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Harvest Church Family and Friends

What a joy to have you join us in our 21 day fast. This experience is going to be beneficial to both your personal and spiritual life. While you follow the guideline, please know that we encourage you to remain open to the Spirit of God as He will speak to everyone differently.

If this is your first time, I congratulate you and offer you great encouragement. If you have fasted before, then you already know that the power of God is real and responds to the sacrifices we make for His glory.

Should you have any questions, you can always contact the church office. We are praying that God will add extensive membership growth to the ministry, personal growth to members, an abundant of ministry volunteers, and so much more so that the works of His kingdom can be accomplished. We thank you for joining us and we are excited about your further growth in Christ! Until later, remain blessed and abundant in your faith.

Pastor K. Solomon Killiebrew Jr.

Times Options for Our Fast

- A) 12 noon – 1 p.m. or 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
- B) 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- C) 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. or 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- D) Sun-Up – Sun Down

Basic Steps to Successful Fasting & Prayer

How to Begin Your Fast

How you begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these steps to fasting, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

Step 1: Set Your Objective

Although we are fasting together as a congregation and community, what are some specific reasons you are fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically in addition to the printed prayers in this journal.

Step 2: Make Your Commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake, even if it is not to the same level as the entire congregation. Jesus implied that all of His followers should fast (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14-15). For Him it was a matter of when believers would fast, not if they would do it. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

1. How long you will fast: one meal, one day, one week, several weeks, 21 days, 40 days. (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)
2. The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, or water and juices: what kinds of juices will you drink and how often)
3. What physical or social activities will you restrict.
4. How much time each day will you devote to prayer and God's Word.

Making these commitments ahead of time will help you sustain your fast when physical temptations and life's pressures tempt you to abandon it.

Step 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is repentance. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

1. Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins.
2. Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness (1st John 1:9)
3. Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; 17:3-4)
4. Make a restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you
5. Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1st John 5:14-15
6. Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1-2)
7. Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others (Psalm 48:9-10; 103:1-8, 11-13)
8. Begin your time fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6)
9. Do NOT underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16-17)

Step 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision.

Physical preparation makes the drastic change in your eating routine a little easier so that you can turn your full attention to the Lord in prayer.

1. Do not rush into your fast
2. Prepare your body by eating smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.
3. Eat raw fruit and vegetables for two days before starting your fast, depending on the kind of fast you will do.

Step 5: Put Yourself on a Schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Morning

1. Begin your day in praise and worship
2. Read and meditate on God's Word
3. Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you to will and to do His good pleasures according to Philippians 2:13
4. Invite God to use you. Ask Him to show you how to influence your community, family, friends, church, and beyond.
5. Pray for His vision for your life and empowerment to do His will.

Noon

1. Return to prayer and God's Word
2. Take a short prayer walk if you are able

3. Spend time in intercessory prayer for your community and for the people we are trying to reach for Christ.

Evening

1. Get alone for an unhurried time of 'seeking His face.'
2. If others are fasting with you, meet together for prayer.
3. Avoid television, social media or any other distractions that may dampen your spiritual focus.

When possible, begin and end each day for a brief time of praise and thanksgiving to God. Longer periods of time with our Lord in prayer and study of His Word are often better spent alone.

Tips of Juice Fasting

1. Drinking fruit juices will decrease your hunger pains and give you some natural sugar energy. The taste and lift will motivate and strengthen you to continue.
2. The best juices are made from fresh lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. In cold weather, you may enjoy a warm vegetable broth.
3. Mix acidic juices (orange and tomato) with water for your stomach sake.
4. Avoid caffeinated drinks. And avoid chewing gum or mints (although you may need some J). They often stimulate digestive actions in your stomach.

Breaking Your Fast

When your designated time for fasting is finished, you will begin to eat again. But how you break your fast is extremely important for your physical and spiritual well-being.

Step 6: End Your Fast Gradually

Begin eating gradually. Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid foods to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, even dangerous,

consequences. Try several smaller meals or snacks each day. If you end your fast gradually, the beneficial physical and spiritual effects will result in continued good health.

Here are some simple suggestions to help you end your fast properly:

1. Break an extended water fast with fruit such as watermelon (If in season)

2. While continuing to drink fruit and vegetable juices, add the following: **1st Day:** Add a raw salad. **2nd Day:** Add baked or boiled potato, no butter or seasoning. **3rd Day:** Add a steamed vegetable.

Thereafter: Begin to reintroduce your normal diet.

3. Gradually return to regular eating with several small snacks during the first few days. Start with a little soup and fresh fruit such as watermelon or cantaloupe. Advance to a few table-spoon of solid foods such as raw fruits and vegetables or a raw salad and baked potato.

A Final Word Step 7: Expect Results

If you sincerely humbled yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face; if you consistently meditate on His Word, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers.

A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infillings of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. A 24-hour fast each week has been greatly rewarding too many Christians.

It takes times to build your spiritual fasting muscles. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. You may have tried to fast too long the first time out, or you may need to

strengthen your understanding and resolve. We here at Harvest are here to help you. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honor you for your faithfulness.

I encourage you to join us in this fasting and prayer period until we truly experience revival in our homes, our churches, our businesses, our beloved nation, and throughout the world.

Types of Fasting

A Regular Fast – Traditionally, a regular fast means refraining from eating all food. Most people still drink water or juice during a regular fast. When Jesus fasted in the desert, the Bible says, "After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry." This verse does not mention Jesus being thirsty.

A Partial Fast – This type of fast generally refers to omitting a specific meal from your diet or refraining from certain types of food. Daniel 10:2-3 says, "At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over." In Daniel 1:12, they restricted their diet to vegetables and water: "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink."

A Full Fast – These fasts are complete no food no drink. Acts 9:9 describes when Paul went on a full fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus: "For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything." Esther also called for this type of fast in Esther 4:15-16: "Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai. Go gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." It is

recommended that this type of fast be done with extreme caution and not for extended periods of time.

A Sexual Fast – 1st Corinthians 7:3-6 says, “The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. DO NOT deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of lack of self-control.

