

HOPE
POINT
CHURCH
2024

JANUARY 7 - JANUARY 28

21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

21
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OF PRAYER
AND FASTING

RAIN

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OF PRAYER AND FASTING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	INTRODUCTION
7	DEVOTIONAL: WEEK ONE
11	DEVOTIONAL: WEEK TWO
15	DEVOTIONAL: WEEK THREE
20	THE PRAYER OF MOSES
23	THE PRAYER OF JABEZ
25	THE PRAYER OF JEHOASHAPHAT
28	THE PRAYER OF THE NT CHURCH
31	THE PRAYER OF THE SHEEP
34	THE LORD'S PRAYER
38	PRAYER & SCRIPTURE DEVOTIONAL
40	WARFARE PRAYERS
44	THE BLESSING OF THE HIGH PRIEST

INTRO

“Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

Hosea 6:3

Hope Point Family,

It's that time of year again! That time of year when we get ready to do some business with God. In this season we are going to prepare ourselves to advance His Kingdom, position ourselves to participate in His divine plan, and posture ourselves to receive His love, peace, joy, and transformative work! **21 Days of Prayer and Fasting** is finally here. As we start the new year, we mark another opportunity to set up the year, to align our hearts with God's, to tune our ears to His voice, to posture our spirits to grow in faith, to direct our wills to respond to His, and to calibrate our emotions to His heartbeat. It's not a Heavenly weight loss program, but rather an opportunity to give God precedence and allow Him to determine the direction and trajectory of our lives this year.

I'm so glad you picked up this booklet and decided to participate in **21 Days of Prayer and Fasting** with us! This is a very special time of year for the church. I firmly believe that what we do here together as a church during this time has a dramatic impact on our spiritual growth throughout the year. In part, this is the track that the train runs on! I know that God is pleased with and honors the time that we dedicate to Him during this season in the life of our church.

If you're new to this time, then you are in for quite an experience! You may be wondering what fasting is and why it's important. First, we recognize that **everything starts with a seed** - a seed of faith, a

seed of hope, a seed of prayer, a seed of sacrifice and a seed of expectation. Jesus told the disciples in **John 12:24**, "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives." Our flesh - the things in our lives that exist in contradiction to the Word, character and will of God - are going to die and our spirits are going to come alive as we give God priority over the next 21 days.

Fasting is Biblical: before Jesus embarked on his earthly ministry, He fasted 40 days and 40 nights. Don't freak out! We aren't asking that of you! The heart of fasting is denying yourself and taking more time to spend with God so that you can be changed by Him and fulfill His purpose for your life. Fasting doesn't have to be food, and it doesn't have to be all food. It can be whatever you choose. I encourage you to just make some more time with God and pair your fasting with faith. Remember, we are all in it together. God says that there is commanded blessing where we dwell together in unity. According to God's promise, there will be blessing on what we do if we are joining in unity as a church together.

The account of Jesus returning to His hometown teaches us about the power of faith. The Apostle Mark records, "Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith." (**Mark 6:4-6**) It doesn't matter if you're familiar with Jesus or if you grew up around Him your whole life, if you don't put your faith in Him and believe that He can do great things in your life, then you will likely never see them. Your faith is one of the essential ingredients in the supernatural recipe of miracles and the greater that God has for your life. A lack of faith limited Jesus' neighbors from receiving what God had for them and without faith it will limit us from receiving too. **Romans 12:3** teaches us that each of us have a measure of faith given to us. Faith grows as we exercise it and hear the Word of God. The Book of James says that "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." So, faith grows as we add our deeds to it.

Fasting costs you something. King David desired to purchase the

property that the Temple of the Lord would eventually be built on. Araunah, the owner of the property, was willing to give it to the King. However, David had a different heart. His response in **2 Samuel 24:24** is instructive for us: "But the king replied to Araunah, 'No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.'" The Bible records that God answered prayer in behalf of the land and the plague stopped. Miracles happen when we seek God. The Lord is pleased with our sacrifice - when it costs us something.

Our theme this year is **RAIN** and our verse comes from Hosea. There's just something about rain! It brings life. It brings refreshing. It's used to describe the Holy Spirit and the Presence of God. It was considered a blessing by God. Water is so essential to life. The rain is refreshing and I believe that it's going to be an amazing year of refreshing for our church and from His Presence. The rain was responsible for the harvest...spring and winter rains. I believe that this is going to be an incredible year of harvest for our church- of answered prayers, of miracles, of people entering into a saving and life-giving relationship with Jesus and pouring into our church. The rain represents the miracle of God, especially during Elijah's time. I believe that the miracle power of God will be made manifest this year in our church and in your life!

Thank you for joining us during this time and continuing on this great adventure. Let's come expectantly. Let's dream big. Let's boldly approach the throne of God. Let's exercise our faith. Let's dance in the rain!

PASTOR JONATHAN STELLS

DEVOTI ONALS

WEEK 1: RAIN

“And Elijah said to Ahab, ‘Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.’”

