

SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH

REF[O]CUS

21 DAYS OF PRAYER & FASTING
JANUARY 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome.....1

Fasting Guide.....2

Why Fast?.....3

Devotional Guide Introduction.....4

Daily Devotionals.....5

Where Do We Go From Here?.....47

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The theme for these 21 days is **Refocus**. Our desire is to spend this time spiritually refocusing as we seek the Lord with our whole hearts through these dedicated days. To help us hear clearly from the Lord, we will spend time studying selected Psalms.

The Psalms are Israel's ancient hymn book, used by God's people to praise, repent, draw near, express sorrow, and commune with Him. They reveal the deep longings of the human heart to worship, hear from God, and respond to Him.

Each Sunday, we will focus on one Psalm to help us prepare for extended and focused times of prayer and fasting during the week. For each day that follows, this guide will provide a devotional thought, space for reflection and journaling, and an opportunity to draw close and hear from the Lord. For some of you, this may be a new experience. We hope that these 21 days will help you build a lasting discipline of daily time with the Lord in prayer and Bible study.

This booklet includes several resources to help guide your times of prayer and fasting:

Fasting Guide: Fasting is a spiritual discipline designed to help you focus your attention on God and seek Him more deeply and passionately. Use this guide to learn about different types of fasts and how to participate in this important practice.

Devotional Guide: This section is intended to lead you into intimate, intentional, and extended times of daily prayer and study. Use it to develop a consistent habit of study, reflection, and—most importantly—prayer.

Recommended Reading: You'll also find a list of suggested books on prayer and fasting for those who wish to explore these topics further.

Join us for these dedicated days as we **refocus** together!

FASTING GUIDE

“Fasting is the most powerful spiritual discipline of all the Christian disciplines. Through fasting and prayer, the Holy Spirit can transform your life.”—Bill Bright

While prayer is something that every Christian has some experience with, fasting always seems like a “next level” commitment—something for missionaries or monks to do. Only elite Christians fast, right? Fasting may also seem overwhelming. The assumption is that you have to go from three square meals a day to renouncing all food and living in a desert climate with only a precious few drops of water a day.

After all, that’s the way Jesus did it, right? For these reasons and so many more, many Christians miss out on the incredible blessings of fasting as a powerful way to seek God. In reality, fasting is a lot more approachable than you might have thought. There are several different kinds of fasts that you may choose to participate in.

Here are a few examples you may consider during these 21 days:

SOUL FAST

This is a fast from some element of your life that is not food-related. This fast is a great option if you do not have much experience fasting from food, have health issues that prevent you from fasting from food, or if you wish to refocus certain areas of your life that are out of balance. You might choose to stop using social media or watching television and then bring that element back into your life in healthy doses.

COMPLETE FAST

In this type of fast, you drink only liquids, typically water with light juices as an option. If you are considering this kind of fast, please consult a medical professional first to ensure that you are physically able to participate.

SELECTIVE FAST

This type of fast involves removing certain elements from your diet. One example of a selective fast is the Daniel Fast, during which you remove meat, sweets, and bread from your diet and drink water and juice for fluids, and eat fruits and vegetables for food.

PARTIAL FAST

This fast is sometimes called the “Jewish Fast” and involves abstaining from eating any type of food in the morning and afternoon. This can either correlate to specific times of the day, such as 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM, or from sunup to sundown.

But why go to all that trouble? Can’t I simply draw nearer to God in prayer and reading the Bible? Why would I choose to fast?

WHY FAST?

Fasting does what few other spiritual disciplines can in our lives...

IT DECLARES THAT WE WANT GOD MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

When we abstain from food, it says to God that we desire Him even more than our most basic needs. It is acknowledging that there is nothing else in our lives that we want more than God. This is a powerful way to worship God and invite His presence into our lives.

IT UNCOVERS THINGS WE VALUE MORE THAN GOD.

We tend to make other things more important than God. Fasting reveals our motives and causes us to re-prioritize our lives around God. In the classic book, *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster writes, "More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us...We cover up what is inside of us with food and other things."

Fasting helps do what King David wrote in Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

IT EXPRESSES OUR DESPERATION FOR GOD.

When we fast, we show the extent of our desperation for God. Jesus expressed this early in His ministry when He went into the wilderness and fasted forty days and forty nights. Though the Bible says He was hungry, He chose not to eat even when Satan tempted Him to turn stones into bread. Jesus was desperate to be with the Father and to live upon God's Word. Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

FASTING LEADS TO BREAKTHROUGH.

When you fast...

- You may experience a spiritual breakthrough with your relationship with God.
- You may experience God's power in the midst of your life's circumstances.
- You may experience clarity in difficult decisions.

Prayerfully consider which kind of fast you would like to pursue in these 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting from January 5-28, 2026.

"And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

Philippians 1:9-11

If you would like more resources on fasting, please visit our online resources at: secondfamily.church/21Days.

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Over the next few weeks, we will enter a focused time of intentional prayer and fasting as a church. Our pastor's sermons, this devotional guide, and several other special elements will challenge and direct you to fast and pray. We will gather corporately for prayer and study, and we encourage you to gather in smaller groups—with your family, your spouse, or individually—for extended and intentional times of prayer and fasting. All of this is so that we can seek the face of God. Our desire is for God to move in powerful ways, and we believe that He desires to move, to answer, and to respond as we pray and focus on Him.