Although not mentioned in the Bible (Because it didn’t exist), Christians today commit to fasting from other activities as well. Some give up entertainment such as TV or movies to concentrate on prayer. Others fast from sleep or another activity such as Social Media for a specified period of time. The ultimate goal is to deny yourself something that is frequent in your life and replace it with time with God.

Ok! Are you ready to begin your fast? I am excited about the spiritual renewal you will personally experience and the church renewal we will experience together. I have a feeling that God is up to something BIG in your life and the life of our church here at Harvest. Remember, if you fall off during your fasting journey, that’s alright. Make a decision and get back on it and journey with us for these twenty-one days. I don’t know about you, but I am ready to receive my blessings that I know are on the way.

35 Things to Pray for During our Church-Wide Fast

1. Pray for your personal spiritual renewal
2. Pray for your family home blessings
3. Pray for your rapid church growth
4. Pray for increase financial resources of the church
5. Pray for forgiveness towards others who have hurt you
6. Pray for increased ministry volunteers
7. Pray for the ability to reach youth in our community
8. Pray for positive church partnerships
9. Pray for the academic excellence of your children
10. Pray for favor from wealthy individuals for donations
11. Pray for worship experiences that are life-changing
12. Pray for an increased intergenerational congregation
13. Pray for the ability to reach our local community
14. Pray for the homeless and the hungry
15. Pray for the safety and security of our facility
16. Pray for our local and national elected officials
17. Pray for family members you have not seen for some time
18. Pray for friends who have lost loved ones
19. Pray for those who are unemployed
20. Pray for an increased presence of young adults (20s/30s) in church
21. Pray for the seniors of our church and our community
22. Pray for lost souls to find Christ
23. Pray for the current and formerly incarcerated
24. Pray for students in local and distant colleges and universities
25. Pray for members who are launching/own their personal business
26. Pray for the success of married couples
27. Pray for the mental and emotional recovery of divorcees
28. Pray for the for those who are addicted to drugs and alcohol
29. Pray for local and national pastors who lead congregations
30. Pray for the guidance of youth on social media
31. Pray for the decrease in human trafficking
32. Pray for the increase knowledge of the Word of God for people
33. Pray for single parents who are struggling to raise their children
34. Pray for our teachers in our local schools
35. Pray for whatever else God lays upon your heart

Foods to Eat During the Fast

Vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried): All vegetables (including potatoes and squashes, as long as they are not fried)

- **Fruits (fresh, frozen):** All fruits
- **Whole grains and legumes:** All whole grains including brown rice, quinoa, corn, wild rice, bulgur wheat, farro, millet, oats, quinoa, popcorn, and all legumes including beans, lentils, peas, chickpeas. Also includes whole grain pasta
- **Healthy liquid oils:** including olive, canola, corn, grapeseed, peanut, sunflower, safflower
- **Nuts & seeds:** including nut butters with no added sugars
- **Drinks:** Water, Tea, 100% natural fruit juices

Fasting Quotes for Encouragement

“When people pray and fast, there’s an increase of Holy spiritual activity.”

“We fast because we have tasted and seen the goodness of God and are desperately hungry for more of Him.”

“Through prayer, fasting, and studying, God will answer.”

“To strengthen prayer, to seek God’s guidance, to express grief, to see deliverance or protection, to express repentance and return to God, to humble oneself before God, to express concern for the work of God, to minister to the needs of others, to overcome temptation and dedicate yourself to God, and to express love and worship to God.”

“Fasting, coupled with mighty prayer, is powerful. It can fill our minds with the revelations of the Spirit. It can strengthen us against times of temptation.”

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” -Galatians 5:16

“To be a Christian without prayer and fasting is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

“Fasting restrains our physical pleasure, but it enhances our spiritual pleasure. Our greatest pleasure comes by fasting on the person of Jesus.”

“Fasting is not an option but an assumed practice for the serious minded follower of Jesus.”

“Three duties of every Christian are giving, praying and fasting.”

Day 1

To Continue to Seek God First

Jeremiah 29:13 You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all of your heart.

1st Chronicles 29:13 Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the Lord your God.

Colossians 3:2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

During our next 21 days we want to chase God deliberately through prayers and fasting. We want to make sure that we are deliberately focused on him and seeking His presence. We will deliberately choose times to listen to His Word and His voice. We want to make sure that we position ourselves to hear from God for inspiration and/or dedication.

As we begin this process, I want you to answer some questions to yourself. What will you do to remain committed to this process? The answer is very simple.....DECIDE! That's all you have to do, DECIDE that this will be your focus for the next 21 days and you will not allow anyone or anything to cause you to lose focus on where you trust that the Lord will lead you as an individual and us as a church congregation. Every day look for God by giving Him your whole heart, mind, and soul. Look for God through people, circumstances, The Bible, dreams, experiences, and so much more.

It will require intention, effort, desire, and time. But I can guarantee you this, it will be so worth it as your relationship with Him grows, develops, and you fall more in love with Him. **Hebrews 11:6** says

that God will reward those who earnestly seek after the God of this universe who loves you completely and desires to walk with you daily? The reward will be great because God is great!

Reflect:

- How will you continue to pray daily and seek God through Scripture now that you have begun your 21 days of prayer and fasting?
- Will you pray daily for a hunger and a thirst to chase after God and seek His presence?
- What will you commit to intentionally doing so that you are seeking God daily?
- Pray that this time of prayer and fasting will accumulate into a beautiful time of worship as we begin this spiritual journey together as a Christian family.

Day 2

To Be Filled with God's Glory

Psalms 22:27-28: All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before Him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and He rules over the nations.

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the seas.

At a time when Israel was rebellious, immoral, and indifferent towards God, Moses prayed, "Lord, show me Your glory!" God was quick to respond to this prayer. And Moses saw with his own eyes a portion of the glory of God. But he also heard the voice of God declaring His glory:

God defined His glory by describing His nature. "I am the Lord God! I am compassionate, merciful, loving and forgiving. And I am perfectly just and will not excuse the guilty."

"Yahweh! The Lord God! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations."

Exodus 34:6-7

So, when we pray for God's glory to come, we are praying for His nature to overwhelm our nature. We are seeking His nature to drive

out the influence of sin nature, demonic nature, or any influence in a region or culture that is counter to him.

