



Annual Fast 2024

# FRUITFUL LIVING

Daily Devotionals



## Why Fast?

In the Bible, fasting is connected to abstaining from food in some capacity for spiritual reasons; it's not a food strike to bargain with God and "deserve" His blessings, neither is it a diet for physical benefits. Fasting serves the purpose of helping us concentrate on spiritual goals.

Jesus practiced prayer and fasting and strongly recommended it to His disciples. When talking about fasting, Jesus taught about the importance of the motivation behind it (Mathew 6:16-18). As we put our focus on God and His word, and make all effort to become more intentional about our spiritual experience, we strengthen our spirit and become more connected with the Spirit of God. Fasting is meant to favor the spirit over the soul.

Fasting should be centered around God; to seek Him, worship Him and dedicate ourselves to Him, and to experience His will in us. Here are a few examples in the Bible: Prophetess Anna worshiped with fasting (Luke 2:37), the prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch fasted (Acts 13:2), God asks to whom we offer fasting (Zachariah 7:5), Paul taught fasting as a form of discipline for the body (1 Corinthians 9:27), fasting is a powerful way for us to humble ourselves before God (Psalms 35:13, Isaiah 58:9, 14), and Jesus said that He expected His disciples to fast (Mathew 9:15).

## Daily Bible Reading and Devotional:

We will read various sections of the Bible together during our fast. Each day has a specific focus and a Scripture selection, and both are intentionally connected with one another. A video devotional will also be released daily throughout our 21-day journey.

Our focus for daily Bible reading and devotional will be around the theme **FRUITFUL LIVING**. We will break this down into three subjects:

### Days 1-7: A Purposeful Life

### Days 8-12: Naturally Supernatural

### Days 12-21: The Fruit of the Spirit

## Prayer Challenge:

A daily time devoted to prayer is an indispensable part our 21-day journey. Prayer will allow for a deeper spiritual experience that goes beyond what is understood into what is practiced. This will be a time of reflection based on the daily devotional and scripture selection to allow the Holy Spirit to minister to the deepest parts of your heart. Get ready to be corrected, encouraged, and inspired to make meaningful and lasting change that will catapult you into a more FRUITFUL LIVING.

## Fast Guidelines

Our basis for the fast is the example of the prophet Daniel (Daniel 1:12 and Daniel 10:2-3) Take simple meals with vegetables, fruits and cereals, that is, to eat without the pursuit of pleasure and refinement, for a time of delight only in the presence of God. When you go shopping for groceries remember to read the labels of packaged foods to make sure they contain only ingredients that are suitable for this time of fasting. You should note especially if they have chemical ingredients, dairy products and sweeteners.

## Recommended Foods:

Fruits and vegetables: Fresh, frozen, dehydrated or canned fruits; avocado, açai, pineapple, plum, banana, grapes, cherry, orange, apple etc. Artichoke, lettuce, chives, green sprouts, cauliflower, spinach, pumpkin, zucchini, eggplant, cucumber, etc.

Cereals, seeds and grain: Brown rice, quinoa, beans, flaked oats, granola, corn, cereal bars (without chocolate), nuts, etc.

Tubers, roots: Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, cassava, etc.



Sugars and sweets: Honey and agave nectar (it is not advisable to use refined sugar because of the toxins, causing strong headaches making it difficult to stay in the fast).

Legume and similar products: Peas, chickpeas, lentils, soybeans, etc.

Roots and bulbs: Garlic, asparagus, beet, onion, carrot, fennel, turnip, radish, olives, etc.

Drinks: Coconut water, fruit juice, smoothies with coconut milk or almond milk, plenty of water flat or sparkling.

Infusions: All types of tea, give preference to caffeine-free options.

### **Foods That Should Be Avoided**

Meats and animal byproducts: All products of animal origin, like: meat (red, fish, pork and chicken), eggs, hams, salami, sausages, etc.

Processed foods: Fried foods, cookies, sweets, pastas, cakes, candies, ice cream, chocolates, refined sugar, foods containing preservatives or additives, butter, margarine and high fat products, etc.

Beverages: Coffee, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, energy drinks, and milk.

### **Additional Reference:**

<http://daniel-fast.com/>

<https://ultimatedanielfast.com>

BOOK: The Daniel Plan by Rick Warren

### **Additional Recommendations:**

- ***If you have any health problems, or take any medications, seek guidance from your doctors.***
- During the twenty-one days try to avoid restaurants, snack bars, sandwiches and snacks on the road.
- It is common to experience a physical detox during the first days of fasting, including headaches, fatigue, leg cramps and other typical symptoms.
- Drink plenty of water, at least two liters a day.
- Try to avoid TV during the 21-day fast as well as the internet for fun and distraction, movie theaters, and shows.
- Begin your day with prayer to the Lord (If possible, with the whole family)
- Do not end your day before you have a moment of worship and prayer to the Lord (if possible, with the whole family)
- Do not let what you do or don't eat, become the focus of your Fast. Focus on what is essential: to deepen your relationship with God. This is a time to forsake bad habits and standards, crucify the flesh and seek God.
- Do not walk with a dejected countenance, do not tell everyone that you are fasting as if it represented a time of suffering. Do it with pleasure! Only God needs to know.