All of this is planned because we believe in the power of prayer. We believe what the Bible says about God's desire for us to call on Him and His desire to answer, provide, and bless us. We encourage you to use this devotional guide for the next 21 days to spend time each day in Scripture and prayer.

Each day, you will have a short devotional thought to read and a place to journal your reflections. Additionally, you will be prompted to spend time in prayer. You may want to journal your prayers or record what God is saying to you through your devotional and prayer time. The goal is to take time to pray and then be sensitive to what God says and does in response.

JANUARY 5: OUR EVER PRESENT COMFORTER

“It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

Deuteronomy 31:8

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 31:1-8

When you were a kid, did you ever accidentally wander away from your parent in the store? Next thing you knew, you were lost, and you had no idea how to get back! In hindsight, it wasn't that bad, but in the moment, it was pretty scary. One moment you were with your parent and the next you weren't.

In yesterday's sermon, we studied how God hears our cries for help. And as we read in Deuteronomy, we see not only does He hear those cries, but He is also right there with us. We see Joshua chosen by God to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land after Moses. While it seemed like an impossible task to make it there, let alone conquer it, God reminded Joshua that He would be with Him. God was the one who would give them everything they needed to make it. And as believers in Christ, we have the same assurance that He will never leave us either. The Holy Spirit lives within us, and we are His forever. Whether life is going great or it feels out of control, He's there. There's never a time when He's not! When we cry out for His help, we don't have to wonder if He hears. Because He not only hears, but He helps us and comforts us. He gives us the strength, joy, and satisfaction to keep going. We don't have to go through life alone. He wants us to fix our eyes on Him and remember that He will always be with us.

Reflect

What specific area of your life might you need to remind yourself that God is always with you? How might the fact that God is with us, both challenge us and comfort us? Are you actively relying on God while going through the easy and rough seasons of life?

Pray

Ask God to show you those areas of your life where you need to cry out to Him. Thank Him for being with you in every moment! Yield to His will in whatever phase of life you may be in, and give Him praise in every circumstance.

Written by Luke Sours

God, thank You for being with me. I cannot go through this life alone...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

JANUARY 6: THAT'S WHAT FAITH CAN DO

“Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD.” 2 Kings 19:14

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 18:13-19:37

As we continue our focus on “Looking Up” this week, a great example from the Bible that shows the power of looking up to God is found in 2 Kings 19, when King Hezekiah was told that King Sennacherib of Assyria and his army had invaded the lands of Judah and were now outside the city walls of Jerusalem. King Sennacherib sent his general, commander, and a high official from his palace to defy the Lord and demand Hezekiah’s full and complete surrender.

When Hezekiah’s messengers returned to the king with Sennacherib’s letter of demands, Hezekiah’s initial response was not to look out at his enemies and assemble his army, or to look inward at his own fear and hide. Instead, he went directly to the Temple of God, spread the letter out before the Lord, and looked up, praying for God’s deliverance. What I learned from Hezekiah is that when life pushes down on us, faith looks up. Prayer should be our first response, not our last resort. We should take our worries to God instead of keeping them to ourselves. Hezekiah didn’t know how God would save them, but he had faith that God could when he said, “You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth” (2 Kings 19:15). He trusted in God’s sovereignty, even when the circumstances looked grim.

Because of Hezekiah’s faith, God heard his cry and sent an angel to strike down the Assyrian army. When we look up, God shows up. It may not always be in the way we expect, but it will always be done according to His faithfulness. That’s what faith can do.

Reflect

What is my initial response when I am afraid?

Where do I look when I face fear or uncertainty?

Am I looking out at the problem, in at myself, or up to God?

Pray

“Lord reveal the insecurities and fears in my life. Forgive me in the areas where I focus more outward at the problem or inward at myself rather than upward towards You.”

Written by Pastor Justin McLaughlin

Write down what God is saying to you through this devotional. Make a list of how God has been faithful in your life...

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JANUARY 7: UNCOMPROMISING FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18

Think about an opinion you have that no one can change your mind about. These opinions vary a great amount. Some of you thought about what your favorite ice cream flavor is, and no one can change your mind, even though Rocky Road is very overrated! Others thought about their favorite pizza topping (pineapple is very good on pizza), while some were being very spiritual and thought about what their favorite book of the Bible is. And no one can tell them any differently! All kidding aside, we all have a passion for something that is so strong that we will not compromise our position. The challenge that we face today, as we look at Matthew 16:18, is quite simply this: do we share that same passion, energy, and uncompromising faith in our walk with Jesus?

Friends, every day Satan seeks to challenge, question, and confuse our belief in Jesus. Even this passage has come under attack, as the Roman Catholics cling to this being the landmark of Peter being the first pope. Yes, Peter plays a critical role in the establishment of the church, but what we so often miss is “this ROCK.” This Rock is the Cornerstone, the Author, the Perfector, the Great I AM. The Rock that we so often miss is Jesus! It is only because of Him that the gates of hell will not prevail. When Satan would love nothing more than to confuse us and lead us further away from Christ, stand on the Rock. So today, the challenge is quite simple: will you carry the passion and energy it takes to stay true to the Gospel? Stand firm on Jesus, and don’t let any person, any circumstance, or anything compromise the Gospel in your life.

Reflect

Think through the areas of your life where you are uncompromising. What are the “rocks” that you have built your life on? Our passion and energy usually show where our time will be dedicated. Is that true in your life?

