Read Colossians 1:16, John 1:14, Philippians 2:9-11

The overarching theme of the entire Bible is God revealing Himself and His plan. Ephesians 1:10 says, "Making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." God is not only revealing Himself, He is also reconciling all things to Himself and is doing so through Christ!!

All of Scripture points toward Christ as the Messiah. We spent time this week asking God to open our eyes to see Him as the Creator who has revealed Himself through His Word as God Most High. The verses we read above show that Jesus is the Creator, the Word, and exalted as most high.

For the first followers of Jesus, sharing the Gospel meant testifying to who Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Gospel is a story about the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. It has often been said, "Share the Gospel [and] use words if necessary." The point that is trying to be made with that statement is that we need to live out our faith in our actions. Although it is true that we need to demonstrate God's love with our actions, ***the best demonstration of God's love is not our actions, but rather the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.***

No matter how well we are loving and serving others, we cannot tell the gospel story without words. Romans 10:14 says, "How then can they call on him they have not believed in? And can they believe without hearing about him?" As God calls us to be witnesses of Him and what He is doing, this should always result in opportunities to share the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Holy Spirit, give us boldness to declare the name of Jesus. May we never shy away from bringing Jesus' name into a conversation with others. Holy Spirit, grow our love and allegiance to Jesus. May His name be above every name including our own. Thank you for the love you have demonstrated for us in the Cross of Christ. Let us live in and from that love today. Amen.

Reflect

Might there be opportunities today for you to talk about the love of God displayed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus with your One?

God, Our Redeemer

Week 1, Day 5

O Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see the Power of the Cross in our lives today.

Read Galatians 3:1-9

Could it be possible if the reason we often do not share the gospel all that much is because we are not seeing the power of the gospel in our lives **right now**? Might it be that we see people who need freedom in Christ, yet perhaps we ourselves have not tasted that freedom?

It is common for us to trust in Christ for eternity and yet strive to transform our lives in our own strength. Galatians 3 communicates the opposite. "Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" asks the Apostle Paul. We often exhaust ourselves in our attempts to please God with our behavior. If we feel we haven't done enough or know we have fallen in sin, the temptation to hide in shame from God is strong. The problem is, **we will never gain freedom from sin by hiding from God.**

Jesus grants us loving access to God, even on our absolute worst days. It is only when we are willing to turn to God for help in the midst of our sin that we are going to find the strength that we need to overcome it. Freedom comes through being in God's presence.

Satan, the accuser, will do everything to keep you from God. He will make you feel unworthy. Satan's job is to remind us of the ways we fall short. But for those who have put our faith in Jesus, we are no longer measured by our performance, but by the perfection of Jesus. His righteousness is always covering us; therefore, Christ has made us worthy. Having access to God based on Jesus rather than ourselves is a part of the riches of God's grace. When we learn to grasp this grace and take God up on His offer, we will experience the power of the cross in our daily life **right now**. And when we experience this power and freedom, we won't be able to keep ourselves from sharing this good news with others.

O Holy Spirit, teach us to walk daily with Jesus. Rather than striving to please God with our self-righteousness, let us rest in the work Christ has done. May we see evidence of the power of the cross rather than the exhaustive efforts of our own striving. Thank you, Jesus, for all you have done!

Reflect

Do you ever feel too unworthy to go to God? In what ways do you tend to avoid or hide from God when you feel like you don't measure up? What do you think it means to rely on Christ's finished work on the Cross rather than our performance in order to please God?

Week 2: Inward

The Need for Pruning

Week 2, Day 1

O Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see our need to be pruned.

Read John 15:1-17

As a church, we are collectively praying through Acts 1:8. Our prayer is that we would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses to Rivermont, College Hill, and our personal spheres of life. The questions “Who’s Your One?” has challenged us to specifically identify the name of at least one person for whom we will pray and ask the Lord for opportunities to share the gospel with. But before we can be effective witnesses to the risen Jesus, we must first know, love, and follow him ourselves. We cannot testify about that which we do not know.