Days 1-7:

# A Purposeful Life

In Hosea 4:6 God gives us some insight about one of the things that make us vulnerable against the devil: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...". The enemy of our soul has success in his mission to steal, kill and destroy when we do not seek knowledge and clarity, especially when it comes to our identity and purpose. The devil works very hard to cause confusion about who we are and what we have been called to do and, if he can effectively provoke us into a purposeless life through ignorance, our ability to be fruitful will be hampered, or even negated. In this first week, you will be equipped to understand and experience the Gospel of Jesus Christ on a deeper level. You'll be challenged and encouraged to live a life of purpose and fruitfulness.

Jesus started His ministry with his legacy in mind, that is why his every interaction, public or private, was intentional. If it were no so, Jesus' ministry would have ended with Him. Imagine all the wisdom, knowledge, power, miracles, pain and sacrifice to have not been recorded and shared with future generations? Imagine if the impact of Jesus' ministry had not survived His physical absence on earth? The reason why His impact has lasted over 2000 years is because the first generation of disciples understood their purpose and calling; they understood the deeper reality of the message of the Gospel: it's not just about them.

One of Jesus' first acts upon starting His ministry was to pick a group disciples; 12 men who would be responsible for carrying His message into posterity. Their journey with Jesus starts with an invitation: "*And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. (Matthew 4:19)*". This invitation is not a calling into comfort, it's a calling into disruption. They were invited to take on the responsibility of carrying His message into the next generations. Think about this! And the way they respond is striking (*They immediately left their nets and followed Him.*), why? Because they were provoked into purpose. Their new found purpose brings them clarity, boldness and intense devotion.

I wonder, how many generations beyond ours will hear of what God has said in us and to us? Are we driven by purpose like the first century disciples were? Are we defined by how the Gospel of Christ touched our lives? If we become fueled by purpose more so than our desire for comfort, our impact will also echo in our families and communities, and in generations to come.

As long as we see the work of Christ from a consumer mindset, we will not live the fullness of the Gospel. I don't believe the message of the Gospel has our comfort as it's priority. Of course God wants us to be blessedly; when the message of the Gospel is lived out, every area of our lives are positively affected. But these blessings were never meant to be the focus of our search, they are simply the byproduct of a purposeful life. Matthew 6:33 says: "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*" This means that, when we prioritize the pursuit of comfort and the subjective sense of happiness, joy seems to evade us; when we prioritize the Jesus' teachings and His purpose, joy pursues us.

Fruitful living is our God-given calling. Throughout these 21 days we will receive spiritual tools and understanding to position ourselves in a way that maximizes spiritual fruitfulness and gives us clarity as to who we are in Christy:

- **Day 1 (11/04):** The Grace of the Gospel
- **Day 2 (11/05):** The Response to the Gospel
- **Day 3 (11/06):** The Identity of the Disciple
- **Day 4 (11/07):** Called Into Fruitfulness
- **Day 5 (11/08):** Opportunity Looks Like Deficit
- **Day 6 (11/09):** Reject the Comfort of Omission
- **Day 7 (11/10):** Life Unwasted





## Day 1 (11/04): The Grace of the Gospel

**Daily Scripture:** Matthew 11:28-30, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 6:1-23, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

**Daily Word:** We must focus on developing a greater awareness, appreciation and dependence on the Grace of God. Fruitful Living is not just a matter of will, ability, self-control or determination; the driving force is **GRACE**. The Apostle Paul receives powerful insight on the importance of God's grace when the Lord makes it clear that His grace is sufficient for Paul to overcome his burdens. The grace of God is the equalizer, it is what enables us to see ourselves unhindered by the failures of the past, the limitations of the present and the uncertainty of the future. Before we move forward with the understanding of what fruitful living is all about, we must understand that, what makes it possible is God's grace. Therefore, receive the grace of God with gladness, be thankful for it and allow it to shape your understanding of what is possible in the next season of your life. The question remains, what is grace? As God's unmerited favor, it is a gift. God's gift of salvation, forgiveness, restoration, deliverance and much more. Because it's unmerited, it means it is also undeserved, freely given and not conquered by our works or actions. Grace is this God's gifted power for living a fruitful life.

### **Daily Questions:**

- After reading 1 Corinthians 15:10, how can we make God's grace towards us count?