Pray

Pray today that God will give you the strength to live an uncompromising life for Him. Is He the Rock that you lean on no matter the circumstance? Pray that our passion and energy would draw us closer to Jesus.

Written by Pastor Wes Tanner

JOURNAL

Lord, let me be uncompromising for the Gospel today, and every day
that I have life in this body. Give us the strength to live boldly for You
and You alone...

[illegible]

JANUARY 8: IT IS OK TO WRESTLE WITH GOD

**“Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help,
when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.”
Psalm 28:2**

Scripture Reading: Psalm 28

One of the best pieces of advice I ever received came from a mentor in college: “It is OK to wrestle with God.” That truth met me at a pivotal moment when I was struggling to trust the Lord in the middle of difficult circumstances. I was angry—so angry that I didn’t even want to acknowledge God, convinced that He didn’t care about me.

My mentor’s words were transformative because they gave me permission to do something I didn’t know I could do: to tell God exactly how I felt—every raw, unfiltered, and not-so-pretty thought.

The truth of the gospel is that God loves us and wants us, even in the middle of our mess. We see this over and over again in the Psalms. David constantly cries out to God because he believes in God’s steadfast love, even when his world is falling apart. He knows that God will not abandon him in his struggle.

It is far better to wrestle with God than to walk away in silence. Honesty before your Heavenly Father is still a form of relationship, and He can handle every bit of your heart.

Reflect

Do you need permission today to wrestle with God? Do you have anything in your life that you need to surrender to Him? When was the last time that your prayer was raw and honest before the Lord?

Pray

Take some time to confess to God that you are struggling and cry out to Him. Remember that crying out to Him is better than no relationship at all.

Written by Rachel Liverman

JOURNAL

Lord, thank you that you do not forsake us in my struggles. Forgive me for not coming to you in my desperation. Teach me to trust you as I seek your help...

[illegible]

JANUARY 9: CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

“The Lord hears when I call to Him.” Psalm 4:3

Scripture Reading: Psalm 28

When was the last time you called a big company and actually spoke to a real person? Verifying passwords, waiting on hold, and navigating endless prompts can be exhausting. Recently, I found myself stuck with Verizon’s “virtual assistant,” just wanting to hear a human voice. It reminded me of those old commercials where the guy wandered around asking, “Can you hear me now?” I couldn’t help but wonder if even he ever grew frustrated talking to a robot instead of a real person.

That experience reminded me how deeply we all long to be heard, understood, and accepted. Even with modern technology like Siri, Google, and AI, we still crave genuine connection. Feeling ignored leads to frustration, but knowing someone is listening makes us feel valued and brings confidence, hope, and security essential to our well-being. We long to be heard because God designed us for relationship—with Him and with others.

Scripture assures us that God faithfully hears us. Hallelujah! He invites us to call on His name and understands not only our words but the deepest thoughts of our hearts. As Psalm 28 declares, the Lord is our strength and shield who lovingly shepherds His people. When we call on Him, He can do far more than we could ever ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Best of all, we don’t need a digital assistant to reach Him. Because of Jesus, we have direct access to our Heavenly Father—no dead zones, weak signals, or hold music. Whether we whisper, weep, or wait silently, He hears us perfectly. The Holy Spirit even intercedes on our behalf when words fail. Heaven’s line is open, and God is ready to hear us now.

Reflect

What do you need to bring boldly to His throne of grace right now? Knowing He longs to hear from us, how much do we long to hear from Him?

Pray

Lord, thank you that you hear me when I pray. Thank you for being attentive to my cries. Thank you for knowing what I need before I ask.

Written by David Shepherd

Lord, I need you today...

Lord, I need you today...

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JANUARY 10: IS YOUR BOAT TIPPING?

“The disciples woke Him up, shouting, ‘Teacher, don’t You care that we’re going to drown?’ When Jesus woke up, He rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Silence! Be still!’ Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm.” Mark 4:38b–39

Scripture Reading: Mark 4:35–41

This week, we focused on our cry to Jesus for help. Have you ever cried out to God in desperation? In the text, the disciples became afraid as the wind and waves grew tumultuous. The Sea of Galilee is only 13 miles long and 8 miles wide, so it is uncommon for violent storms to form. Life’s storms often hit us when we least expect them and without warning. Another example of a metaphorical “tipping boat” can be found in Habakkuk 1:2. Habakkuk was a godly prophet who spoke to God more than to people. When he was in trouble, he pushed the panic button when he said, “How many times do I have to yell, ‘Help! Murder! Police!’ before you come to the rescue?” (Eugene Peterson paraphrase).

God always has a plan, but that divine plan does not always make sense to us. God’s plan for Joshua was to destroy Jericho by marching around the city and blowing trumpets. God’s plan for Gideon was to defeat the 135,000-strong marauding Midianites with only 300 soldiers. God’s plan for the disciples of Jesus was to feed 5,000 men plus their wives and children with a little boy’s lunch. God always hears His children’s plea for help!

Reflect

Do you need to cry out to God for His help? When life feels overwhelming, do you ever push the “panic button” because you cannot handle it anymore? After recognizing these moments, what intentional steps will you take to place your hope in Christ this week?

Pray

Take some time right now to pray and ask God for strength to seek Him wholeheartedly when times are tough. In challenges, cry out and present your burdens to Him. God wants you to reach out and desires to hear from you.

Written by Pastor Tommy Goddard

JOURNAL

Lord, please hear my cry for your help. I need you, only you! Lord, please teach me how to rely on you for all my needs...