So, in Week 1 we focused on asking God to open our eyes to see Him so that we might be accurate witnesses of who He is. This week we are going to be asking God to open our eyes so that we might see ourselves rightly. We are asking God to prepare and equip us to bear fruit.

John 15 compares followers of Jesus to branches on a vine. Christ says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” This is an invitation for us to join Jesus in the work that He is doing, and it sounds very promising. One other verse in this passage is a little harder to swallow. Towards the beginning of the passage, Jesus says, “Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

As a church, we are praying and preparing for the enduring fruit of gospel multiplication and transformed lives. During this time of preparation, we need to be aware that this includes pruning. Pruning will look different from person to person. According to John 15, the pruning is up to the Vinedresser, God our Father. Sometimes God prunes by asking us to give up things that are consuming our time and energy and are wooing us away from being with Jesus. Sometimes He prunes by asking us to surrender relationships to Him that are not healthy. Sometimes it is through conviction, asking us to finally deal with sin we have allowed to remain kept in secret.

In our study of Acts 23 a few weeks ago, Dr. Matt Willmington asked us a question. He said, “How far are we willing to go for the sake of the Gospel?” Are we willing to remain attached to the vine, fully accessible to the shearing scissors of the great vinedresser? As brilliant Creator and Designer, he knows exactly what to cut and what to leave. But it may not align with what we want. ***Do we love Jesus enough to trust and follow Him wherever he leads, no matter the cost?***

O Holy Spirit, make us willing branches. I pray our desire is to see the fruit of your kingdom outweigh our desire to keep things as they are. Holy Spirit, if you are pruning by asking us to surrender things to you, will you make your voice abundantly clear? Remove any confusion. Help us trust that the fruit that will come is worth so much more than any sacrifice being asked of us. O Lord, help us listen and obey.

Reflect

Do I love Jesus enough to follow him wherever he leads, no matter the cost?

God as Surgeon

Week 2, Day 2

Letting God search the depths of our hearts

Read Hebrews 4:12-16

One very important aspect of pruning is allowing God to sift through your heart for the purpose of cleansing and healing. If you grew up in a church that celebrated polished external behaviors, it may have become easier to stuff down negative emotions and sinful thoughts rather than deal with them. For instance, if you get jealous because someone is always getting recognition that you want, it is sometimes easiest to stuff down the jealousy and fake kindness. Perhaps it is easier to avoid the person until the jealousy slips back under the surface rather than deal with the jealousy directly through deep soul searching and repentance. We know jealousy is wrong and therefore try to rid ourselves of it. All we end up doing is managing our behaviors. We cannot remove the sin from our own hearts—only God can do that.

If we have a tendency to try to manage our behaviors rather than allow God and His Word to transform our hearts, then there may be much more under the surface that needs attention. Hebrews 4 gives a perfect illustration of God using His Word as a surgeon's scalpel to perform heart surgery. Verse 13 says, "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Can you picture a person lying on the surgical bed being prepared for surgery? In this illustration, our entire hearts are exposed before God. All of our thoughts, motives, dreams, fears, etc. Having our hearts fully exposed like this can be a terrifying thought. Everything within us wants to reach up and cover ourselves much like our first parents, Adam and Eve, did when they attempted to cover up their nakedness. But we have no reason to fear. Jesus, our high priest, is present and His righteousness covers us completely. God is not searching our hearts with condemning eyes. By grace through faith, Christ already bore that shame and condemnation. His Great Surgeon's eyes are searching for areas that need healing.

He knows that any sin detected is a cancerous disease that needs to be removed. He presses in on it with conviction, moving us to repentance. He will also come across wounds and scars within the heart; remember: He is the God of all comfort. There really is no reason to fear opening up our hearts fully to God. He is here to heal.

O Holy Spirit, sift my heart. Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my anxious thoughts. And see if there be any broken way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139).

Reflect

When you are experiencing heart-sickness of sins such as pride, jealousy, bitterness, etc., how do you deal with them? Do you confess and repent of them? Do you attempt to push them back under the surface? Do you attempt to manage your circumstances to relieve them?