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- In your opinion, what does becoming an instrument of righteousness to God mean?

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- What are some of the ways you have experienced God's Grace in your life?

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**Guided Prayer:** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you accept God's grace. Often times we feel burdened by spiritual and emotional baggage that God has already lifted from us. Accept His grace and be thankful for it. The next step is committing to a life that values the gift you have just received. Commit to the Lord to live a life of righteousness, dedication to His cause, zeal for His work and aligned with His purpose. Pray for strength, wisdom and opportunities to make the grace He has given you count.



# Day 2 (11/05): The Response to the Gospel

**Daily Scripture:** Matthew 4:18-22, Ephesians 4:1 - 5:21, 1 Peter 1:13 - 2:12.

**Daily Word:** The gospel is the powerful display of God's love toward humanity and, when we are touched by it, we have access to much more than forgiveness. Through Christ, we receive insight about the purpose of the God who rules and reigns over all, and how His transforming power is able to operate in us and through us. The way we respond to this will determine if we will live a new life of purpose and fruitfulness, or if we will remain unbothered and content with what has been received. Don't get me wrong, receiving is wonderful, but it's not all. If our experience with the Gospel is limited to what we have received from God, it is certainly incomplete. We should desire to move beyond the receiving state of discipleship into the pouring state of witnessing. We must understand that our deliverance and forgiveness have a purpose beyond our comfort and relief; our access to God's grace comes with a responsibility to be fruitful. The scripture selection for today will reveal some of the ways this response should manifest in our lives, such as increased maturity, spiritual gifts, repentance, holiness, commitment to the cause of the Gospel, generosity, among many others. I pray we all receive something powerful from God throughout this fast, but I also pray that this experience will provoke us into a life of passion and action that will produce lasting fruit.

**Daily Questions:**

- In Matthew 4, what does the response of the first disciples tell you about their passion and commitment?

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- What three truths stand out to you in the Ephesians 4 and 5 portion of our scripture selection?

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- How does the scripture in 1 Peter challenge you to respond to the Gospel in a new way?

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- Comparing and contrasting the consumer mindset and the contributor mindset, what do you believe your response to the Gospel has been? How will it be different?

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**Guided Prayer:** Lord, ignite a fire in my heart for a life of purpose and fruitfulness. I reject complacency, and I accept my calling. Give me the passion and desire to respond to you with the same urgency the first disciples did when they chose to follow Jesus. I open my heart to what you want to do in me and through me, I am Your vessel. Purify me, sanctify me, create in me a clean heart that reflects Your nature. Amen.



# Day 3 (11/06): The Identity of the Disciple

**Daily Scriptures: 1 John 3:1-24, Ephesians 2:1-22.**

**Daily Word:** Before we can talk about purpose, we must understand our identity. Purpose is what we have been called to DO; identity is who we have been called to BE. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" We must look to Jesus to find our true identity, and not to other people or things. Jesus is the reference, He is the model, He is the target and the goal. Understanding the "vertical" nature of our identity prevents us from being discouraged by "horizontal" distractions. We are not defined by the things we do. We are defined by being in Christ. Although the enemy will try to convince us otherwise, our identity is not in our past mistakes or current battles. We are loved, chosen, forgiven, redeemed and adopted. That is our true identity: CHILDREN OF GOD!

**Daily Questions:**

- How does your new found identity in Christ liberate you to live your purpose?

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- What do you learn about your identity in Christ from the passages you read today?

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**Guided Prayer:** Ephesians 2:19 says "...you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens...and members of the household of God." Lord, help me find my identity in you. Rid me of all shame and doubt, and establish me in your presence. I claim my identity as a child of God, as a disciple of Jesus; rescued from sin and perdition, called into fruitfulness.

## **NOTES**

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# Day 4 (11/07): Called Into Fruitfulness

**Daily Scriptures:** Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:9-23, Matthew 26:36-46.

**Daily Word:** In Mark 1:17 Jesus makes a disruptive invitation to His disciples, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." This invitation is symbolic of the journey of the disciple of Jesus. We have been rescued, forgiven, restored and empowered, but to what end? One of the biggest lies of the enemy is that the Gospel has our comfort as it's priority, or that our preferences are God's main focus. The fact is that the Gospel is disruptive. Of course we are blessed by the message of the Gospel; those who follow the teachings of Jesus are powerfully empowered to live better lives. But that is only a byproduct of the Gospel, and not it's main focus. Jesus' invitation is for us to commit to a life of purpose, not comfort. Often times the purpose we have been called to is uncomfortable, and we are challenged to find fulfillment in the discomfort. Fruitfulness is not about preferences or comfort, it's about doing the will of the One who has called us. So what do we do when His will differs from our preference? The answer is: surrender! We are challenged everyday to fall in love with His purpose more intensely than our preferences, until our preference becomes His will, no matter what it is. We will be challenged to make changes that will seem uncomfortable and disruptive throughout this fast, this is the Lord calling us into fruitful living.