[illegible]

JANUARY 11: LOOKING WITHIN

“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” Psalm 50:14-15

Scripture Reading: Psalm 50

If you are reading this early this morning, you will probably be getting ready to go to church soon. Maybe you will attend a small group Bible study and then go to corporate worship, or possibly you will just attend the corporate worship service today. What do you do to prepare yourself for this experience? Are you aware of the seriousness of gathering for worship of the one true God? What is your responsibility to prepare as a member of the body of believers gathered for worship?

In Psalm 50, God confronts his people for their empty ritual and misunderstanding of true worship. His indictment is that they have replaced true worship with empty actions and no heart for Him. God desires that we come before Him in gratitude, faith, and dependence. Take time to check the attitude of your heart as you seek to approach Him in worship today.

Reflect

What is the Lord saying to you this morning from this text? What do you need to do to prepare yourself for corporate worship today? Is there sin to confess? Gratitude and faith to express? Remember your worship is for an audience of one!

Pray

Take some time right now to pray and ask God to help you to be prepared to worship Him.

Written by Pastor Matthew Gibbs

JOURNAL

Lord, you desire and deserve true worship. What must I do to prepare to worship you today?

[illegible]

JANUARY 12: THE WEIGHT OF SIN AND THE CROSS

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.”

Romans 5:18

Scripture Reading: Romans 5:12-18

If you have been saved by Christ, that means there was a time when you acknowledged your sin, repented, and trusted in Him to be your Savior. After that, growing in our relationship with Him is key. If we are not intentional, we can become stagnant in our faith and begin to forget the weight of what Christ did for us and why repentance is so important. On one hand, there is the sin we were born into. That sin nature by itself is enough to eternally separate us from God. There is nothing we can do about it on our own, just like verse 12 in today's reading describes. We are all infected with sin. It is a huge deal, and it is very important to recognize that. We are utterly lost on our own. But on the other hand, there is the cross. Because Jesus loved us more than we can comprehend, and in obedience to the Father, He went and died for us. The sin that we could do nothing about was paid for by Him. And then, He conquered the grave and is alive today. As believers, we ought to remember the incredible weight of what Christ did for us, and that should drive us to repentance. Look again at verse 18. His righteous act on the cross gives life. Are we living in light of that? If we gloss over how much His death and resurrection meant, sin will not seem like a big issue. But when the Lord convicts us of sin in our lives, we must see how dangerous it is, repent, and run back to Him.

Reflect

Is there a sin in your life that you need to surrender over to the Lord? When was the last time you genuinely thanked God for the new life He has given You?

Pray

Think for a minute about how much it means that Christ died for you. Pray that God would place a burden on your heart for the sin that we commit, and run towards Him in repentance! Ask God to convict you of anything that you might be doing that does not glorify Him.

Written by Luke Sours

JOURNAL

God, convict me of my sin! Help me to see how severe sin is, and give me the strength to run wholeheartedly toward You every day...

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JANUARY 13: SEARCH ME, O GOD!

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” Psalm 139:23-24

Scripture Reading: Psalm 139

With this week’s focus on looking within ourselves, it would be easy to go to Psalm 51, which highlights David’s repentance after his moral failure with Bathsheba. However, I would like for us to look at Psalm 139, where he asks God to look within him when not caught in sin.

Here’s a quick synopsis of this text: the first six verses focus on the omniscience of God, which simply means that God knows everything. The next six verses focus on God’s omnipresence, showing that He is everywhere. Then, verses thirteen through eighteen reveal God’s omnipotence, presenting Him as an all-powerful God. This leads to the final six verses, where we see David’s response to all of God’s attributes, and that response was his worship of God.

In today’s devotional, we will focus on the last two verses, where we can learn a lot from David as a man after God’s own heart. David cries out, “Search me,” not because he believed he was blameless, but because he knew that he couldn’t see his most inward thoughts, desires, and sins the way God could. He then proclaims, “Know my heart,” because motives matter to God. This is why David asks, “See if there be any grievous way in me.” David knew repentance began with an awareness of sin, and since he, like all of us, was a sinner, awareness would lead to brokenness. At the end of the psalm, David had one last request. He asked God to “lead me in the way everlasting,” because repentance always leads to renewal. God doesn’t want our performance; He wants our repentance.

Reflect

What is the Lord showing you from this text? What might God reveal if you truly prayed, “Search me, O God?” Would He find bitterness? Pride? Fear? Or maybe a longing to return to Him?

Pray

Lord, search me and know my heart. Reveal what’s hidden, purify what’s impure, and renew what’s broken. Teach me to worship You in spirit and in truth while not performing empty rituals. Give me a thankful and surrendered heart. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Written by Pastor Justin McLaughlin

Write down what God would find if you requested Him to search your whole heart...