1 Kings 18:41

Our theme for this year is **RAIN** and a fitting focus for our devotion for week one. About 71% of the Earth's surface is covered with water and the oceans hold about 96.5% of it. Water also exists in the air as water vapor, in rivers and lakes, in icecaps and glaciers, in the ground as soil moisture and in aquifers, and, yes, in you! You are about 60% water as an adult. Much of the most important parts of you are made up of water too. The brain and heart are composed of 73% water, and the lungs are about 83% water. The skin contains 64% water, muscles and kidneys are 79%, and even the bones are watery: 31%. You get the point. Water is important. One of the most prevalent ways that we access water and that it is replenished on earth is rain. Only 2.5% of Earth's water is fresh water - the amount needed for life to survive. However, almost all of that water is locked up in ice and in the ground. Only a little more than 1.2% of all fresh water is surface water, which serves most of life's needs.

Now that we've geeked out on water, what's the real point? There are lots of ways that we try to refresh ourselves. If you drink the wrong water, you'll get sick or dehydrated. Salt water won't sustain, bring life, or satisfy you. It actually makes you more dehydrated if you ingest it. There are lots of things that we reach for, that we look to satisfy us, but there's only one who can do that. Jesus makes some important statements about what we should reach for to sustain, to satisfy, to supply, to bring life: “Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water... Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,

but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:10;13-14) John would later write, “On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive...” (John 7:37-39) All water isn’t the same. Nothing refreshes, satiates, renews like Him!

When we worship God, it’s like the process of convection. Our praise goes up to God and it builds an atmosphere of spiritual moisture in the air. The wind of the Spirit and the light of the Son of God makes clouds and God rains down his Presence on the earth and refreshes us- inhabiting the praises of his people. Let’s practice worship and praise personally during this time. Maybe find a place that’s all your own and put on some worship music on your phone. Sing to the Lord along with the music, raise your hands, bow in reverence and engage in personal adoration of God. Set an atmosphere for God to come down and meet with you. Set an atmosphere for it to rain in your life.

1 Kings 18 is our text for this week and I encourage you to read it. Do you hear the sound of rain? The background to this chapter is that Israel has experienced three years of drought as judgment from God pronounced by his spokesperson, the prophet Elijah. Elijah boldly tells the wicked king Ahab that this drought will take place because of the wickedness of the nation. Drought was deadly. No one would have food. People would starve. The economy would suffer. “After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: ‘Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.’ So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.” (1 Kings 18:1-2) This may seem like a trivial thing. However, the king hated Elijah. Elijah had been on the run in hiding for quite some time. However, God tells him to go back to the king. **Radical obedience is a precursor to rain.**

There’s a showdown til sundown that occurs as Elijah then has to confront the evil prophets of Baal. **Confronting sin is a precursor to rain.** God answers by fire and consumes the sacrifice. Sometimes our worship is a sacrifice. That’s why the Bible says to give God a

sacrifice of praise. It can be a sacrifice because we just simply don't feel like doing it given some of the circumstances in our lives. He's still worthy. We won't truly know the cost of what we bring to him until we offer him what he so deserves despite everything going on in us. It's not hypocrisy. It's sacrifice. It's death to our flesh. It's obedience. It's a sacrifice because it's worship. It's our ministry to God: "Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come here to me.' They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, 'Your name shall be Israel.' With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, 'Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.'" **(1 Kings 18:30-33)** Elijah rebuilds the altar, the place of worship, the place of surrender, the place of sacrifice. He actually offers what they so desperately need. He has them pour precious water - a lot of it - on the altar. Think of it! Water in a drought! **Give God a seed of what you need.** What do you need this year? Can I encourage you to determine to give God what you need and trust Him to make what you need overflow in your life? Elijah gave God something to work with.

Here's the thing about sacrifice - **God won't fill your life until you make the decision to empty it.** We need to be people that are willing to lay some things on the altar of worship and allow God to consume them.

"So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. 'Go and look toward the sea,' he told his servant. And he went up and looked. 'There is nothing there,' he said. Seven times Elijah said, 'Go back.' The seventh time the servant reported, 'A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea.' So Elijah said, 'Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'" Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel." **(1 Kings 18:41-46)** **Prayerful persistence is a precursor to rain.** Elijah prayed and was persistent.

He had his servant go back and check seven times, which is the number of perfection. God is faithful to complete the work that he began in us. He is looking to perfect us. ***Do you hear the sound of rain?***

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS

1. In what areas of my life do i need to be radically obedient?
(A few examples might be: Developing a daily devotional routine, being bold and telling others in your life about Jesus, forgiving those who you have long held offense against, making time to serve and use your gifts in church, trusting God with your finances, and committing to tithe, letting go of anger, etc.)
2. Are there any areas of sin or inconsistencies with God's word that are in my life and that I need to confront?
3. What is the seed of what I need that I should give to God?
4. In what do I need to be prayerfully persistent? Can I stick with it until I see it happen?

WEEK 2: REFRESH

“Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

Hosea 6:3

This passage from Hosea is beautiful. The sun is a simple reminder of God’s faithfulness and desire to be with us. He will appear. His arrival is like the seasonal constancy of the rains, which bring the harvests and replenish the earth. The prophet Hosea encourages us to do our part. God is faithful and will always do His part. If we are honest, we’d probably admit that we struggle in the area of faithfulness at times. God is more constant than the rising of the sun, than the seasonal rains, than the rotation of the planet. Prayer is a great place to start to build faithfulness and find refreshing. It’s one of the ways that we can press on to acknowledge him. There are things that we can do to position ourselves for refreshing. Rain represents God’s Presence, the Holy Spirit, life, refreshing and growth.