**Daily Questions:**

- How does Jesus' commitment to the will of the Father, in Matthew 26, challenge you in your own life?

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- Ephesians 2:10 says we are created for "good works", what do you believe these to be?

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- What lessons do you take away from the Colossians portion of our daily reading?

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**Guided Prayer:** Have you accepted Jesus' invitation in your life? Have you committed to His purpose and will? Take some time and reflect on what effect the Gospel has had in your life. What changes have taken place? How has your life reflected the commitment to God's purpose? Pray to the Lord for wisdom to identify the opportunities he has given you to serve and to be an agent of change. You may be the one God has sent to produce the change you have been waiting for.



## Day 5 (11/08): Opportunity Looks Like Deficit

**Daily Scriptures: Nehemiah 1:1 - 2:18, 1 Samuel 17:1-58**

**Daily Word:** One of the best ways the God introduces us to opportunities to be fruitful is by opening our eyes to the challenges around us. When God allows us to see a problem, there's a chance He has sent us as a solution (directly or indirectly) to that problem. Reframing problems into opportunities is a gift that we can all exercise. Those who desire to be fruitful and impactful disciples should activate this wonderful spiritual ability. Our scripture selection for today introduces us to two powerful examples of this. Nehemiah and David were both challenged to see themselves as solutions to problems that didn't seem to have anything to do with them, but they chose to care enough to cause them to access a supernatural power that pushed them beyond their natural abilities. In both cases we can see God's power working through their limitations, elevating them into supernatural ability and confidence. But, why them? Why not someone else? Because they were the ones who cared enough to step in the direction of the challenge and not run away from it. God has called us to do more than criticize problems we see; have you ever considered the possibility that God has called YOU to be the answer to the deficit around you? Whether it's in the church, our family, our workplace or our community, we must learn to reframe challenge into opportunities. God is inviting you see every problem as an opportunity for His power to be revealed in you and through you. You will be surprised to find out what God can [and wants to] do through you.

### **Daily Questions:**

- What lessons do you learn from Nehemiah's experience?

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- How does Nehemiah's prayer move him into action? How can your prayer life be impacted by this understanding?

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- What lessons do you learn from David's experience?

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**Guided Prayer:** Lord, help me see the challenges around me as opportunities to serve and display Your power. Move me away from my comfort zone and into a season of impact. Open my eyes to what You can do; I want to live by faith, and not by sight. Teach me to reframe the problems around me into opportunities, and may your name be glorified through my life. I will become Your agent of change in my Church, my home, my workplace/school, my community and the world. In Jesus name, Amen.



## Day 6 (11/09): Reject the Comfort of Omission

**Daily Scriptures: James 4:17, Romans 12:1-21, Numbers 32:1-33**

**Daily Word:** Omission is one of the most dangerous traps of the enemy. Often times we live unburdened because we are not doing evil, which is wonderful, but it's not enough. We have not been called to "not do evil", we have been called to DO GOOD! When we abstain from contributing to the cause of the Gospel, we are indeed sinning against God. This may seem harsh, but we must be challenged by this truth. Omission is comfortable, but it's deadly. It's deadly because it destroys our ability to conquer and be fruitful. When we give up on our purpose and commit to doing nothing, we are wasting the precious chance to be impactful and fruitful. Why else would God place where He has placed you, or give you the resources He has given you, or give you with the gifts He has given you? Fruitfulness is also about restlessness, and a continuous desire to be a contributor and not just a consumer of the environment God has placed me. I wonder, how would our families be affected by a change in our posture; how would our communities be affected by a change in our attitude? The example we have in Numbers 32 is a powerful illustration of what God expects from us when we are in a position to contribute. God's rebuke to the tribes of Gad and Reuben was that they had abandoned their mission, harmed their fellow soldiers and sinned against the Lord. Simply because they had chosen to not do what they could do. I pray that God moves our hearts to reject the comfort of omission just like the tribes of Gad and Reuben later did.

### **Daily Questions:**

- What lessons did you learn from the experience of the tribes of Gad and Reuben in Numbers 32?

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- After Reading Romans 12, what do you learn from the different functions and gifts within the body of Christ?

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- How are the consumer and contributor mindset different?

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**Guided Prayer:** How are you approaching your opportunities to serve? Can God entrust people in need to you? Present yourself to the Lord as a servant. Present your willingness to be a "good and faithful" servant to the Lord. Ask the Lord for forgiveness for times when you have not taken advantage of God-given opportunities to serve, whether out of fear of inconvenience, or out of distraction. Reject the comfort of omission and pray to the Lord that He may show you what He will have you do for the spread of the Gospel and live a life of fruitfulness.