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JANUARY 14: TRUSTING THE PROCESS

**“Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His presence continually!
Remember the wondrous works that He has done.”**

1 Chronicles 16:11-12a

When things are going according to plan, it is a whole lot easier to trust the process, isn't it? Our trust tends to waver when the road is rocky. That tends to be the time that we give up on the process and try to do things our own way. And, to our defense, it can be difficult to “trust the process” when we aren't seeing the results we desire. We operate in a “microwave world” where we want what we want and want it right now. Even though “the process” can be daunting, or even feel impossible, the final product is something amazing! Trusting the process with Jesus is even better! This lifelong process is hard and overwhelming. It feels impossible at times, but the reward is greater than anything we can imagine. We see a great reminder in 1 Chronicles 16 of trusting in the Lord's process. David calls us to seek the Lord continually and to remember all He has done. We must remember how good and faithful the Lord is. Even in moments we would rather do things our way, we must seek the Lord because He is strong enough to bear our burdens. We must remember what He has done, because without the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, there would be no point to this whole process. Think about the trust Noah had to have when building the ark. Or the trust that David needed when facing Goliath. That makes the trust we must place in the Lord a whole lot easier. Will you trust the Lord through the process of life? When we trust the process, the reward is great. And there is no greater reward we can receive than heaven. When we trust Jesus' process for our life, that is the reward that awaits.

Reflect

Do you “trust the process” no matter the circumstance? In what ways do you leave God out of the process and try to handle things on your own? How much different is the outcome when we fully trust His plan verses when we only trust in our own convenience?

Pray

Pray for the strength to fully “trust the process” with Jesus. Allow Him to examine you and reveal to you the areas that you need to trust Him on a deeper level. Thank God today, that because of Jesus, when we fully trust in Him, that we have the hope and the promise of heaven. The greatest reward ever, when we “trust His process.”

Written by Pastor Wes Tanner

JOURNAL

Lord, today I want all my trust to be placed in you. No matter what I face, no matter what tomorrow may bring, let my hope and trust be only in You...

[illegible]

JANUARY 15: GOD IS NOT SILENT

**“The Mighty One, God the Lord speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.” Psalm 50:1**

Scripture Reading: Psalm 139 and Psalm 50:1-4

Who sits on the throne of your heart?

That might sound like a strange question, but the truth is this: every heart has a throne, and something—or someone—always sits on it. Our world constantly tells us that we should rule our own hearts. “You do you,” they say. “Put yourself first.” Self-care, independence, and personal autonomy are praised above all else. But this mindset isn’t biblical.

Psalm 139 and Psalm 50 offer a sobering reminder of who truly deserves that throne. These Psalms aren’t meant to make us feel comfortable; they’re meant to make us examine our hearts before a holy God. In Psalm 50:1–4, we see a striking picture of God’s power and majesty—one that should move us to awe and reverence.

Why is self-examination so important? Because God deserves every part of us, including the throne of our hearts. He is not silent about who He is—He reveals Himself clearly and powerfully. So we shouldn’t be silent about who He is to us.

Is God truly seated on the throne of your heart? Or have you placed yourself there instead?

Reflect

In order to know if God is not on the throne of your heart, answer this question honestly: Do I love anything more than God? Have you taken the time to confess this to the Lord? What action steps do you need to take to keep God on the throne of your heart?

Pray

If you are not sure how to examine your heart, ask the Lord to show you your heart just like Psalm 139 states. He will be faithful to show you because He loves you.

Written by Rachel Liverman

JOURNAL

Lord, forgive me for replacing you with something else on the throne of my heart. Give me the strength to continue in your way and praising you for who you are...

[illegible]

JANUARY 16: THE SUPREME JUDGE

“And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for God himself is judge.” Psalm 50:6

During a family trip to Washington, D.C., we toured many of the city’s famous memorials and monuments. One of my favorite stops was the Supreme Court. Though the courtroom was empty due to a holiday recess, it still felt sacred, and the atmosphere radiated quiet reverence. What struck me most was the strict boundary around the bench. Even on our private tour, the guide explained that no one approaches it without explicit permission. Licensed attorneys must stop at the lectern—only Justices, clerks, and official staff are allowed beyond. That level of honor and reverence left a lasting impression on me.

If we show such respect to human judges, how do we regard the Righteous Judge of the Universe? Since 1789, only 116 people have served on the Supreme Court, and only 17 as Chief Justice. Yet even with life tenure, turnover is inevitable. Not so with God Almighty. He has always reigned as the eternal Judge. His position was never granted or appointed—He has always been on the throne and will never be replaced. Human judges do their best to rule fairly but are limited by the evidence before them. Holy God, however, is all-knowing. He judges with absolute truth, complete righteousness, and perfect justice. His verdicts are never overturned.

When we recognize who He is—the holy and eternal Judge—our only right response is humble worship. He owns everything, yet blesses us with His goodness and love. He deserves not half-hearted praise, but sincere devotion from hearts that truly know Him.

Reflect

As we pray and fast, how is God calling me to humble myself before His righteous judgment and allow Him to search my heart? Am I fully surrendered to His authority and will? As I fast and seek God, do I trust His justice and timing, even when I don’t understand His judgments?

Pray

Lord, You are the eternal judge, holy and righteous. I willingly submit myself to you. Forgive me for my arrogance and teach me to approach you in humility and surrender.

Written by David Shepherd

JOURNAL

Lord, you are worthy of worship, I...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

JANUARY 17: WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

**"We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."
2 Chronicles 20:12b**

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 20

This week, we focused on our call to repent to Jesus. Has your faith ever been shaken? This happened to some of the greatest people in the Bible. Elijah's faith brought fire as he killed 450 phony preachers, but he hid in a cave and begged to die when Jezebel came. David was known as a "man after His own heart," but the Psalms are full of his pain and questioning God. John the Baptist was confident that Jesus was the "One who takes away sin," yet, while in prison, he sent disciples to ask if Jesus was the One true God. Simon Peter was known for his boldness in affirming Jesus as the one and only Christ, yet he struggled with his faith when he denied Jesus 3 times. Jehoshaphat loved the Lord and had strong faith, but was afraid when he learned that multitudes were coming to face him in battle. If we lose our faith in Jesus when we are tested, we must repent and ask God for His forgiveness for our lack of trust that He will prevail in our lives. In Philippians, the Apostle Paul said, "I want to gain Him, be found in Him, know Him!" We must truly know the Lord and seek Him daily.