This hour for us is not unlike the time when Moses prayed this great prayer. We too are at a time when our nation and the world have never been so contentious with God. The name of Jesus stirs deep resentment in many people. Holiness is rare. Morality is in a rapid decline. And the Church of Jesus Christ is in a battle for its existence. In America, 3,500-4,000 churches a year close their doors, thank God Harvest is still open.

Churches lose 2.7 million people a year to nominalism or secularism. And 1,500 pastors a month are leaving the ministry, thank God Pastor Killiebrew is remaining the course Moses could have prayed, "God meet our needs." But this circumstance demanded so much more than "meet our needs." He prayed, "Show me Your glory!"

We are in a desperate place today. We join our hearts in intercession to pray, "God, show us Your glory!" Overwhelm the numbness of our hearts with Your fire. Revive me with Your presence. Show Your glory in our church. Show us Your glory in America and all over the world. "Father God, show us Your glory!"

Reflect

- Will you begin to pray, "Lord, show us Your glory" so that the world will see and know Him?
- What does it look like to be the 'salt and light' in the work place, school, or neighborhood you live in?

Day 3

I Want to Feel Your Presence and Power

Psalm 43:3-4 Send me Your light and Your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy mountain, to the place where You dwell. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise You with the lyre, O God, my God.

As you are on day 3 of this fasting journey, I want you to ask God to allow His presence and power to take over your life and direct you in the path that He has assigned for you. Trust me, when you get into your purpose and your will, every day you rise from your bed, you will know that you are getting ready to make a difference.

God is speaking to you right at this moment, can you hear Him? What do you think He is saying to you?

Reflect:

- Have you met and encountered the Holy Spirit of God? When and where was that? What led up to that encounter?
- How are you different because of that moment? What has changed in and around you because of that?
- As we continue in our fasting journey, where has God shown up for you?

Prayer

God, I pray that Your Spirit comes down in real and powerful ways in my life. Come alongside me today and demonstrate who You are. Show me the power of Your radical love, show me who I am because of what You have done, and show me how You can impact those around me with Your will and love.

Come alongside me in my interactions with others, in my conversations with You, and in how I treat my family and my friends. Be near to me, show me Your presence and Your power, and make me a different person because of how You love me. But more than anything, I pray that You show up in my life.

I acknowledge that there is no church, there is no faith without You, and so I pray that You are present and vibrant in all that I think, say and do. In Jesus name, Amen!

Day 4

Blessings Upon My Family

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

1st Timothy 3:5 For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

Genesis 2:24 Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Ephesians 5:21 Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Every family comes with challenges, including yours! You need not feel embarrassed or weird because of any family challenges or struggles you may have, it is a part of life. You must always be thankful for your family because whether you like them or not, they are your family.

If God wanted you to be birthed into any other family, He had the power to do so. Which means that there is a reason why God has given you the family that you are in, and it may be so that you can be the light for many of them to come to know Him for themselves. Sometimes as Christian we tear church members and others more Christ-like than we do our own parents, spouses, children, cousins, aunts, uncles and others. Before we were ever apart of a church family, we were already connected to our birth family.

The number one goal of the enemy is to destroy families. His methods varies depending upon every family. Methods such as

abandonment, disrespect, words of defeat, lack of support, unforgiveness, etc. There are times when the enemy can enter your house through you on any given day, which is why you have to ask God to help you become the light and not an element of darkness.

As you begin day 4 of our fasting journey, ask God to make you more valuable to your family by the way you demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to each of them. This does not mean that you have to accept disrespect or dishonor, but this simply means that even in your moments of displeasures, you will seek to act in a way that is godly and Christ-like. I know you can do it because you already have everything you need, which is the power and presence of Jesus Christ! Go forth and become a better family member starting today.

Reflect:

- When was the last time you told members in your household that you love them? If you haven't, why not?
- In what ways do you show your family support?
- If there are people in your family who have hurt you that you have not forgiven, I challenge you to reach out to them today and let them know that you forgive them.
- Ask the Lord to give you the strength you need and the words to say so you can become the godly leader to your family members.

Prayer:

Father God, I ask that you will help me become an example of what it means to be a true Christian and follower of Jesus Christ. Help me to speak words of life into my family and loved ones. Give me a heart of forgiveness towards others as you have been forgiven to me on many occasions. I thank you for my family because they are truly a gift from you. I promise Lord from this day forward to become better in my Christian walk in my home because of this fasting journey. Bless my household with your presence and I give you everyone I love. In Jesus name, Amen!

Day 5

Working in Ministry

Ephesians 4:12: To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ....

Matthew 25:40: And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to Me.

Colossians 3:23-24: Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ!

Have you ever wondered to yourself how is that the church operates from week to week? Have you ever said to yourself that you are going to get involved in a ministry but you have not made a move yet? Have you ever wondered how other churches are able to accomplish a lot? Let me give you the answer. Any church that you see making a huge impact in their communities and in the lives of people must have many hands working together to achieve great victories.

Yes, there are staff members in churches, but the idea function of staff members and ministry leaders are to support the many volunteers who commit to giving their share of time in order to advance God's kingdom of earth. In order for us to impact the lives of youth, families, addicts, un-churched, communities, and others, we must get more people involved.

The Bible shares with us that everyone has been given at least one gift, and that gift can be used for assisting in building the kingdom

of God. What is your skill? What are your connections? What brings joy to your heart? How can you use your profession to advance the church? What relationships do you have that can help advance various aspects of the ministry? It is really that simple! Using what you have to help your church go to the next level.

As you are on day 5 of your fasting journey, make a decision that you are going to be committed to finding a way to get involved in a ministry in our church. Even if you are not an official member, you can still become involved in ministry. On behalf of the many members and lives that will be blessed because of your involvement, I am thanking you in advance.