## Day 7 (11/10): Life Unwasted

**Daily Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 15:10, James 1:1-27**

**Daily Word:** I remember a quote I saw in my visit to an Auschwitz Exhibit in Boston earlier this summer that was very powerful. After seeing the documented atrocities of the holocaust, it was very touching to see how the survivors found strength and the will to fight of life. This quote displays the unavoidable tension of the comfort we live in contracted by the challenges they had to overcome just to survive. I think it illustrates the message of todays reflection: "You who are passing by I beg you Do something, learn a dance step, something to justify your existence; something that gives you the right to be dressed in your skin, in your body hair. Learn to walk and to laugh, because it would be too senseless after all, for so many to have died while you live doing nothing with your life." - Auschwitz survivor Charlotte Delbo (1971). We are tempted to waste our lives, gifts, talents and opportunities on a daily basis. Fruitful living not just about calling, it's also about intentionality. Being called alone does not produce a fruitful disciple, we must develop a commitment of intentionality with the calling of God in our lives. James 1 talk about being doers, not just hearers of the word. Unfortunately, a lot of the knowledge we receive is not translated into action in our lives, and that is what God wants to change. Before we move into week 2 of our journey, we must fist commit to life a life unwasted; a life of purpose, meaning, consequence and impact. We must refuse to waste the opportunity we have been given to make the name of Jesus shine in us and through us.

### Daily Questions:

- How does Jame 1 empower you to life a life unwasted?

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- What did Paul mean in 1 Corinthians 15:10 when he said the grace of God was not in vain toward him?

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- What are some of the ways you feel called to be impactful? How will this change the way you live?

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**Guided Prayer:** Lord, I repent from the sin of omission and make myself available to accomplish You purpose and will. Make me. fruitful disciple, more so than I have ever been. May my life be impactful in all the ways You have called me to be. I desire to be Your hands and feet in every context I am able. Empower me, enable me, use me for Your glory. Amen.





## Day 8 (11/11): Born of the Spirit

**Daily Reading:** John 3:1-21, 1 Corinthians 15:45-50, Colossians 1:3-18, John 7:37-39

**Daily Word:** The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is very insightful. Nicodemus comes to Jesus seeking understanding about the spiritual world and the Kingdom of God. Jesus makes it clear to Nicodemus that the The Kingdom is spiritually discerned and spiritually accessed, that is, you can't see it or grasp it spiritually unless you are changed spiritually; unless God enables you to see it. Jesus makes it clear to Nicodemus, "...you must be born again." This "new birth" is not just about salvation, it's about a completely new experience of existence. We must understand that the spiritual life is in disagreement with the world; it contradicts the norms and culture of this age. The Apostle Paul taught the Colossians that God has "delivered us from darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." Being transported to this new kingdom means that we're now in a new domain, under new law (grace), we experience a new culture (culture is made up of values, beliefs, language, and norms). Our lives ought to be truly impacted by the interaction with the spiritual things of God, to the point that what we say, think, feel, do, prioritize and consume (visually, audibly, mentally, etc.) is shaped by the will of the Holy Spirit who abides in us. This spiritual awaking drives us to experience what Jesus described in John 7:38, "...out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." What is wonderful about this powerful image is that the living water flows for the benefit of those who also thirst for God, and not for our own benefit. Being born of the Spirit, and filled with the Spirit, is to allow His presence to pour out of us to help quench the thirst of many people around us who dwell in a dry place!

### **Daily Questions:**

- What do you learn from Jesus'interaction with Nicodemus in John 3?

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- In what ways does the culture of heaven contradict the culture of this age? How does this contradiction affect you?

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- What does Paul mean when he says "we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man." in 1 Corinthians 15:49?

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**Guided prayer:** Lord, fill me with your Holy Spirit. Let my life be shaped by Your will. I do not wish to be controlled by the things of this age; help me set my mind of the things above. I open my heart for the change You want to promote, and my rivers of living water flow from me to touch the lives of those who are thirsty for You. Amen.



## Day 9 (11/12): Christ in Us

**Daily Reading: Colossians 1:26, John 15:1-5, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Romans 8:9-11, Ephesians 3:16-21, 2 Corinthians 4:6-12**

**Daily Word:** In John 15 Jesus uses the analogy of the vine and the branches as a way to deepen our understanding about our relationship with Him and our Heavenly Father. He makes it clear that in order for us to produce "much fruit" we must abide in Him, and Him in us, because without Him we can do nothing. This powerful truth highlights the importance of our surrender. Christ in us, means we are not full of ourselves. It means we are surrendering our own nature so the nature of Christ may take over and be dominant. When we limit our spiritual experience to only what is convenient to us, we will never experience the level of change that makes us truly spiritually fruitful. If our hearts open up, even for the inconvenient and challenging changes the nature of Christ produces in us, we will experience a level of spiritual fruitfulness that otherwise would never be possible. The example of the vine and the branches is a perfect way to illustrate what must happen on the inside of us. We must allow the nature of the vine to be displayed above our own. With this, we experience the true power of Christ in us. We don't have to feel alone, unsure, insufficient, unqualified, unsupported, forsaken or weak; Christ in us is strength, power, wisdom, enablement and much more.