Prayer impacts rain. **James 5:17-18** says, “Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.” This is such an encouraging scripture. James says that Elijah was a man just like us. I think it’s hard to envision ourselves in that category. We often read about people in the Bible as though they were superheroes. Elijah went through a very difficult period in his ministry. After great success on Mount Carmel, his life was still in danger. People hadn’t repented and turned back to God. He was depressed and wanted to die. Yet, he was obedient to God. He prayed earnestly. In the verse preceding that passage, James says, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” The general rule is that you need clouds

for rain. The atmosphere has to be right for rain. We often set the atmosphere spiritually through faith and the spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship, the Spirit and reading the Word.

Utilize the right source. I've always been accused of being way too loud, even as a child. I just have a loud volume. I also had ear trouble, so maybe that has something to do with it. I suffered from an inoperable eardrum issue for almost 20 years. I likely had no idea how loud I was. I'm comforted to know that, at times, Jesus was loud too. The following passage of Scripture found in **John 7:37-39** says that Jesus could be loud too: "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive." Jesus is loud about his intention to invite us to finding refreshing in him. Jesus might have even been inappropriate according to some. He is bold in his desire to connect with us. We see that John points to someone else here as well- the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is designed to bring refreshing to our lives. Jesus is the source! Water is used as a metaphor throughout Scripture to identify the Holy Spirit, but Jesus is the source. If we believe in Jesus, then we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us. He can constantly refresh us by connecting us to our Creator each and every day. I wonder how often we lean into Him?

Lifestyle impacts rain. "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord," (**Acts 3:19**) The reality is that we have to repent and turn to God. The result is forgiveness, cleansing and refreshing. What incredible news! We should never outgrow the ability to repent even if we outgrow the need to do so. As we mature in Christ and surrender more of our lives to Jesus, the need for repentance goes away as we walk in the will and righteousness of God. However, we should always have the humility to be able to repent, should we need to do so. Often, we can get into destructive patterns of sin that don't seem like such a big deal and may just be the "easier way" to get through life. I'm reminded of a story I used in a message once about a Fatberg. You may ask what a fatberg is. I'm happy that you might be wondering.

A newspaper reported on an interesting story dealing with people knowingly pouring bacon fat down the sink drain and the problems that a little grease can cause over time. Many of us do it, despite the fact that when fat cools it congeals and gets hard over time. The fat actually coats the outside of the pipes first, eventually building to the center and constricting the flow of water. Several years ago in London, officials had to excavate a 130 ton “fatberg” from the Whitechapel sewer. The monstrous glob was the size of 11 double decker buses and consisted mostly of grease runoff and trash. A ton is 2,000 pounds. Let’s do that math. That’s a 260,000 pound blob. In 2017, Roto Rooter plumbers unclogged almost 211,000 residential kitchen sinks, costing almost 30 million dollars. When we don’t give adequate attention to things in our lives that need to be addressed, destructive and sinful patterns in our lives, we steal from and dilute the abundant life that God came to give us through Jesus Christ. A little over time leads to a big problem.

We have blind spots. Let’s identify some trouble areas where small things can turn into big issues. It is important to use the Word, Prayer, the Holy Spirit and trusted leaders and pastors to help us with both identification of areas where we need to grow and accountability to walk in victory. Sometimes, we can just use faulty equipment and some of the problems in our lives can be masked. There’s an interesting lesson from history that illustrates this common practice. On July 2, 1881, a disappointed politician named Charles Guiteau shot President James A. Garfield, hitting him twice. One shot only grazed the President’s arm, but the other penetrated his abdomen. He was moved to his bed, and doctors tried to find the second bullet so they could remove it safely. They used a metal detector, which was a new device invented by Alexander Graham Bell. Unfortunately, the device didn’t really have a chance to locate the bullet. The President’s bed included metal springs, which threw off the detector. The bullet was found only after the President died. Knowing that there are things that are holding us back from moving forward with God is important, but so is developing the right resources in our lives to identify them and walk with us through them to receive victory. I love that the community of faith, the church, is so good at helping us with this.

Refreshing comes from God. Our Creator made us and knows what will truly refresh us. We have this promise from God and I hope

that you will say, “*Yes and Amen*” to it because it definitely applies to you! Remember, all of God’s promises are **yes and amen**. **Jeremiah 31:25** says, “I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint.” One of the most barren, hottest and driest places in North America is Death Valley. The temperature can rise to over 130 degrees Fahrenheit. These harsh conditions do not typically facilitate the growth of fragile wildflowers. However, thanks to El Niño storm conditions, wildflower seeds that had laid in waiting for years are sprouted to life in 2016. It’s called a super bloom. **Isaiah 43:18-19** says, “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.”

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS

1. What will I consistently do to create the atmosphere for the rain of God’s presence in my life?
2. What do I need to remove from my lifestyle that might be depleting me and robbing me of being refreshed in the Lord?
3. Are there things that I reach for to find refreshing that are harmful?
4. Who do I need to include in my life to help me evaluate things that will help me grow?

WEEK 3: REACH

“You heavens above, rain down righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness grow with it; I, the Lord, have created it.”