Reflect:

- When will you connect with a ministry? _____
- Which ministry would you like to join? _____
- What is something you know you can do? _____
- Are you ready to make a difference? () Yes () Yes () Yes
- How many hours a week can you give to the church? _____

Prayer:

Father God thank you for reminding me on day 6 of my spiritual fast that I am required to play my role in the advancement of your kingdom here at Mount Ararat Church. Please show me the ministry where I can be most effective and have an impact. Lord, I want to do my part and give of my time to the church because of how much You have given to me, especially through the gift of Salvation. I make a new commitment today that I will serve You through serving people as we continue to Sow in Love, Plant in Faith, Grow in the Word, and Reaping in the Promise. In Jesus name, Amen!

Day 6

To Uphold Righteousness and Justice

Psalm 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

My stomach dropped to into my shoes as my eyes grew big. I had just heard that there are more slaves in the world today than at any other point in history. How can that be true? In the progressive post-abolition culture that we live in. How can there be over 27 million slaves worldwide? And how could there have been over 1,000 calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in the past four years from the state of Michigan? Surely slavery doesn't happen today. But it does, and the reason is because there is heartbreaking injustice in the world.

As Christ followers, God makes it clear that we are to take a stand against injustice and fight for those who do not have the ability to fight for themselves. "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow." (Isaiah 1:17NIV). When I compare this command to the statistics of injustice, domestic abuse, police brutality, racial profiling, so many others, I begin to feel a call to action. How do we even begin to act justly when injustice seems to be taking over? Where do we start?

The best place that we can start is where many great Biblical leaders before us have started. With prayer. Look to the example of men like Moses, Ezra, and Nehemiah who turned first to God and pleaded for His guidance and intervention. These men saw God

change the attitudes of kings and rulers to move in ways that were beyond what they had imagined. The rulers of their day who were once set against God allowed a nation to be freed from slavery, a temple to be rebuilt by an exiled people, and a city wall to be built up in only 52 days. Each of these men were guided in their work by the One who has a passion for those under unjust oppression.

There is an overwhelming amount of work to be done to solve the injustices in our world today. So, where do we begin to stem the tide of heartbreak? The best place, the only place to start, is on our knees asking God to give us His wisdom and discernment as we work to uphold justice in our circles of influence. Don't hesitate to ask boldly for Him to move the hearts of those with greater influence as well— our leaders, politicians, and media. Our call is to uphold righteousness and justice in the world around us, but God, just like the leaders whose stories are recorded in the Bible, God does not leave us alone in that task.

Reflect:

- What injustice cause your heart to break? _____
- Where is God giving you influence to fight for injustice?

Prayer:

Father God, on day 6 of my spiritual fasting, Your word show that You care deeply for those that are suffering under injustice. Thank You for Your father heart that upholds the oppressed. I ask that You would be with our leaders and work through them as You have so many times throughout history. Give them a passion to establish just laws and the wise discernment they need to solve issues. Where there is a lack of passion, move in their hearts to create an urgency to uphold justice. Give me a fire to stand up for those who are suffering all kinds of injustice. Show me how I can work to influence those around me, and move in my own community to show Your love and compassion. May Your Kingdom come even now. In Jesus name, Amen!

Day 7

8 Principles for Thinking Better Thoughts

1. Stay Morally and Spiritually Grounded: Spend time with God every day; pray about big decisions; and listen carefully to your conscious. Your adversary wants you to behave impulsively and make poor decisions; God wants you to behave rationally and make wise decisions. Trust God!

2. Monitor Your Thoughts and Dispute the Exaggerated Beliefs That Lead to Unproductive Thinking: Not all thoughts are created equal. A simply way to improve the quality of your thoughts is to recognize— and then make the conscious effort to reject— irrational, exaggerated, or unhelpful thoughts. So, if you can tell your thoughts are heading in the wrong direction, take deep breaths, say a little prayer, and replace those counter-productive thoughts with rational thoughts.

3. Be a Realistic Optimist: On the road of life, chronic pessimism is a dead-end street. So, don't invent imaginary catastrophes, and be open to the possibility that good things will happen, and soon. Foster a realistic sense of self-confidence (In God), and avoid worst-case-thinking. Whatever your circumstances, say no to pessimism and yes to hope.

4. Make Peace with Your Past and Forgive Everybody: Bitterness in intellectual poison. If you remain stuck in the past, you will spoil the present and sabotage the future. So, forgive everybody (including yourself) immediately and permanently. And if you can't seem to forgive, keep praying about it until you can.

5. Learn to Accept the Things You Cannot Change and Work Instead on the Things You Can Change: Refuse to fret over the

things you cannot control (weather, other people, etc.). Do your best and let God take care of the rest.

6. Learn to Control Your Emotions Before They Control You:

Exaggerated thoughts have a way of revving up in your emotions. And emotional outpourings can have bitter consequences. So, if you feel your emotional temperature beginning to rise, call time-out before you erupt, not after. True wisdom is knowing how to step away from a combustible situation before it ignites.

7. Be Thankful and Learn to Live in the Precious Present: Learn to focus on your blessings, not your hardships. The Lord has given you more blessings than you can count, but it never hurts to try. And while you are trying to make an inventory of God's gifts, remember Psalm 118:24 "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

8. If Your Thoughts Seem Seriously Distorted, Seek Help ASAP:

Sometimes, faulty thinking has physiological causes. Thankfully, medical conditions like depression or bipolar disorder are readily treatable. So, if there's any question about the state of your mental health, seek help immediately. My friend Pastor Steven Carter says "Therapy is not a sign that you are crazy, but it means that you love yourself enough to keep from going crazy."

Reflect:

- What are unproductive thoughts that I think to myself? • How can I improve my thoughts to become more positive?
- What are some blessings in my life that I have overlooked?

Day 8

Making God First Place in Your Life

Exodus 20:3 Do not have other gods besides Me.

Psalms 128:1 How happy is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways.

1st John 4:19 We love Him, because He first loved us.

If you want to improve your life during this spiritual fast, it helps to strengthen your relationship with God. As you think about the nature of your relationship with your Creator, remember this: you will always have some type of relationship with Him---it is inevitable that your life must be lived in relationship to God. The question is not if you will have a relationship with Him; the burning question is whether that relationship will be one that seeks to honor Him....or not.