### **Daily Questions:**

- Read John 3:30-35 and respond, what did John the Baptist mean when He said "I must decrease that He may increase"?

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- What changes has the nature of Christ produced in you?

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- What does it mean to have the life of Jesus be manifested in our body, as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:10?

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**Guided prayer:** Lord, I pray that I may decrease so that Your presence may be increased in me. I want to be the branch in the vine, abiding in You and that Your presence may abide in me. Help me look, sound and act more like Christ, may His life be manifested in my body. I desire to be spiritually fruitful and for the nature of Christ to shine through me. Amen.



## Day 10 (11/13): You Have the Mind of Christ

**Daily Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16**

**Daily Word:** I think of the mind of Christ being the way Jesus sees things. Having the mind of Christ is allowing His perspective to trump ours. When we consider this, we must look at the words of Jesus to discern what attitudes and ways of thinking embody Jesus and character. Having the mind of Christ also means we understand God's plan in the world - to bring glory to Himself, restore creation to its original state, and redeem the fallen nature of humanity. Not only that, but we should consider Jesus's purpose ("to seek and to save what was lost" - Luke 19:10), His perspective on humility and obedience (Philippians 2:5-8), compassion (Matthew 9:36) prayerful dependence on God (Luke 5:16), holiness ad etc. Having the mind of Christ means to shape our lives according to His pattern and standards. In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul teaches us five truths about the mind of Christ. First, the mind of Christ stands in sharp contrast to the wisdom of man (verses 5-6). Second, the mind of Christ involves wisdom from God, once hidden but now revealed (verse 7). Third, the mind of Christ is given to believers through the Spirit of God (verses 10-12). Fourth, the mind of Christ cannot be understood by those without the Spirit (verse 14). Fifth, the mind of Christ gives believers discernment in spiritual matters (verse 15).

### **Daily Questions:**

- How does the idea having the mind of Christ challenge you?

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- What did Paul mean when he says the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man?

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- What are some of the attitudes that, in your opinion, most reflect the mind of Christ?

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**Guided prayer:** In what ways are manifesting the mind of Christ? Consider His perspective, His plan, His purpose, how aligned are you with them? Pray to the Lord that you may receive the mind of Christ and be shaped by your understanding of Him and His Character.



## Day 11 (11/14): Supernatural Living

**Daily Reading:** Ephesians 5:1-21, Romans 6:1-14, Romans 12:1-21

**Daily Word:** When we think of supernatural, we think of the Hollywood movie special effects and things that defy the laws of physics. I would submit to you that these cinematic fantasies are not what supernatural living is all about. Don't get me wrong, I truly believe that God is able to do anything. All things are possible when we're talking about a God who opened the Red Sea and the Jordan River; the same God who did the wonders described in the Old Testament is still working today. However, that is not what I'm referring to when I talk about supernatural living. We will approach the concept of the supernatural life with the understanding that supernatural is that which transcends the natural order of things. Supernatural living is not about depending on reality-defying miracles everyday, it's about living in a way that defies and challenges the natural patterns and tendencies of our nature and culture. When I think of supernatural living, I remember the story of Noah. Genesis 6:5 says *"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* Then the story takes a turn and surprises us with verse 8 and 9: *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."* Most of us would label Noah's life as supernatural because of the way God spoke to him about building the ark, or the fact that he survived the flood miraculously. I would suggest that those things happened because Noah was ALREADY living a supernatural life; his way of life was a protest to the chaos and evil around him. Supernatural living is about rejecting the tendencies of our own nature and contradicting the patterns around us by expressing the culture of heaven and the character of Christ. If you want to display a supernatural life live holy, express the love the Jesus, live according to the wisdom of God, walk in the light of God, serve God with your Spiritual Gifts (as described in Romans 12), behave like Christ, be generous, be kind and patient, persevere in prayer, bless those who persecute you, love without hypocrisy and serve the Lord wholeheartedly. That us what supernatural living is all about!

### **Daily Questions:**

- What does this understanding of supernatural living teach you? How will you live differently?

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- What gifts, as described in Romans 12, most impact you and why?

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**Guided prayer:** Lord help me live a supernatural life. Raise me up in my generation as a beacon of righteousness. As Noah was considered righteous by You in a generation of wickedness, help me live in a way that honors Your name. Awaken in my life the spiritual gift described in Romans 12. I make myself available for You to use me in whatever way you see fit. In Jesus name, Amen.