Isaiah 45:8

It’s hard to think of a greater miracle than salvation. When the church started on the Day of Pentecost, Peter said these words, quoting the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy... And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (**Acts 2:17-18; 21**)

I’m always encouraged by Jesus and the woman at the well in John 4. The woman had lived a lot of life, made a lot of mistakes, was living in sin at that moment in her life, but Jesus reached out to her anyway. Reach is intentional. You usually have an object in mind that you are reaching for. You see it. You initiate action toward it in order to grasp it. Paul said it this way in **Philippians 3:12**, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” Paul saw Jesus. He saw the calling of God on his life. He saw eternity. He wanted to take hold of the plan and purpose of God for his life. Jesus came to take hold of us. The example of his ministry to the woman at the well is so poignant.

John writes of the encounter: “Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he

said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor." Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (**John 4:28-42**)

Jews would avoid Samaria. They would go to great effort, time and expense to avoid even travelling through the region. Jesus goes right through the territory. He knows He needs to. Many of us know this story. I love that despite the fact that Jesus is tired and hungry, He is focused on others. Despite His own needs, He sees to the needs of the Kingdom of God. He has an eternal perspective. He sees the person. However unconventional the method, Jesus doesn't mind. He came for people.

I believe that this year is going to be an incredible year of harvest for Hope Point, as many people come to know Jesus and join our church. There is going to be phenomenal growth and the Kingdom is going to expand this year. As Jesus makes so clear in John, don't put off the harvest. People are ready to come to Christ.

Many might have heard of a company called Rovio. Rovio, the company that created the game, had a great deal of difficulty as a small video game and app startup. They tried 51 games on the market and none of them were particularly successful. The former CEO of Rovio admitted that by 2009, the company was close to going bankrupt. However, that year is when everything changed. They launched a new game called Angry Birds and it had a great

deal of success. Over the years the game became a franchise with movies, merchandise and spin off games. They sold over \$500 million in app purchases. Sega recently purchased the company this year for over \$775 million dollars. Isn't it amazing what can happen when we just choose to shoot our shot for the 52nd time? I think about people who have been difficult to get to church. You may be tempted to stop praying. Don't stop. Keep praying! God is still working. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you, to give you the right words to say and to direct you on how you should pray. Many of you have been praying for specific people. Let's believe together that they are going to come to know the Lord. Don't give up! You may have been praying for years. Keep praying.

I love that this woman is a door. She's the gateway to the whole town. The Bible says that many believed because of her testimony. I encourage you to share your testimony, your God story, what Jesus has done for you. You never know what kind of eternal impact you can have. Maybe you're just planting a seed. Maybe you get the joy of reaping the harvest. Jesus said in the passage, "so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together." When the harvest is reaped—when people come to Christ— the one who started the process and the one who finished it can both rejoice!

Jesus says some remarkable things to the Jewish people of his hometown. **Luke 4:24-27** says, "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian." What's so interesting about the words of Jesus is that the Jewish people would have never expected God to save people that weren't Jewish— Gentiles. It was actually offensive to them. God's grace was shown to the widow of Zarephath through the prophet Elijah. God's grace was shown to the enemy commander, Naaman, through the prophet Elisha.

Listen to the words of these two unlikely "converts". The widow of Zarephath says, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth." (**1 Kings 17:24**)

Naaman said, "If you will not," said Naaman, "please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the Lord." (**2 Kings 5:17**) God will reach out to and connect with whoever is open and willing to receive him. He came for humanity. I'm believing for a huge harvest this year for the Kingdom of God and Hope Point.

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Who can you consistently pray for this year that needs to hear the Gospel? Write down their names.
2. Is God already using you to reach specific people?
3. Where are the areas of opportunity to share Jesus?
4. What's your God story?
5. Do you know how to lead someone to Jesus? (If you do not, then think of Romans 10:9-10. Ask a church leader or staff pastor how to do that.)

PRAY ERS

THE PRAYER OF MOSES

"Have the people of Israel build me a holy sanctuary so I can live among them. You must build this Tabernacle and its furnishings exactly according to the pattern I will show you."

Exodus 25:8-9

"Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend."

Exodus 33:11

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets: I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

Matthew 5:17

1. THE OUTER COURT | GIVE GOD THANKS

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name."

Psalms 100:4

2. THE BRAZEN ALTAR | FOCUS ON THE CROSS

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners."

Romans 5:6

"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Isaiah 53:5

3. THE LAVER | OFFER EVERY PART OF MY LIFE TO GOD

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship."

Romans 5:6

4. THE CANDLESTICK | INVITE THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MY LIFE

"This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given you a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."

2 Timothy 1:6-7

5. THE TABLE OF SHREWBREAD | CLAIM THE PROMISES IN GOD'S WORD

"Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."'"

Matthew 4:4

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes...(Take) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray..."

Ephesians 6:10-18

6. THE ALTAR OF INCENSE | WORSHIP HIS NAME

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under his care."

Psalms 95:6-7

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

Proverbs 18:10

7. THE ARK OF THE COVENANT | INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

1 Timothy 2:1-2



THE PRAYER OF JABEZ

"Pray in the Spirit in every situation. Use every kind of prayer and request there is."

Ephesians 6:18

"Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, 'I gave birth to him in pain.' Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, 'Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.' And God granted his request."