Danger of Unconfessed Sin

Week 2, Day 3

Read Psalm 32:1-5

As God shines light on our hearts, He is going to discover things that need to be removed. As discussed yesterday, there are many ways we can try to manage our hearts, but there is only one way for the sin to be removed. God removes sin when we confess and repent of it. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Unconfessed sin is a very dangerous thing to remain in our hearts. It is a stronghold that Satan can use against us.

This week, God wants to free us from the weight of hidden sins in our past. Shedding light on dark secrets can bring about an overwhelming fear. For some, the secret is so shameful they decided long ago to take the secret to the grave. Satan, the accuser and deceiver, uses fear to keep us silent. We end up fearing condemnation even though "there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus." We fear ruining our reputation incorrectly thinking that would ruin our witness. The truth is, when we repent and allow God to forgive and free us, we have even more about which to testify.

God is more glorified through our redemption than our reputation. Covering past sins in order to put forth a grand outward appearance or performance does not glorify God. It actually steals an opportunity from God. Repentance and forgiveness allows God to display His glory because we become an exhibit of His glorious grace.

David wrote Psalm 32 *after* his abusive affair (see 2 Samuel 11). He committed adultery and murder, then tried to hide it all in the shadows. But, his insides wasted away with conviction, and he was miserable. Then, a prophet named Nathan came and confronted David about his sin. David broke. He confessed and repented of his sin, then was able to say, "Blessed is the one who is forgiven."

Nathan was not a condemning accuser. He stood with an invitation from God, inviting David back into his presence through the door of repentance. That same invitation stands before us today. Jesus is ready and willing to shoulder your burdens, forgive you, and bring true and deep healing.

Holy Spirit, give courage today to repent of unconfessed sin, both to you and to the people who need to hear it. Holy Spirit, be with those who are going to hear the confession. Grant them the grace to forgive. Bring freedom and healing today. Thank you that even our past sins become an opportunity to see your name glorified. Holy Spirit, give us the courage needed to confess sin and turn away from it.

Reflect

Do you have any past sins that you need to confess? If so, it is important to be specific and put the confession to actual words. Avoid simply thinking about the confession. Actually say it out loud or write it out. There is something very healing about expressing the confession, allowing it to come up and out from you.

The Gravity of Sin

Week 2, Day 4

Read Luke 15:11-32

Yesterday we talked about unconfessed sin that was lurking in the past. Today, we are going to address the ongoing sin that goes unchecked in our lives. For some, lack of repentance is *not* out of fear of rejection or condemnation. It is simply because of a love for the sin. Perhaps you know God is willing to welcome you back when you repent...eventually. You are just not ready to give it up yet. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see just how devastating sin really is.

The story of the prodigal son is a story of a loving father and an unappreciative son. The son wanted his dad to pay for him to live however he wanted. The dad gave him the money and let him do as he pleased. Eventually, the money ran out, and the son was no longer appealing. The son became a slave to his circumstances. In true despair and misery, the son returned home to the father seeking restoration.

Luke 15:20 says, "And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and *felt compassion* and *ran* and *embraced* him and *kissed* him."

The father knew what the son did not. Eventually, he would hit rock bottom. Many times, rock bottom propels us toward God. Sometimes pride keeps people at rock bottom.

The way of Jesus is the only way off the path of sin which leads to destruction. God sees, feels compassion, runs toward us, and embraces us. If you are willing to look to Him and ask, He will give you the strength needed to repent and come back home.

Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see the destructive nature of sin even before it wreaks havoc in our lives. The way of sin always leads to destruction. None of us are clever enough to outwit it. If we continue in this sin, it will destroy us. O God, give us a hunger for Your presence that is stronger than the hunger for the temporary pleasure of sin .