Are you willing to place God first in your life? And, are you will to welcome Him into your heart? Unless you can honestly answer these questions with a resounding yes, you will constantly be worrying about things that are better left up to Him. Thankfully, God is always available; He's always ready to listen; and, He's waiting to hear from you now. The rest, of course, is up to you.

To minimize your worries and maximize your joy, you must guard your heart by putting God in His rightful place---first place! Today during your fast, focus on this thought: God deserves first place in my life, and I deserve the experience of putting Him first.

Billy Graham once said, "Learn to shut out distractions that keep you from truly worshipping God." Decide today that God is going to

be your focus when you wake up in the mornings, your thoughts throughout the day, and your comfort at night when you are preparing to end your day. God wants nothing but the best for you, and your adversary wants to do whatever he can to keep from looking to God for your strength and support. Contrary to common beliefs, the most important thing you must decide to do every day is to keep Christ first in your head and your heart.

When your children get on your nerve, family members annoy you, coworkers upset you, bills discourage you, haters plot against you, health decline on you, loved one part from you, and life seems as if it is falling apart, remember to keep God in first place and He will guide you through these trials and lead you to your victory.

Reflect:

- What areas of my life do I need to place God first in?
- Have there been areas where God was first and I moved Him?
- I will begin every morning with prayer and reading a few Scripture verses or listening to something that is spiritually positive.

Day 9

It's Time to Clean Up Our Communities

Psalms 25:18 Look on my affliction and my distress and take away my sins.

Nehemiah 1:6b, 8-9: I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house have committed against You. We have acted very wickedly toward You. Remember the instruction You gave Your servant Moses, saying, "If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to Me and obey My commands, then, even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from their and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for My Name."

In a meeting of diverse Christian leaders someone said, "The church in our city needs to repent." One response to this statement was, "What do we repent for?" Then the individual asking the question went on to talk about all the good things the church in that city was doing and finished by trying to make the case that there was a need for repentance and the seeking of forgiveness from God, but rather that the favor of God was resting on the city.

1st John 1:8-10 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us."

The Scriptures reveal the sinfulness of cities such as Sodom, Gomorrah, Nineveh, and other cities too. Those that repented and

turned to God were blessed and those that did not, well, some of them do not even exist anymore.

God loves to take a sinful city and turn it into a revival center. He did just that in Antioch, Ephesus, Jerusalem, Nineveh, and more recently in Cali, Columbia, Fiji, Guatemala, Uganda, Brazil, and hopefully very soon in our community (Rossville, Chattanooga). How does it happen that an entire community repents to the extent that it get God's attention and a transformation begins to occur? It begins by individuals getting honest with God, confessing their sins, and crying to Him for forgiveness and freedom.

The real question is not, can it happen in our community, but will you allow it to happen in you? Let's be honest before God about those things in our heart. Confess our sins to Him and repent.

Reflect:

- Imagine what our church (Mount Ararat) and community would look like if a true transformation occurred among Christ followers. What are some things that would look different?
- Will you pray for the revival to begin in you?
- In what ways can you become a better member of your local church to begin this revival?

Day 10

Not Today Satan

James 4:7: Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Ephesians 6:16: In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one...

John 10:10 The devil comes to kill, steal and destroy; but I come that you might have life and have it more abundantly

Have you ever had a day where it just felt like the enemy was trying to get the best of you? I mean, hitting areas in your life that just simply send you to pieces. Well guess what? He's just doing his job, and he is good at it. The devil has been trying to distract your focus ever since you made a decision to make Christ your Lord and Savior. You need to tell the devil, Not Today!

Today your life is going to become filled with happiness as you begin to focus on what the Lord has been doing for you and in you. The fact that you have committed to this journey of fasting and is now on day 11, the enemy is not happy. He was expecting you to quit in the first week, but you are already in week two and growing in your faith.

Jesus Himself told the devil get behind Him because He knew that the devil was trying to get Jesus distracted from His purpose, which was to sacrifice His life for our lives. Therefore, since Jesus has already placed the enemy behind Him, we too, through Jesus, have been empowered to do likewise.

I want to share with you a few ways to tell the devil "Not Today."

1. Focus on Your Blessings Instead of Your Burdens: I don't care how bad you may think your life is, there is someone who would love to trade lives with you. Be thankful that your situation has not eliminated your existence.

2. Pray for Another Individual: Whenever you are able to pray for another person, it frees you from the worries that you have regarding your own life. This does not mean that you neglect your responsibility, it simply means that you think of others above yourself.

3. Find a Reason to Smile: There is something you can think about that will make you smile. Go ahead and think about whatever that is right now. See, aren't you feeling a little better? The Word of God teach us that laughter is medicine for our souls.

Reflect:

- Decide that the devil is not going to distract you from your happiness regardless of what happens today.
- When you find yourself most unhappy? What can you do to reverse those feelings?
- Do you believe the lies of the devil or the promises of God?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father I ask that you will give me the power to resist any demonic influence upon my life today. I speak Your power into me today as I interact with others. Please control my emotions and my attitude. Place in me in the mind of Christ, and allow me to think about things that are positive. I thank you in advance for every blessing that I will receive on today, and I am happy that this day will end with me growing in my faith and drawing closer to You. This is my prayer, in Jesus name, Amen!

Day 11

Stay Tuned for Coming Attractions

Jeremiah 29:11: For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Philippians 4:19: And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 40:31: But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Have you ever been to the movies and irritated because you have to sit through previews of upcoming movies? You are ready to see one movie, and they have the nerve to show you other movies that will come out in a few days, weeks, or even months. You hear the voice that says, “Stay tuned for coming attractions.” Sometimes you get excited based on the previews and say to yourself, “I am definitely going to see that.”

Likewise, although you are sitting today wherever you are, if you listen carefully, God is speaking to your heart right now and saying those same words, “Stay tuned for coming attractions.” I want you to believe in faith that what God has for your future is better than what you could even imagine. However, the key is that like Isaiah says, you have to remain faithful and wait on God to bring to you what He has for you in His own time.

As you continue to wait in faith, know that everything you have been through in your life is going to work out for your good in order for God to get the glory. Yes! Even the worst of the worst, it too will

work out for your good. This is why you have to remain focused on God and your walk with Christ because what God has for you in your future is too bright for your eyes to even behold in this moment.