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

1. PRAY FOR BLESSING

"Oh, that you would bless me..."

1 Chronicles 100:4

"You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great."

Psalms 18:35

"I will bless you...and you will be a blessing to others."

Genesis 12:2

2. PRAY FOR INFLUENCE

"...enlarge my territory..."

1 Chronicles 4:10

"Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession."

Psalm 2:8

"I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints."

Ephesians 1:18

3. PRAY FOR PRESENCE

"Let your hand be with me..."

1 Chronicles 4:10

"The Lord's hand was with them and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord."

Acts 11:21

"Then Moses said to him, 'If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?' And the Lord said to Moses, 'I will do the very thing you have asked.'"

Exodus 33:15-17

4. PRAY FOR PROTECTION

"...and keep me from harm."

1 Chronicles 4:10

"The devil is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

1 Peter 5:8

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

Romans 8:35-37

THE PRAYER OF JEHOSHAPHAT

WHEN FACED WITH OVERWHELMING ODDS

1. GO TO GOD'S HOUSE

"Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard..."

2 Chronicles 20:5

When we are faced with trouble, it's always good to go to God's House. The answer is in His House. Jehoshaphat was faced with an overwhelming army that he had no power to face. He had no ability or strength in his nation to withstand such odds militarily. However, he met with the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem. There were so many families assembled there as well to stand in agreement in prayer. We can gain so much strength from other believers supporting us in a time of need and agreeing in prayer. When you're faced with an overwhelming situation, go to the House of God. Seek Him and get the support of the church.

2. RECOGNIZE WHO GOD IS

"...and said: 'O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you.'"

2 Chronicles 20:6

This is all about acknowledging God and submitting to Him. This is a sign of humility and submission, of praising God because He's worthy, even in the midst of your circumstance. When we recognize God over our circumstance, then we declare in faith that He is bigger, and that we have the victory through Him. We can introduce

our problem or our challenge to our God.

3. RECOGNIZE WHAT HE'S DONE

"Oh our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?"

2 Chronicles 20:7

It's always good to recognize what our good and loving Heavenly Father has done for us. Israel often recounted the mighty deeds of God. They built altars and memorials so that future generations would know the might and power of God. When the Israelites walked across the Jordan River into the Promised Land, Joshua instructed them to grab rocks out of the riverbed and stack them up on the other side as a memorial. We need to remember the good deeds of God. In confessing what He's done in the past, we give thanks from a grateful heart. This builds our faith and trust, giving us hope that He will perform His will in the future. Gratitude is the right thing to do for its own sake. Thanking God reminds us of all that we have, all He has done, and all that is right because He is God and loves us. This act is extremely powerful and will instantly change the atmosphere of your life.

4. CLAIM HIS PROMISES OVER YOUR SITUATION

"They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgement, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.'"

2 Chronicles 20:8-9

We also can declare the promises of God in our lives. When we declare, we take a stance of faith and apply God's promises directly to the situations in our lives where we need them to be fulfilled. God's promises are powerful.

"God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?"

Numbers 23:19

5. RECOGNIZE YOUR NEED

“But now here are men from Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. O our God, will you not judge them?”

2 Chronicles 20:10-12

When we recognize our need, we explicitly state that we need God and cannot do it on our own. Again, this is a sign of complete and total dependence on Him, a point of humility, where we acknowledge our weakness and need. God loves to hear from His children. When we need help, all we have to do is go to Him and ask for it.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

6. COMMIT YOURSELF TO GOD

“For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.’ All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the Lord.”

2 Chronicles 20:12-13

At the end of the day, Jehoshaphat committed himself to God. He didn't know what to do, but he wasn't turning his eyes away from God. They were firmly fixed on Him. It doesn't matter how big the army is; if you're looking at God, He will always be bigger than anything else. Peter realized the importance of keeping his eyes on Jesus instead of the storm. When we put our faith and trust in Jesus, there is a power from God in it that enables us to do miraculous things through Him. Keep your eyes on Jesus, no matter what's going on. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He's got the answers. **He is the answer!**

THE PRAYER OF THE NT CHURCH

"Pray in the Spirit in every situation. Use every kind of prayer and request there is."

Ephesians 6:18

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

James 5:16

"It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this was met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, 'Put on your clothes and sandals.' And Peter did so. 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,' the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and

rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.' When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, 'Peter is at the door!' 'You're out of your mind,' they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, 'It must be his angel.' But Peter kept on knocking, and when she opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. 'Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this,' he said, and then he left for another place. In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter."

Acts 12:1-18

INGREDIENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER

1. WHERE THERE IS PRESSURE, PROMPTING, OR PAIN

"In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From his temple, he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears."

Psalm 18:6

2. WITH PASSION

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."

Hebrews 5:7-9

3. WITH PERSISTENCE

"From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God."