## Day 12 (11/15): Intentional Fruitfulness

**Daily Reading: Mark 4:1-32, John 15:18-25, Psalms 73: 26-28**

**Daily Word:** Once we understand our calling to a fruitful life, we must accept the reality that the world is a hostile environment to the seed of the Kingdom of God. That means that we must be intentional about the virtuous fruitful living we hope to engage in. As we learned yesterday, the life of a disciple of Jesus goes against the tendencies and patterns of our culture; our way of life, our families, our decisions and priorities contradict what this world finds appealing or acceptable. The fact is that fruitfulness will not happen by chance, we must be intentional. This world will take advantage of any little gap we leave behind to try to prevent our virtuous fruitfulness from being expressed. Intentionality is about strategy and priority; either we make virtuous fruitfulness our mission, or it won't happen at all. In Mark 4, we need the sower as a symbol of who we are as representatives of the Kingdom of God; we are disciples of Jesus scattering the seed of the Kingdom of God. The success of the sower in the parable is attributed to three things: he took on the identity of a sower, he took initiative, and he insisted even when the first three attempts failed. Firstly, let us learn with this example that we must be sowers, wherever we go let us sow the seed of the Kingdom. Secondly, let us take initiative, we should be bold and active in the pursuit of change and fruitfulness; passiveness does not lead to fruitfulness. Thirdly, let us be encouraged to persevere; fruitfulness does not happen overnight, it requires dedication and tenacity.

### **Daily Questions:**

- In what areas are you committing to be more fruitful?

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- What does it mean for you to be more intentional about your virtuous fruitfulness?

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- Between these three lessons (identity, initiative, insistence), what speaks more deeply to you and why?

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**Guided prayer:** Have you been intentional about fruitfulness in your life? Have you been intentional about fruitfulness in your family (marriage, children, parents)? Have you been intentional about fruitfulness in your professional/academic life? What steps have you taken to overcome passiveness and lethargy? Pray to the Lord for boldness and step in faith to produce the environment necessary for powerful fruitfulness in your life.



**Days 13-21:**

# **The Fruit of the Spirit**

In John 15, Jesus teaches His disciples about the importance of fruitfulness in their spiritual journey. Jesus goes so far as to say that when a branch that is grafted into Him does not bear fruit, the Father cuts it off! Why such a drastic action? If we consider that the gardener (God, the Father) is perfect, the vine and the root (God, the Son, Jesus) are perfect, the one who produces the fruit (God, the Holy Spirit) is perfect and the soil (the Kingdom of God) is perfect, we will understand that, the branch is what must be dealt with if it remains unfruitful.

The issue with the unfruitful branch, is that it has no justification for not bearing fruit. By having the perfect gardener, it is getting the best care; by remaining in the perfect vine, it is getting the best sap; because it has perfect soil, it is getting the best nourishment; if, with all this investment, it still does not bear fruit, this shows an unwillingness of the branch to assume the fruitful identity of the vine. It is, therefore, a resistance to the nature of the vine; it is a resistance to the nature of Christ.

The purpose of surrendering to the Lord is to allow the nature of Christ to fill and overtake us. Eventually, every disciple of Christ should look more like Christ than him or herself. Receiving the nature of Christ is necessary because fruit is all about nature. Fruitfulness is not about effort or willpower, it is the unavoidable result of a natural process; the fruit is the outward expression of the inner nature. The Fruit of the Spirit is the most powerful evidence of a change in nature in us. Although the Gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-11) are extremely important and must be desired, we must not neglect the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23). The Gifts of the Spirit have to do with FUNCTION, the Fruit of the Spirit have to do with CHARACTER and essence. We must be careful to never accept spiritual gifts absent of the Fruit of the Spirit. Throughout this last section of our devotional we will take a deeper look at each of the nine attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit. Our daily focus will be:

- **Day 13 (11/16):** Love
- **Day 14 (11/17):** Joy
- **Day 15 (11/18):** Peace
- **Day 16 (11/19):** Longsuffering
- **Day 17 (11/20):** Kindness
- **Day 18 (11/21):** Goodness
- **Day 19 (11/22):** Faithfulness
- **Day 20 (11/23):** Gentleness
- **Day 21 (11/24):** Self-control



## Day 13 (11/16): Love

**Daily Reading:** John 13:34-35, Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:6,14,  
1 Corinthians 13 :1-13

**Daily Word:** Love, joy and peace are the first three attributes of the fruit of the Spirit, and they express the Godward aspects of our Christian living. You'll notice that every attribute leads you to the next attribute, it's a chain reaction of Spiritual fruitfulness. Love has a distinct place among other spiritual attributes, because love is a commandment, not an option. Love is a test of our discipleship, it is the main element that identifies the disciple of Christ. Love opens the gateway for all other attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit and validates all spiritual gifts for, without love, the gifts are ineffective. The powerful revelation Jesus makes in John 13:34 and 35 should put us on notice. Love is the purest expression of the nature of Christ and the way He wants to be represented above all else. The problem is when we consider other expressions of spirituality and maturity to be more important or even more valid than love. The reason why it is commanded is because we were loved first; He loved us before we were ever aware of His love, before we were ever appreciative of His love, before we ever felt the need to respond to His love. Because He loved us this way, we should be forever in awe of His marvelous loving nature, and committed to love as He did.