Holy Spirit, open our eyes to see the weight of our own sin, that we might run to You. Your invitation is open to each of us every day and You will receive us when we come. You will not turn away from us. Yet, so often, we turn away from you. We cannot love sin and follow you at the same time. God, give us courage to confess and strength to turn our backs on sin and walk away from it and toward You. Thank you for loving us enough to run toward us when we do.

Reflect

Is there a sin that you find yourself wrongly attached to?

Awareness of Blindspots

Week 2, Day 5

[Read Galatians 5:16-26](#)

If you have taken the time to walk through this guide, asking the Holy Spirit to work in you each day, hopefully you are beginning to walk in a new sense of freedom. There may have been some deep heart surgery performed! Praise God for His grace! There is great peace which accompanies a clear conscience—when, as far as we know, there is no unconfessed sin in our lives.

The goal is not to become perfect, but rather to know the freedom that comes with walking step-by-step with Christ. We will know this kind of freedom when we cultivate repentance as a lifestyle. How would our lives change if we brought things to the Lord as soon as they surfaced? Picture it: as soon as you recognize a prideful thought, you sprint to the Lord in confession, expecting it to be cleansed and, in turn, receiving grace and mercy. As soon as a lustful thought lures you toward an image, you sprint to God in repentance, allowing it to be cleansed and removed.

When we see repentance as a gift from God and a tool of healing in His hands, we will never fear allowing God to refine us more and more. Many have said that they feel overwhelmed reading the Bible because it exposes all the areas in which we fall short. That approach is overwhelming if it is up to us to manage it all. But the story of the Bible invites us into the drama of redemption, in which Christ makes all things new, even us. It shows us where we fall short so that we can open these things up to God in repentance and allow Him to transform us.

Even if we have a clear conscience now, let's ask God to continue pruning and refining us of our blindspots. Some people say "ignorance is bliss" or "what we don't know can't hurt us." Unfortunately, these ideas are not true. *All sin is destructive*. Our blind pride can hurt the relationships around us. It can isolate us from others. Whether we hurt someone intentionally or unintentionally, it still hurts.

In Psalm 19, David prayed:

"Who can discern his errors?

Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!

Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer."

We cannot always discern our own errors. The more we are in God's Word, the more we give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to transform us.

O Holy Spirit, open my eyes to see where you are trying to refine me. Lord, in the moments I become aware of sin, remind me to come to you immediately in repentance rather than trying to deal with it on my own. Lord, give me the humility to cultivate a lifestyle of repentance.

Reflect

Where in your life might pride be blinding you to your own sin? Will you ask the Lord to open your eyes to what sin may be present in your heart?

Week 3: Outward

Who's Your One?

Week 3, Day 1

Read Acts 8:26-40

“8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and [you](#) will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

For the past two weeks, we have been praying and fasting, that the Holy Spirit would come upon us with power. He has opened our eyes to see and love God more. We have asked Him to move powerfully in our own hearts so that we can experience personal freedom in Christ. Personally experiencing God is not our end goal, however. ***We want to experience God so that we can be His witnesses to those He has placed in our lives.***

Who's your one? These 21 days of prayer and fasting are about asking God to put a fire in our hearts to declare His good news to others. We are asking everyone to pray for God to burden our hearts for someone specific. For some of us, our one is not even a question. You have already been praying for people by name for years. This season is an invitation to lean into more intentional prayer, believing that God is at work in their lives and ours.

For others, naming a person may be hard because most of the people in your life are already believers. If that's the case, ask God to broaden your sphere of influence. Be prayerful as you go about your day. Ask God for opportunities to connect with someone in your neighborhood, as you go to the grocery store, check your kids in at day care, stop at a coffee shop, etc. God wants to make these connections. Are you willing to put yourself out there?

God can and will orchestrate these encounters. Philip met the Ethiopian Eunuch because he listened to God's direction. It is amazing the opportunities that God will bring when we ask Him to. Ask God to open our eyes and ears to hear how He may be directing us today.