Jonah 2:1

4. IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS

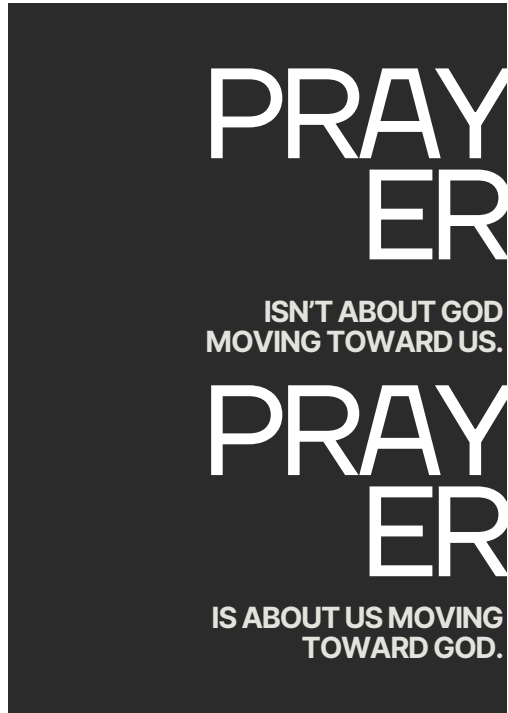
"Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven."

Matthew 18:19

5. FOCUSED ON THE PERSON OF JESUS

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

John 14:13-14



THE PRAYER OF THE SHEEP

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Psalm 23:1-6

1. YOU ARE MY SHEPHERD

"The Lord is my Shepherd..."

Psalm 23:1

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me."

John 10:14

2. YOU ARE MY PROVIDER

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

Psalm 23:1

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

3. YOU ARE MY PEACE

"He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters."

Psalm 23:2

"Peace I give you."

with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

John 14:27

4. YOU ARE MY HEALER

"He restores my soul."

Psalm 23:3

"He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls."

1 Peter 2:24-25

5. YOU ARE MY RIGHTEOUSNESS

"He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

Psalm 23:3

"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do."

1 Peter 1:14-15

6. YOU ARE MY CONSTANT COMPANION

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

Psalm 23:4

"God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?'"

Psalm 23:4

7. YOU ARE MY DEFENDER

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Psalm 23:5

"But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one."

2 Thessalonians 3:3

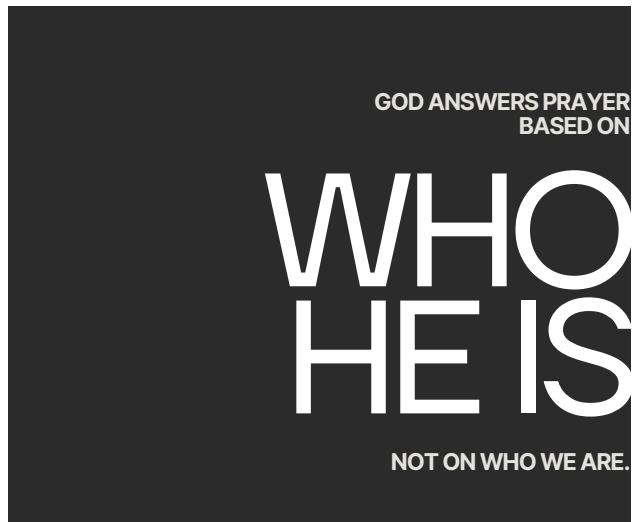
8. YOU ARE MY SANCTIFIER

"You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over."

Psalm 23:5

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

1 Peter 2:9



THE LORD'S PRAYER

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray...'"

Luke 11:1

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."

Matthew 6:9-13

"OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN..."

1. CONNECT WITH GOD RELATIONALLY

"You have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father.'"

Romans 8:15

God loves for us to call Him our Father. Establish your intimate relationship with Him and thank Him for the relationship you have with Him.

"...HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME..."

2. WORSHIP HIS NAME

"God's name is a place of protection - the righteous can run there and be safe."

Proverbs 18:10

WHAT ARE HIS NAMES?

Righteousness | He makes me clean

Sanctifier | He has called me and set me apart

Healer | He heals all my diseases

Banner of Victory | He has defeated my enemy

Shepherd | He speaks to me and leads me

Peace | He is my peace in every storm

Provider | He supplies all of my needs

"...YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN..."

3. PRAY HIS AGENDA FIRST

"He will always give you all you need from day to day if you will make the Kingdom of God your primary concern."

Luke 12:31

GOD'S PRIORITIES

Saving the lost

Guiding those in authority | *parental, spiritual, governmental, workplace*

His Will in us

"...GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD..."

4. DEPEND ON HIM FOR EVERYTHING

"I look up to the mountains - does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!"

Psalm 12:1-2

Ask God for what you want and need and then trust Him for the answer.

“...FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS...”

5. GET YOUR HEART RIGHT WITH GOD AND PEOPLE

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9

Ask God to check your heart and motives. Receive His forgiveness for any area that He brings to mind. Forgive anyone who has offended you in any way. You can even forgive people in advance.

“...AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE...”

6. ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Ephesians 6:12

Take your stand against the enemy and fight the good fight of faith. Every lie that the enemy has told you should be replaced with the truth of God's Word.

“...FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER.”

7. EXPRESS FAITH IN GOD’S ABILITY

“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.”

Jeremiah 32:17

End your prayer time by reminding yourself of God’s ability. Return to praise and make your faith declarations.

“Yours is the Kingdom” - all rule belongs to you

“Yours is the Power” - all mightiness flows from you

“Yours is the Glory” - Your victory shall be complete

PRAYER & SCRIPTURE DEVOTIONAL

This is a great prayer outline mixed with Scripture readings. Simply walk through the outline while you look up the passages of Scripture.

1. THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE | PRESENT YOURSELF TO GOD.

Mark 12:30

Think of a fresh reason to thank Him.

Psalm 100:4 | 118:24

Present your body in worship by:

Kneeling before Him as your Lord

Lifting your hands to Him as your Source

Standing in praise before Him as your King

Clapping your hands with rejoicing

Dancing with joy as a child

Bowing your head in humility

Romans 12:1 | Psalm 63:3-4

Sing a new song to Him.

Psalm 96:1-2 | Colossians 3:16

Invite Holy Spirit assisted praise.

Jude 20 | 1 Corinthians 14:15

2. CONFESSION AND CLEANSING | PRESENT YOUR HEART TO GOD.

Proverbs 4:23

Ask God to search your heart for:
Sin - receive cleansing and righteousness
Selfishness - receive holiness and sanctification
Stress - receive life and power
Sickness - receive healing and strength

Psalm 139:23-24

Remember the danger of self-deception.

Jeremiah 17:9 | 1 John 1:6-10

Set a monitor on your mouth and heart.

Psalm 19:14 | 49:3

Ask God to help you keep His purposes and goals in view.

Psalm 90:12 | Philippians 3:13-14

3. ORDER AND OBEDIENCE | PRESENT YOUR DAY TO GOD.

Psalm 37:5

Present the day's details:
Choose the fear of the Lord.
Commit your works to God.

Psalm 37:4-5, 31:14-15 | Deuteronomy 33:25

Indicate your dependance upon God.

Proverbs 3:5-7 | Psalm 131:1-3

Request specific direction for actions and decisions.

Psalm 25:4-5 | Isaiah 30:21

Choose to obey God's explicit instructions:

In the Word of God.

By choosing His will.

Matthew 6:11, 7:7-8

WARFARE PRAYERS

Prayer is not only communion with God; it is confrontation with the enemy. These prayers are very helpful in spiritual warfare:

“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

Ephesians 6:11-18

1. THE ARMOR OF GOD

Based on Ephesians 6:13-17

“Thank you, Lord, for my salvation. I receive it in a new and fresh way from You and I declare that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ and the place I have in Your kingdom. I wear Your righteousness today against all condemnation and corruption. Cover me with Your holiness and purity - defend me from all assaults against my heart. Lord, I put on the belt of truth. I choose a lifestyle of honesty and integrity. Expose the lies I have believed, and show me the truths I need today. I choose to live for the Gospel in every

moment. Show me where You are working and lead me to it. Give me the strength to walk daily with You. I believe that You are powerful against every lie and assault of the enemy. You have good in store for me. Nothing is coming today that can overcome me because You are with me. Holy Spirit, show me the truths of the Word of God that I will need to counter the traps of the enemy. Bring those Scriptures to mind today. Finally, Holy Spirit, I agree to walk in step with You in everything as my spirit communes with You in prayer throughout the day.”

2. THE WEAPONS OF WARFARE

Based on 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

“Father, Your Word says that no weapon formed against me shall prosper. (Isaiah 54:17) Therefore I declare that no weapon formed against me prospers this day or any day to come in Jesus’ name. Your Word says that trouble will not arise a second time. (Nahum 1:9) Therefore I declare that Satan cannot make trouble for me again, in this manner, as he did in the past in Jesus’ name. I declare all of these prayers accomplished and brought to pass by trusting You through faith and expectation in the name of Jesus.

Lord Jesus, I confess to You all of my sins this day, yesterday, and every day past. I repent and renounce them, those known and unknown, those of omission and commission, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do. I lay down at Your feet all of the sins of the flesh, the tongue, and of the heart, and all unholy thoughts and actions. Thank You, Lord, for shedding Your precious blood for me.

I stand on Your Word. The enemy is driven out from before me, above me, around me and below me; from my home, workplace, church, and its ministries, children, and loved ones; from my works and labors, land, and my presence. I declare that he is not able to stand against me, and his works are taken captive and destroyed. No weapon formed against me will prosper, for the Spirit of the Lord shall raise a standard against them. I declare all of these things accomplished by Your Word. Jesus, my Lord, I give You thanksgiving, praise, glory, honor, and worship for Your righteousness and holiness given to me by Your Word on my behalf.”

3. PROTECTION PRAYER

Based on 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, 10:3-5 | Romans 12:1-2

“Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to You. I submit myself only to the true and living God and refuse any involvement of the enemy in my life. I choose to be transformed by the renewing of my mind. I pull down every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ. I pray and thank you for a sound mind, the mind of Christ.

Today and every day I ask for protection over my spouse, each of our children, our immediate family members, relatives, friends, acquaintances, and myself. I also ask today for protection during all of our travels; additionally, I pray for our provision, finances, possessions, health, safety, and welfare. I put all of these things under the covering of Your precious blood and declare that Satan cannot touch them, on this day or any day to come.”

4. GENERAL CONFESSION PRAYER

Based on Romans 10:10 | James 5:16 | John 1:7-9, 3:8

“Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God. You are the Messiah, come in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil. You died on the cross for my sins and rose again on the third day from the dead. I now confess all my sins and repent. I receive your forgiveness and ask you to cleanse me from all sin. Thank You for redeeming me, cleansing me, justifying me, and sanctifying me in Your blood.”