Reflect

Is there something in your life that you need to repent to God? When you are tested, do you keep your eyes on Jesus? What intentional steps will you take to keep your eyes on Christ this week?

Pray

Take some time right now to pray and ask God to search your heart for anything that needs repentance. If there is something, immediately submit it to the Lord and release your sin to Him. Ask God for His forgiveness and for help making the situation right.

Written by Pastor Tommy Goddard

JOURNAL

Lord, thank you for saving my soul and adding my name to the Book of Life. Give me the strength to ask for your forgiveness when I sin. Lord, teach me to walk with you each day and trust you with my life...

[illegible]

JANUARY 18: LOOKING AROUND

**“But I trust in you, O Lord, I say, ‘You are my God.’”
Psalm 31:14**

Scripture Reading: Psalm 31

Where are you today? I don't mean physically, but spiritually and emotionally. Are you on a mountaintop? Perhaps you find yourself in a valley or a challenging time. You are not alone. All of us find ourselves at different places as we walk the path of our spiritual journey. Sometimes we are tempted to wonder where God is in all of this. I can assure you that He is there in the midst of your life. In Psalm 31, David pours out his heart as he expresses his grief, fear, and confusion. Can you identify today? Life is full of both valleys and mountain tops. Today, take time to acknowledge God's presence in your life, no matter where you find yourself. Look to Him for help in your time of need. Trust Him as you take the next steps on your path, no matter what those steps are or where they will lead. David had learned to trust God and to move forward in confidence that God would be there to guide, provide, and protect him. He is there for you, too! God welcomes our authenticity when we are in distress. He will protect those who seek Him for refuge. When we express our trust in God, it transforms our anguish into worship.

Reflect

What is the Lord saying to you this morning from this text? What do you need to do to prepare yourself for worship today? Do you need to confess any sin? Express your trust in Him? Ask for His guidance?

Pray

Take some time right now to pray and ask God to renew your confidence in His presence, protection, and provision.

Written by Pastor Matthew Gibbs

JOURNAL

Lord, I know you are there today. I know that you love me and that you have a plan for my life. Thank you for your love and guidance today...

[illegible]

JANUARY 19: EVIDENCE OF GOD'S TRUSTWORTHINESS

"The Lord is my strength and my song and He has become my salvation..." Exodus 15:2

Scripture Reading: Exodus 15:1-18

Do you ever have difficulty trusting someone? When we think about trusting God, it may also be difficult, but for different reasons. We don't always know His exact plan for our lives or how He wants us to go about something. We may feel discouraged at times and wonder how we can trust Him.

Take a look at Exodus 15:1-18. This is the song of Moses, sung just after God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt and across the Red Sea. In this song, Moses recalls all that the Lord had just done for them, and he praises Him for it. Just before all of this, Moses had doubted and wondered how God would use him to get the Israelites out of Egypt! He didn't think God would be able to use him at first, but now we see his attitude change. When we go through life wondering how we can trust God with it all, take a look back on your life. We've all had very different experiences that shape us into who we are today, but one thing should be common among those who are saved: evidence of God working in our lives. If we take a look back, we should be able to see times where God provided, where He challenged us, and where He grew us as followers of Him. He's proven His trustworthiness time and time again! And if that's not convincing enough, look throughout all of Scripture. Through every single event we read about, He proves that we can trust Him with everything—our lives, our decisions, and our future.

Reflect

What is one thing in which you have been reluctant to trust God? How can you encourage a fellow believer in Christ to continue to trust God with everything?

Pray

Take a minute to think about and praise God for the evidence of His trustworthiness in your own life. Ask Him if there is any area in your life that you could trust Him in more?

JOURNAL

Lord, thank you for being so trustworthy. You've shown how faithful You are countless times throughout history. God help me to never forget that, and to never doubt You...

[illegible]

JANUARY 20: OPEN MY EYES

“Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.’” 2 Kings 6:17

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 6:8-23 and Psalm 31:15

Do you remember a time in your life when you were in such distress that you felt there was no way out? Maybe it was the loss of a job, financial debt, divorce, or the death of a loved one. When you looked around, all you could see was trouble, and everything seemed to be against you. This is exactly how the servant of Elisha felt when he saw the Syrian army surround them. He panicked and cried out to Elisha, “Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?” Sadly, his first reaction was to go to Elisha rather than God.

Elisha said, “Don’t be afraid! Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then Elisha prayed, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” The Bible says God answered his request, and his servant’s eyes were opened. He then saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire all around them. The servant’s perspective changed. He saw that God’s protection was greater than the enemy’s power.

This should remind us that when we look around with faith, we can see God’s hand. Faith doesn’t change our surroundings, but it does change what we see. On Sunday, Pastor Jim preached from Psalm 31. In verse 15, David did not say, “My times are in my enemies’ hands,” but rather, “My times are in Your hands.” No matter what’s happening around you, your life is secure in God’s care. When you look around with spiritual eyes, you’ll discover that you are never alone. God has surrounded your situation with His power, purpose, and peace.