Therefore, while you are waiting on God, get to work and grow in your prayer life and in your love for others near and far. Your future will become a direct result of the lives you touch today and the ministry impact you make for the kingdom of God here on earth. I am congratulating you now for what I know God is going to unfold in your life. I encourage you during this fast, thank God for all of the wonderful coming attractions that eyes have not seen and ears have not heard?

Reflect:

- Are your dreams big enough to the point that they can't be achieved unless God intervenes? If they are not, you are dreaming too small.
- Can you see some coming attractions in your future that makes you plan to show up for what you can see in your life?
- What are some things in your future that you desire God to do for you?

Day 12

From Defeat to Victory

1st Corinthians 15:57: But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:37: ...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Deuteronomy 20:4: For the Lord your God is He who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.

Romans 8:31: What then shall they say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us.

A story is told of a young man who lived in Houston, Texas who was being bullied by his peers. Every day they would take money from him, make him steal things from his home, and cause him to have to fight for his survival. What he didn't know was that the entire time the school principal was observing all of these actions from his office window. Just when the time came that was going too far, the principal gathered the names of the bullies, called them to his office, expelled them from the school, and informed the young student that he has been paying attention the entire time, and the situation has been handled.

I want you to know that the same is true of God and of you. When it seems as if you are living in defeat after defeat, know that your Heavenly Father is observing the attacks from the enemy upon your life. And at the right time, God will call in your adversaries and let them know that their time is up. Just like He did the adversary of Job, He will also do with yours.

You are destined for victory in your future if you choose not to give up in your present.

Every battle, disappointment, setback, discouraging moments, and various trial and challenges will all work together for your good to prepare you for your greatness that has yet to be revealed. I want you to know that you are destined for greatness, God is just waiting for you to believe that greatness that has already be invested in you. Hold your head up, prayer for your haters and naysayers, and trust God to lead you to your victory in your personal, professional, and spiritual realms of your existence.

Reflect:

- What areas of your life do you feel as if you are being defeated?
- In those areas, how much of your defeats are because of your own thinking?
- How have some of your challenges made you a stronger Christian in your faith?
- Write down two challenges specifically that you know if you didn't have in your life you would not be who you have become.

Day 13

How to Become an Example

1st Corinthians 6:19: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own...

1st John 3:16: By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

1st Peter 2:21: For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps.

2nd Timothy 2:15: Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of truth.

Guess what? Your life is not your life! I know, you don't too much like that. However, the day you decided to follow Christ as the day you made an internal decision to no longer follow your own desires. The reason you don't want to follow your own desires is because when we lead ourselves, we often end up in positions that we would rather not experience.

The best way to become an example for others is to allow them to see that you have made the commitment to allow Christ to lead and guide your every choice. As you continue in your fasting period, I want to give you some simple steps on how to allow God to make your life an example for others.

Step 1: Ask God to Make You an Example: When you pray, don't be afraid to ask God to develop your life in ways that can be an example for others who are desiring to grow in their walk with God.

Step 2: Be Honest About Your Flaws: When you make an attempt to act as if you are super holier than others, it turns people away from Christ and the church because it presents an unrealistic expectation. Allow others to see that although you are striving to be faithful, don't be afraid to admit your weaknesses when you know it can encourage another person in their struggles. Make sure that the admittance is for encouragement of growth and not approval on sin.

Step 3: Practice What You Promote: Make it your business to always be an example of what you profess to others. People will always watch how you live more than listen to what you say. Whenever your living is a contradiction to your witnessing, you lose your opportunity to become an effective witness for Christ and His kingdom.

Reflect:

- Are there any actions or habit of mine that are seen by others that contradict my Christian faith?
- Who are some people who you know who claim to be Christians, but you have questioned their seriousness because of what you have witnessed in their habits?
- Write down three things you can do in your life that you know will enhance your ability to become a better example for others.

Day 14

Managing My Finances as a Christian

Proverbs 22:7: The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave to the lender.

Matthew 6:24: No one can serve two masters, for either he you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Proverbs 13:11: Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.

Proverbs 13:22: A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.

One of the false realities that we hear as Christians is that money is not important. That is a huge lie because if money was not important, we would not work for promotions, degrees, etc. Many things we do in life, if we are honest, is to prepare ourselves to earn more money. God is not against money, God is only against money that will cause you to be against Him. It takes money to feed the homeless, clothe the naked, pay for your housing, educate yourself or your children, maintain ministry staff and facilities, go on vacations, pay for health care, hire workers, and so much more. Therefore, no one can argue that money is not needed, the desire from God is that our money will be managed. Today's fasting lesson is very simple, becoming a better steward of your finances. Here are some simple steps to help you manage your money like a Christian.

Step 1: Earn It: God has blessed you with skills and abilities to be able to position yourself to earn respectable income. If I had to say it another way, there is nothing wrong with having employment.

The Bible says, "A man who doesn't work don't eat." God is simply saying, get up and do something.

Step 2: Tithe It: The Bible teach us to give our first 10% back to God. That means before we pay any other bills, our first commitment must be to God. If you are saying that you are struggling in this area, ask God to increase your faith. Remember, if you can trust what He says about your soul, you too should trust what He says about your finances.

Step 3: Give It: God loves a cheerful and not fearful giver. It is always more blessed to give than it is to receive. The ability to give is never based upon the size of your income, but it is always based upon the size of your heart. Look for opportunities when you can be a financial blessing to someone else.

Step 4: Save It: Set aside a certain amount that you will commit to savings for your future. Whenever you don't plan to succeed, you are actually planning to fail. Tomorrow is uncertain, so it is always wise to have finances set aside for unexpected realities. My mother used to say, "Always plan for a rainy day."

Reflect:

- How much of my money am I currently saving?
- How often do I give to others when I can?
- Do I trust God with my tithes? If not, when will I begin trusting Him?

Day 15

Don't Be in a Rush

Isaiah 40:31: But they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Lamentations 3:25: The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.

If God is making you wait, then be prepared to receive more than you asked for. Trust in God's timing. It's better to wait a while and have things fall in place, than to rush and have things fall apart. Waiting for God is never a waste of time. Therefore, we must trust God, even when His answer is 'wait'.