O Holy Spirit, burden our hearts for people who need to meet you. Let us never become so content in our own relationship with you that we neglect to share you with others. Lord, give us a heart to see your kingdom expanded. Give us faith that our prayers are making an impact for eternity. Lord Jesus, we pray that you put a specific [person](#) on each person's heart. We cry out to you for this person, O Lord! O Holy Spirit, hear our prayers and move in power!

Reflect

Who's your one?

Laboring In Prayer

Week 3, Day 2

Read Matthew 9:35-38

When Jesus saw the crowds of people, He had compassion on them. What He says next is very interesting: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Rather than sending them off right then and there, Jesus told them to pray earnestly that the God of the harvest would send out laborers. ***Jesus knew that they would end up being the laborers who were sent, but first He wanted them to pray.*** Similarly, Luke’s last recorded words of Jesus are, “You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:48-49). Jesus had much work for the disciples to do, but they needed to do it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5, “For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.”

1 Thessalonians 2:13, “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.”

These verses make it clear that the gospel going forth is a work of the Holy Spirit. But it is a work that we are invited to participate in every step of the way. We are called to pray for God to send out laborers, be willing to be a laborer, share the gospel, and pray that the words we speak are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Every step of the way is a beautiful partnership between God and His people. He has to do all of the work yet He uses us to accomplish that work. Let us be willing to participate in every part—praying, going, speaking, and serving. And where we are not yet willing, let us pray that God moves in our hearts.

O Holy Spirit, we pray earnestly that you send out laborers for the harvest you have here in Lynchburg. Lord, may we be amongst the laborers. Lord, may we always be willing and ready to share Jesus whenever an opportunity arises. Lord, may we even be looking for the opportunities. But let us never run ahead of you. Open our eyes to see where you are at work and invite us to join you. Thank you in advance for all that you are doing and are going to do.

Reflect

Are you willing to be involved in every part—praying, going, speaking, and serving? If not, are you willing to ask God to move in your heart so that you can say, “Yes, Lord” no matter how He leads? Have you specifically prayed that God will create opportunities for you to speak with the **one** He has put on your heart?

Awareness of Blind Spots

Week 3, Day 3

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Reading the Pauline epistles can be very convicting when we read how far Paul is willing to go for the furtherance of the gospel. He sacrificed so much in order to make disciples. Another thing that is clear in Paul's writings is that he absolutely loves the people he is ministering to! He willingly gives of himself to them because he delights in them.

In order to effectively share the gospel with people, we are going to need to do life with them. Life is messy, and this will create some inconveniences. But even "inconvenience" may not be a strong enough word. God may be calling us into a lifestyle that will be difficult. There is one thing that makes sacrifices like this worth it—having a deep affection for those for whom we are sacrificing.

The cross was a demonstration of God's love for us. Let's not take the word love lightly. Out of affection and delight for us, God was willing to send His Son to the cross. Christ, out of love for us and reverence for the Father obediently went to the cross. Ephesians 5:1-2 says, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." This was a HUGE sacrifice for Jesus, yet love compelled Him to endure it with joy.

Paul was able to say, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." To be imitators of Jesus, or Paul for that matter, we must learn to walk in love. ***When we truly love God and love our neighbors, the giving of ourselves for the sake of seeing them come to Christ will not feel like an obligation.*** Sacrifice will flow out of us as an expression of the deep love that we have for God and our neighbors. It will be our privilege to give of ourselves to them. However, this love is rare; it is a love that comes from God alone. And this love is a work of the Holy Spirit. This love is what we are praying and fasting for!

When we love someone, it becomes a HUGE burden knowing that they don't know, love, or follow Jesus. Love will compel us to pray for God to soften their hearts to the gospel and give us opportunities to speak. Love will override any fear we may have of sharing the gospel, as St. John said, "Perfect love casts out all fear" (1 John 4:18).

O Holy Spirit, You are not only loving, You are love itself. Fill our hearts with Your love. Lord, never let us see others as an inconvenience. Stir up our hearts with affection for You and others so that we cannot help but give of ourselves for the sake of the gospel. Lord, I pray we will rely on You every day to receive this love so that we can turn and pour it out. Empower us to love our neighbors in the same way you have loved us. Teach us to abide in you and remain in Your love so that we will never run dry.