5. FORGIVENESS PRAYER

Based on Matthew 6:14-15 | Leviticus 19:18

“Lord, I have a confession to make. I have not loved, but have resented certain people and have unforgiveness in my heart. I call upon You, Lord, to help me forgive them. I do now forgive (name them). I also forgive and accept myself in the name of Jesus Christ.”

6. PRIDE PRAYER

Based on Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 26:12 | 1 Timothy 3:6

“Father, I come to You in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know pride is an abomination to You. I renounce anything that would cause me to have pride in my heart in dealing with other people. I renounce these and turn away from them. I humble myself before You and come to You as a little child.”

Study Matthew 6:16-19 and remember that fasting is a means by which a person humbles himself before the Lord.

7. GENERAL BONDAGE PRAYER

Based on Exodus 20:4-6, 34:7 | Numbers 14:18

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I now renounce, break, and loose myself from all bondages or bonds of physical or mental illness upon me, my family, or family line as the result of parents or any other ancestors. I thank You, Lord, for setting me free.”

THE BLESSING OF THE HIGH PRIEST

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: ‘The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.’” So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.’”

Numbers 6:22-27

I thought it important to include this blessing along with all of the prayers that we have offered to God during our time together as individuals, couples, families, and as a church. This blessing is undoubtedly well known by many, as the worship song, “The Blessing,” was released several years ago. Maybe you were aware of the origins of the song, or maybe you’re just discovering where many of the lyrics came from. Whatever camp you are in, I’m sure that you were blessed by it just like I was (and still am). I wanted to say this blessing over you as we end our time of fasting and prayer together. It is fitting, powerful, and significant for all of God’s people. Let’s discuss its background and meaning together.

This blessing was commanded to be placed upon the Israelites, God’s chosen people of the Covenant. God told Moses to tell Aaron, the High Priest, to give this blessing to the people of Israel and as a result, to put the name of Yahweh on them. The command was given at the end of the Covenant that God made with his people through Moses after 40 days on Mt. Sinai. This Mosaic Covenant effectively established the Law of God that the Israelite people lived by and which kept them in convenient relationship with God. It would effectively point to Pentecost. The Law was given 50 days after the Passover and their subsequent exodus from Egypt. The Holy Spirit was given 50 days after Jesus celebrated the Passover with the disciples. The Word and the Spirit were both given at that festival.

The Holy Spirit being given signified the ratification of a new law instituted by Jesus Christ, since the old law was fulfilled in Him. This was now a law of grace. God's purpose was clear in both covenants - relationship with His people and a desire to bless them through it. It's fitting that this capped off the giving of the Covenant between God and His people.

The blessing is written in classic Hebrew poetic style. Harper's Bible Commentary states:

"In Hebrew, the first line of the blessing in v.24 consists of three words, the second line of five words, and the third line of seven words. Each line in turn consists of two clauses. The Lord (Yahweh) is explicitly named as subject in the first clause of each of the three lines. That the Lord is the source of blessing is emphasized again in the closing statement in v. 27 in which God says, "I will bless them." The "I" is emphatic in the Hebrew."

Mays, 187

The first line deals with blessing and protection. Blessing refers to continued life and children, land, the presence of God, fruitfulness, health, and all of the other things that make life enjoyable. It is general and comprehensive in scope. The words "keep you" refer to the divine protection of God from all harm and evil. Thus, there is safety, security, and blessing in the presence of God. Quite a start, wouldn't you say?

The second line deals with the face of God, which is really a way of saying the presence of God. If you think of the word "shine," you will immediately think of light: "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5) The history of the Israelites is that God protected and led them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. These directed the Israelites, kept them cool from the desert sun in the day, and warmed them and gave them light at night. The very manifest glory and presence of God came in this cloud and fire as it hovered over and in the Tabernacle. God was literally among his people: "You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance - the place, O Lord, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established." (Exodus 15:17) When the Temple was established in Zion, it is easy to see how God felt about it:

“For the Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling: This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it.” (**Psalm 132:13-14**) Jesus would later model what His Heavenly Father did in the past with Israel. John says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (**John 1:14**) When God’s face shines upon his people, then the presence, blessing, and favor of God is upon them. The ultimate outcome of God’s favor is His grace and graciousness. Grace is simply defined as us getting something we don’t deserve. God loves to bless His children. This mercy and grace is not earned by us in any way. It is purely a gift of God to those who don’t deserve it. That is an essential facet of our salvation. Pure and simple, it just speaks to the amazing goodness and love of our God!

The third line sounds familiar to the first but is more intentional and personal. God is not just shining his countenance upon His people, but is turning His face toward us. Without the face of God upon us, we perish. The final line deals with “shalom.” Shalom isn’t simply peace; it also reflects a completeness and wholeness in God. It is the outcome of being in right standing and relationship with God. Peace can only truly come from God. The line also foreshadows the Messiah, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah sees him coming over 700 years before Jesus arrives and prophesies, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (**Isaiah 9:6**)

Something else that God foreshadowed when He had Moses write the words to this beautiful blessing was the revelations of his persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The proper Hebrew name for God, “Yahweh,” is used three times in this blessing. Blessing comes from God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Our God is simply amazing! I pray this blessing over your life and family this year and for all years to come!

hp

HOPE
POINT
CHURCH