When you study the Scriptures, you will see that God specializes in teaching His children to wait, for the purpose of growing their dependence upon Him and less upon themselves. Waiting is a sign that we are not in complete control of every matter. Just like your parents made you wait as a child for certain things in life, God will also make you wait for certain blessings and elevations in your own life.

God understands that if He doesn't make you wait and honors all of your prayer request, your life can become destructive instead of productive. Just like you wouldn't give the keys to your car to a child because you know that they are not capable of driving, there are blessings in your life that God has not yet given you the keys to because he knows that you are not ready for the responsibility that comes with it. There are also times when God will make you wait

and it has nothing to do with you, but it has something to do with the other side of the blessing that is being prepared for you.

Therefore, decide that you are going to become content with waiting on God because you know that your waiting is not in vain, but it is working towards a greater purpose than you could have ever imagined. As you continue your fasting journey, realize that some of the things you may fast about may not result in your desires in the end of your fast, but you have to know that since God knows what is best for your life, He is still in control, even when you are in the waiting room.

Reflect:

- What are some things you find yourself waiting on God to do for you?
- In what ways did you need to read this on today?
- How will you turn waiting into something positive instead of thinking of it in a negative way?
- Who are some people in the Bible who you know had to wait on God?

Day 16

Are You Involved in Ministry Yet?

1st Corinthians 12:27: Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

John 14:15: If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Matthew 16:18: 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.

By now this time I KNOW you have become involved in some form of ministry at the Harvest Church! Don't fool me, you can't be this far in your fasting period and God has not led you to become involved with something. Ok, let me stop before you quit this fasting journey with us and decide to go to another church where they don't want you to do anything other than come on Sundays and make no impact.

On the serious side, our ministry will only become as great as the amount of hands we have helping to do the work of the kingdom here on earth, and specifically here at 425 Howard Avenue. Jesus always incorporated the efforts of others (disciples and people) to get the message of Salvation. So much so, when He departed He told them to "Go into the world..." This means that the work of the church is dependent upon YOU to do your part.

What is your part? What is your skill? What is your passion? What is your burden? What is your hunger? This is often how God will lead you to find your area in ministry. Remember, you serve to please God and never to satisfy man. Although the church and the community will benefit from your labor, ultimately you are working for Christ.

I challenge you today during your spiritual fasting journey with us, make a commitment to look through our ministry listings and find your place to make an impact. We thank you in advance, but more importantly, God will reward you. There is story after story of the blessings many people have received as a result of giving time back to God's church.

Decide today that you will get involved. Thanks in advance for your decision to become a participator and no longer a spectator. I have realized that people who are not involved in ministry often refer to our ministry as "the church they attend", but those who are involved says "my church." Decide that since you are here, Mount Ararat will become "your church."

Reflect:

- How did you feel when you read this insert today?
- Would you agree that there is something in our ministry that you can sign up for?
- As a result of your spiritual growth, will you make a decision to get involved with a ministry?

Prayer:

Father God please forgive me if I have been attending church and not seeking how I can do my part in the church. Forgive me if I have given more excuses instead of finding ways to make myself available for your service. Please show me how I can use my skills and talents to help Mount Ararat Church become excellent in presentation and demonstration. Allow me to grow into the member who is passionate about serving You through serving others. I commit to finding a ministry to get involved with and I thank You in advance for the joy I will experience as a result of it. This is my prayer. In Jesus name, Amen!

Day 17

You Don't Need What You Think You Need

Luke 12:15: And He said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

Matthew 6:33: But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Romans 12:2: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Matthew 16:26: For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeit his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

So many of us in our faith and walk with God, when we lose certain things (relationship, jobs, money, status, etc.) we feel as if we have to stop talking to God. Sometimes our communication with God is based upon what He gives to us instead of who God is. I want you to know that even when you have nothing, you still have everything.

As you continue on your fasting journey, realize that your relationship with God should never be based upon what you possess, but should always be based upon the power of God and Him being your Creator. When God see that you are not committed to things more than you are committed to Him, your life is more

likely to be filled with blessings because God knows that your peace is not connected to your possession, but it is in your Christ.

Whenever the blesse focus more on the blessing than the Blessor, the Blessor will take the blessing from the blesse until the blesse begins to thank the Blessor for the blessing. In other words, whenever you focus more on what you have than the God who gave you what you have, God will take what you have from you, until you begin to thank God for what you have. Now go ahead and tell God thank you for what you have!

Reflect:

- How attached are you to the things in your life?
- How do you act when you lose things that you think you need?
- What is something that you don't think you can live without? Now think how you can if you lost it?

Day 18

Why Attending Church Is Important

Hebrews 10:25: Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habits of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Romans 10:17: So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the Word of God.

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

Galatians 3:28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Just like your car must have gas, your laptop must be plugged up, your cellphone must be recharged, and other things you need requires daily and weekly maintenance, what makes you think that attending church is only when you feel like it? I know I am not talking about you, but I know you know someone who only attends church when they feel like it. They don't realize that attending church is not necessary for your Salvation, but it is a sign that you are in full agreement with what it means to have received your Salvation.

For those who may not know, the reason why we as Christians worship on Sunday is because this is the day in which we honor the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Truthfully, worship at any time is good for God, but worship on Sunday is a day when we gather with other worshippers to encourage one another in our faith as we all grow together as brothers and sister.

If you have been attending church on a weekly basis, we are glad. If you have been attending church whenever you feel like it, I want to challenge you to step it up a little more. You may not come every Sunday, but at least make a new commitment to come at least two Sundays a month. Below are a few reasons to help you understand why you want to make attending church a part of your weekly schedule.

Reasons to Make Church Attendance Important in Your Life

Reason # 1: It is a Command from God

Reason # 2: It Grows You in Your Understanding of the Word of God

Reason # 3: It Positions You to Fellowship with Your Christian Family

Reason # 4: It Allows You to Become Involved in Ministry to Others

Reason # 5: It Gives You Necessary Strength for the week

Reflect:

- How many Sundays a month do you attend service?
- If not every Sunday, why? Are you willing to add another Sunday per month?
- How do you feel on the Sundays you do attend?