Reflect

Can you say that you have a deep affection for the **one** that you are praying for? In addition to praying for God to give you love, how can you cultivate love for that person? Spend time with them? Hear more of their story? Pray for them more often?

I Once Was Blind but Now I See

Week 3, Day 4

Read John 9

The story we just read in John is a simple story of a man receiving his sight, then telling others what happened. He encountered Christ, and his life was transformed because of His power. When people asked him what happened, he simply shared his story. Sometimes, we are afraid to tell others about Jesus because we are afraid we won't know what to say.

If you have put your faith in Christ, you have a story of how Christ's work on the cross—His death, burial, and resurrection—has impacted you! As we allow the Holy Spirit to lead, it is amazing how he crosses paths of people who need to hear each other's stories. During Week 2, we talked about the importance of confessing sin. Confessing sin does not ruin our testimony, it is an opportunity to display God's grace. Being vulnerable in a way that celebrates God's grace and forgiveness invites others to see how God's grace can free them from their sin as well. It is amazing how vulnerability breeds vulnerability. When one person finally opens up about a personal struggle, it gives courage to others to finally open up and seek the help they need.

This week, we are praying for our **one**. Let's also ask God if there is anyone else who needs to hear our story. Perhaps you have been freed from addiction, found healing after being abused, or finally released bitterness and forgave someone from your past. What would it look like if we allowed ourselves to be stories of God's grace on display? Instead, many of us wear masks, acting as if we're all good. Only putting forth our best foot makes others only put forth their best foot. This is great if people are actually doing well. Instead, hurting, struggling people don't know who they can open up to because no one else seems to be struggling, and therefore it seems no one will understand.

God has given each of us a story for a reason. He has forgiven us of much. Healed us of much. Restored us. Reconciled us to Him and others. Our story is a display of His grace. Are we willing to ask God to give us opportunities to share these stories with others? Whether to an unbeliever or a believer, God will use our stories to continue the work in someone else's life and bring glory to His name.

O Holy Spirit, thank you for all the work that you have done in my life. Thank you that my story is nothing to be ashamed of but rather a display of how amazing your grace is. Lord, if there is anyone who would benefit from hearing how you have worked in my life, lead me in that direction. If it is someone I already know, make it evidently clear by giving us the opportunity to speak and directing the conversation toward that topic. If it is someone I do not yet know, then cross our paths. Lord, give me the courage and the boldness to be vulnerable in a way that gives you all of the glory. Thank you for Your hand in my story.

Reflect

How might God want to use your story to display his glory and grace for someone else in your life?

What We Have Seen and Heard

Week 3, Day 5

Read Philippians 1:1-11

O Holy Spirit, thank you!

As we finish out the 21-day fast, let's spend this last day meditating on this passage and praising God.

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, [d] both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." Philippians 1:3-11

Lord, thank you for our partnership in the gospel. Lord, we are partnered with you and with everyone else at Gospel Community Church. Thank you that we are not in this alone.

Lord, thank you that You who began a good work will bring it to completion.

Lord, you are not done working. As we finish out this fast, we trust that this is only the beginning of this chapter in the story.

Lord, thank you for all my brothers and sisters in Christ who are partakers with me of your grace. We are all one in you.

Lord, thank you for growing this church in love for you and for one another.

Lord, it is our prayer that our love may abound more and more with all knowledge and wisdom. Give us discernment to approve what is excellent. Lord, fill us with the fruit of Christ's righteousness.

Lord, all of this is for your praise and glory.

*Lord Jesus, continue the work you have started in us. We thank you in advance for the day of salvation for those whom we are praying for. Lord, thank you for our **one**.*

Reflect

As we end out the fast, don't let this be the end of praying for your one. Have you had an opportunity to share the Gospel with them yet? Have you made an effort in growing in community with them? Remember the partnership between us and God. Be praying and be willing to be the answer to the prayer by being the one sent to share.