Reflect

What is the Lord showing you from this text? What do you see when you look around today? Fear, stress, uncertainty? Ask God to open your eyes, not just to what’s around you, but to Who’s around you.

Pray

Lord, when I look around and see trouble, help me to not focus on my fears, but rather to open my eyes and see Your hand at work. Remind me that I am surrounded by Your presence, protected by Your power, and sustained by Your promises.

Written by Pastor Justin McLaughlin

Write down a time or event in your life when you thought everything was against you, but God revealed Himself to you through that situation...

[illegible]

JANUARY 21: BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

“...and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:24

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4:22–24

Do any of you remember sayings your parents or grandparents repeated when you were growing up? I’m sure many of you do. One saying my dad has engrained in my mind is, you guessed it, “Be aware of your surroundings!” When I started driving—every time I left the house—“Be aware of your surroundings!” Every Sunday evening as I headed back to Piedmont College—“Be aware of your surroundings!”

Even now, whether Mandi, the boys, and I are headed out of town or we’re taking students to camp, a retreat, or a mission trip, he still says it: “Be aware of your surroundings!” The older I get, the more I understand why he repeats it. There’s a world going on around us that we need to stay alert to, be aware of, and be ready to minister to at any moment. Ephesians 4 gives us a similar reminder: be aware, and remember that we have become a new creation in Christ. Our awareness includes remembering that Christ saved us in our messy, sinful state, and that we should daily recognize His goodness in our lives. When we come to Jesus, we are renewed. The renewal of our minds is a process where believers learn to think in new and right ways as we meditate on the truth of God’s Word. So what does that mean for the believer? It means we’re not just aware—we’re actively responding to God’s goodness every day. As you go through your day, be aware of your surroundings. Pause and reflect on God’s goodness in your life. And when the opportunity comes, share His goodness with someone who needs to hear the good news of Jesus. After all, they need to be aware of their surroundings too.

Reflect

Where have you seen God’s goodness in your life today? How is Christ shaping the way you live and grow right now? In what areas do you need to become more like Him? And what step can you take today to actively live out the mission of Christ?

Pray

Ask God to show you those areas of your life that you need to be more aware. Pray that He would give the boldness to share His good news to the lost. Let my awareness be focused on His goodness and on growing His kingdom.

JOURNAL

Lord, let me be more aware of what You are calling me to today. Let my thoughts be Your thoughts, and my awareness be focused only upon You...

[illegible]

JANUARY 22: PERSPECTIVE CHANGE

“But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.” Genesis 39:21

Scripture Reading: Genesis 39:21 and Acts 7:9-16

Perspective changes everything. Have you ever thought about the difference between standing at the top of the Grand Canyon and being down in the valley? Every year, countless people descend into those canyons. I hear it's beautiful! But imagine knowing the view from the top and then somehow forgetting it once you reach the bottom. You start your hike full of adrenaline, purpose, and excitement, holding onto the memory of what you saw. But then the trail gets steep, or the rafting becomes overwhelming, and suddenly it's hard to remember why you even started the journey.

Our faith can feel the same way. We're quick to praise God when we can see the big picture and recall how He's worked in our lives. But the moment we hit a rough patch or life becomes heavy, we forget. We lose sight of His faithfulness, and it becomes difficult to picture the ways He's sustained us before.

Joseph is a beautiful example of someone who didn't forget God's faithfulness, no matter his circumstances. From the time he was a boy, Joseph was blessed. He knew God and trusted Him deeply. Yet again and again he found himself in heartbreaking situations—sold into slavery by his own brothers, falsely accused, thrown into prison, and forgotten by people he helped. Still, I believe Joseph held onto a perspective that kept God's faithfulness front and center. He remembered those “top of the Grand Canyon” moments, and that perspective carried him through the valleys.

Reflect

When was the last time you praised God for all that He has done for you? How quick are you to forget about God's faithfulness when times get tough? What are some practical ways you can remember His faithfulness in hard times?

Pray

Take some time to praise God for what He has done. Ask Him to remind you of how He has been good to you in the past.

Written by Rachel Liverman

JOURNAL

Lord, thank you that you are faithful when I am not. Help me to consistently remember all that you have done for me...

[illegible]

JANUARY 23: SEEKING ANSWERS

“I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the LORD.” Psalm 31:6

We live in the “information age,” where data is produced and consumed faster than ever. Yet even with endless access, truth often slips through our fingers. Emotionally charged headlines, biased algorithms, and crowd-sourced opinions all fight for our attention—twisting facts and distracting our hearts. In all the noise, the blind still lead the blind as people search for real answers in the wrong places.

In 2 Timothy 3:7, Paul warns that in the last days people will be “ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth.” It makes you wonder—has knowledge itself become one of our modern idols? We usually name idols like money, success, or comfort, but sometimes we chase worldly insight more eagerly than God’s wisdom. Idols grow out of anything we love, trust, or depend on more than Him.

The psalmist says he “hates those who pay regard to worthless idols”—not condemning people, but rejecting empty sources of hope. Instead, he anchors his heart in the Lord alone.

So let’s pause and ask ourselves: Who do I rely on for wisdom? Do I go to God first—or to news feeds, voices online, or popular opinion? What truly shapes my peace, my security, and my decisions?