Day 19

It's Not My Fault: Or Is It?

Genesis 3:12: The man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.'

Are you someone who tend to try to get out of your errors by making up excuses for them? Saying things like, "The devil made me do it." "At least I am not as bad as...." "This is just who I am, either you like me or you don't." "God knows my heart." Now if you have ever said or thought any of these, congratulations, you are truly human.

It is natural to always look for loopholes in our errors in order to protect us from the reality of looking inside of our lives and seeing the areas we need to improve. Self-development is one of the hardest and most rewarding experiences you can ever have. However, you will never learn your errors until you admit your errors. It is often said, 'You cannot fix what you will not face.'

I want to encourage you today on this fasting journey that you will become more focused on taking ownership on your errors and work to improve them. Ask God to show you areas you need to improve upon, and decide not to be upset when He use people close to you to reveal them to you. An element of this spiritual fasting journey involves cleaning of the head and the heart, which means that we must face the areas we desire to fix. Don't worry, it's not just you. All of us have areas we must improve, including me as your Pastor. I want to share with you the four stages of your self-development.

Stage 1: Unconscious Incompetence: You just don't know what you don't know.

Stage 2: Conscious Incompetence: You have become informed and you are now aware of what you didn't know that you need to work on and improve.

Stage 3: Unconscious Competence: You can't see it, but others can see ways in which you have grown as a person and as a Christian. Your improvement has become second nature as a result of you making a new commitment.

Stage 4: Conscious Competence: You are now aware of your growth and you have made the commitment to keep on growing and becoming better.

Reflect:

- Who in your life can be honest with you even when the truth is hurtful?
- Who in your life can you ask to become your accountability partner?
- What areas are you already aware that you know you have to improve upon?
- In your own thinking, why do you think it is important to take ownership of your errors?

Day 20

Overcoming Feelings of Rejection

Psalms 27:10: For my mother and my father have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.

Ephesians 2:8-9: For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

John 3:16: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Let me tell you from the jump, God accepts ALL of you! Now that we got that out of the way, let's deal with feelings of rejection. A lot of times in life people live with feelings of rejection from family, friends, employment, marriages, and sometime even feeling rejected by God. This is a lie from the enemy to make you feel less than God made you. When God created you, He created His spirit inside of you, and if His spirit is inside of you, you have been accepted and loved by Him since your creation.

The danger of living in feelings of rejection is that it can tempt you to do ungodly and unproductive things in order to gain the acceptance that you crave. During this fasting journey I want you to become confident in yourself regardless of your past, good or bad. When God created you, He didn't create you to be perfect, He created you to be faithful while He works on your imperfections.

Sometimes in life people will say things to you to make you feel inferior, and if you are not careful, you will begin to believe the lies of your adversary (the devil) instead of the truths and promises of

God. God wants you to become His display of joy, peace, power, and victory. This why you have to believe in yourself in order to overcome those feelings. Before you say your prayer today, read some of these affirmations and repeat them to yourself.

- Rejection from people may really be protection from God.
- The God who accepts ALL of you is more powerful than the people who rejects SOME of you.
- Being rejected in public is better than only being accepted in private.

Reflect:

- Have you had moments when you felt rejected?
- How do you usually handle those experiences?
- What do you do in an effort to gain acceptance?
- Are you truly aware that God knows and accepts all of you?

Day 21 (Final Day)

Invite Some to Church with You

Mark 16:15: And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Matthew 9:37-38: Then He said to His disciples, "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.

1st Corinthians 9:22: To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.

Luke 19:10: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

How many times have you said to someone, "Had you invited me, I would have come." This is so true for many experiences, we just wished someone would have invited us.

Likewise, how many times have you invited someone to attend a worship service or church experience with you? You never know what someone is dealing with privately inside of their lives, that if you just took some time to invite them to church, could be blessed and even come to know Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Contrary to popular belief, inviting someone to church is not a major challenge. It doesn't require any degrees, any training, any church skills, or anything other than a simple request. Think about it, how many times have you asked someone to go with you to a restaurant, a movie, the gym, or even come over your house to just

chill and hangout. Likewise, all you have to do is just ask someone to come to church.

Studies have proven that most people who have never attended a church has never been asked by a family member, friend, co-worker or neighbor. It is very simple, all you have to do is just trust that God knows what others are dealing with, He is just waiting on you to invite them to have an experience that you greatly enjoy on a weekly basis. Remember, Christ has empowered you to become His voice to reach His children just like He reached you. In other words, it is your heavenly duty to always invite and encourage others to attend church with you.

Reflect:

- Who are 5 people you will invite to attend church with you this Sunday?
- How will you invite them? By phone conversation? Text? Email? Social Media?
- **Script:** Hey _____! I would like you to visit the Harvest Church with me this weekend, our worship service is at 12 noon. Are you available to attend?
- **If they say NO:** Not a problem, I just wanted to invite you. Should you ever want to attend, know that you are always welcome.

Recommended Books on Fasting

The Complete Guide to Fasting: Heal Your Body Through Intermittent, by Dr. Jason Fung

Fasting: Opening the Door to a Deeper, More Intimate, More Powerful Relationship, by Jentezen Franklin

Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough: A Practical Guide to Nine Biblical Fasts, by Elmer Towns

Fasting for Breakthrough and Deliverance, by John Eckhardt

Tony Evans Speaks Out on Fasting, by Tony Evans

The Transformational Power of Fasting: The Way to Spiritual, Physical, and Emotional...., by Stephen Harrod Buhner

Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond Our Appetites, by Lynne M. Baab

Fasting for Financial Breakthrough, by Elmer L. Towns

The Fasting Edge: Recover Your Passion, Recapture Your Dream, Restore Your Joy, by Jentezen Franklin

Fasting for a Miracle: How God's Power Can Overcome the Impossible, by Elmer L. Towns

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer for Spiritual Breakthrough, by Tiffany K. Jordan

Awakening: A New Approach to Faith, Fasting, and Spiritual Freedom, by Stovall Weems

When You Fast: Jesus Has Provided the Solution, by Andrew LaVelle