May we invite the Lord to search our hearts, expose any misplaced confidence, and draw us back to the way everlasting—where truth isn’t found in more information, but in Him.

Reflection Questions:

Do I spend more time seeking insight from people than wisdom from Scripture? What sources shape my perspective more than prayer does? How can I quiet competing voices so I can clearly hear God’s?

Pray

Lord, I trust you for wise counsel. I choose to first run to you. You are my peace, my security, and my all. Search my heart, expose any misplaced confidence, and lead me back to the way everlasting.

Written by David Shepherd

JOURNAL

Lord, I trust in you...

[illegible]

JANUARY 24: LOOKING AROUND YOUR “MOUNTAIN”

“I say to you, ‘if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.’” Matthew 17:20

Read Matthew 17:14-21

This week, we focused on trusting Jesus. Sincere trust grows through prayer and fasting. Jesus’ disciples struggled to perform miracles because of their lack of faith. Matthew 17:20-21 says, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” My Great-Grandfather had a large hill on his Atlanta property in the 1950s. He trusted God to move this “mountain,” so he would not have to drive around it every day while tending to his crops. For years, he committed it to prayer and fasting. Our family and church congregation heard my Great-Grandfather’s consistent prayer request many times. One day, construction workers appeared on his doorstep and asked to buy dirt from his “mountain” for a nearby project. Because of his faith and trust, his “mountain” was finally gone!

Reflect

Is there a “mountain” you need moved? Do you trust God has the power to move your “mountain?” What intentional steps will you take to increase your trust in Christ this week?

Pray

Take a moment now to pray and ask God for the strength to trust Him more. Commit your faith, hope, and trust to Him each morning. Ask God to place spiritual leaders around you to keep you accountable as you release complete trust in the Lord.

Written by Pastor Tommy Goddard

JOURNAL

Lord, show me how to strengthen my trust in you. Lord, teach me how to release my “mountains” to you and trust you with my life...

[illegible]

JANUARY 25: LOOKING AHEAD

“Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you He will never permit the righteous to be moved.” Psalm 55:22

Scripture Reading: Psalm 55

Our passage today brings back memories of a song my children used to sing by Rob Evans, the Donut Man. It was based on 1 Peter 5:7, “casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.” The song had a calypso style and was such fun to sing. The words went: “Cast your burdens on Jesus, for He cares for you... Highya Highya Highya... lift Jesus Highya. Lowa Lowa Lowa... stomp Satan Lowa.” I can still picture us dancing around the room, singing and celebrating that simple but powerful truth.

In Psalm 55, David shares the deep grief he felt after being betrayed by a friend. Hurt from someone close to us often cuts the deepest. But David shows us what to do with that kind of pain—he brings his anguish directly to the Lord. He pours out his heart honestly because he has learned that God’s goodness, love, and care truly have no end. David knows God sees his situation, understands his sorrow, and is fully able to comfort and sustain him.

There is no burden too heavy or situation too complicated for our God. He knows our deepest wounds and our greatest longings. He is the perfect judge, the perfect comforter, and the One who carries us when we cannot carry ourselves.

Just like David, we can cast our burdens on Jesus. We can trust Him to sustain, protect, and provide for us. And even in the middle of hardship, we can lift Jesus “Highya” while He stomps Satan “Lowa”!

Reflect

What is the Lord saying to you this morning from this text? What do you need to do to prepare yourself for corporate worship today? What burden do you need to take to the Lord today? Be reminded that Jesus cares for you and He is ready to take your burdens today.

Pray

Take some time right now to pray and to cast your burden on Jesus because He cares for you.

Written by Pastor Matthew Gibbs

JOURNAL

Lord, I...

[illegible]

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Over the past few weeks, we have spent intentional time studying, praying, fasting, and seeking the Lord. And He has responded in ways that have truly been life-changing. When you experience God like that, you don't want to slide back into the old status quo. You want to keep walking in that same closeness and power. Once you taste the goodness and greatness of God, nothing else satisfies the hunger of your soul but God Himself.

The psalmist said it best: "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him... those who seek the Lord lack no good thing" (Psalm 34). Our hope is that this season of prayer and fasting becomes a springboard—not a finish line—into a new way of life with Him.

There's a story told about Watchman Nee, the Chinese Christian leader. One of his disciples frequently pressed him, asking how he could experience a deeper, more intimate relationship with God. The young man persisted, determined to learn the "secret." As the story goes, Nee suddenly grabbed him, threw him into a shallow pond, and held his head underwater. The man fought and struggled desperately for a breath. When Nee finally released him, he gasped for air. Nee said, "When you desire to know God with the same passion you desired that next breath, then you will have discovered the secret."

When we hunger and thirst for God with that kind of intensity—when we recognize we cannot live without Him—He meets us. He reveals Himself, draws near, and allows us to know Him more deeply than we ever imagined.

From this day forward, may we hunger and thirst for God with that same passion. And may we continue in the disciplines of prayer and fasting as we seek His face and walk in the fullness of His presence.

GOING DEEPER...

For further personal study on prayer and fasting, consider reading one or more of the following books:

The Essentials of Prayer, by E.M. Bounds

The Doctrine of Prayer, by T.W. Hunt

Praying Successfully, by Charles Spurgeon

The Circle Maker, by Mark Batterson

Prayer, by Dan Earley

The Power of Prayer and Fasting, by Ronnie Floyd

Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough, by Elmer Towns

A Hunger for God, by John Piper



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