### Daily Questions:

- What are some ways you have experienced the love of God?

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- How does love reveal God 's character?

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- What are some of the ways His loved can be expressed through you?

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**Guided prayer:** Beloved Holy Spirit, teach me to love as Christ loved. My desire is to be an agent of the Lord, who communicates Your love in all circumstances. I make myself available to be an expression of Your love to the ones who don't yet know You. Fill me with wisdom and increase my capacity to love as You would have me do. Amen.



## Day 14 (11/17): Joy

**Daily Reading: 1 Timothy 1:5-7, Psalm 43:1 -5, Habakkuk 3:17-19**

**Daily Word:** Joy is the second of the three attributes that express the Godward aspect of Christian living. It is directly connected to the previous attribute (love) because, we can only experience true joy if indeed we understand how the love of God has reached us. Joy is much more than a feeling, it is an attitude. Attitude means behavior dictated by inner disposition; manner, conduct. We easily confuse joy with pleasure or happiness. Pleasure occurs in the body as a result of physical and neurological stimuli; happiness resides in the soul, as a result of favorable circumstances that produce a feeling of satisfaction. Joy is manifest in the spirit, and is independent of bodily stimuli, or favorable circumstances. Joy has to do with closeness and relationship with the Lord. Once we understand how much He loved us, and that everything He does is for my good, it matters not what circumstances surround us, the enemy will never steal our joy.

### **Daily Questions:**

- What is the relationship between love and joy?

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- How does joy reveal God 's character?

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- Is it possible to remain joyful in times of adversity ? How?

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- What are some ways the enemy tries to steal your joy? How are you resisting it?

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**Guided prayer:** Beloved Holy Spirit, teach me to love as Christ loved. My desire is to be an agent of the Lord, who communicates Your love in all circumstances. Help me to live with unwavering joy. May my rejoicing not be dependent on favorable circumstances, for difficult days are part of life. I put my trust and joy in the Lord of my salvation, so that I will never be shaken. Amen.



## Day 15 (11/18): Peace

**Daily Reading:** Isaiah 53:4-8, Colossians 1:13-23, Philippians 4:4-7.

**Daily Word:** Peace is about ending conflict, not because one defeats the other, but because of reconciliation. Conflict was brought into the earth through sin; on account of sin, we became enemies of God. However, Christ has brought us full reconciliation, and today, we have true peace. Once we enjoy peace with God, we also have a responsibility to be agents of peace, through the reconciliation that is in Christ. If we do not promote peace among men, we do not truly know the peace of Christ. Peace as an attribute of the Fruit of the Spirit is not attached to "favorable circumstances", but it is attached to the confidence that the Lord is in control. The word in Hebrew for peace is SHALOM, which means much more than the absence of conflict, it also means complete, restored and whole. In Isaiah 9:6 Jesus is called the "Prince of Peace" and, through Him, we are restored and made complete. The enemy preys on vulnerable hearts and tries to steal our peace by producing anxiety and worry. That is why we must seek the Lord because, the closer we are to Jesus, the more His peace fills our hearts. Maturity is not letting our circumstances dictate our level of peace; our peace is supported by how great and in-control our God is.

**Daily Questions:**

- How is Peace affected by the previous 2 attributes of the Fruit Holy Spirit?

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- Is it possible to have true peace in times of adversity? Share your experience.

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- In what ways can you be an agent of peace? How can peace be an expression of the character of Christ through you?

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**Guided prayer:** Beloved Holy Spirit, I pray to You for Your grace to overcome the limitations of my humanity, and produce in my spirit peace as an attribute of the Fruit of the Spirit. Protect my heart from anxiety and fear. Use me as an agent of reconciliation to promote peace; I long to be a witness of Your greatness and Your power. In the name of Jesus, amen.



## Day 16 (11/19): Longsuffering

**Daily Reading:** Romans 5:1-5, James 1:2-4, James 1:19-27.

**Daily Word:** Longsuffering means patience; you can not experience true patience without having experienced complete peace. Patience has to do with two different realities; first, the firmness to remain steadfast in the face of difficult times. Second, it is a matter of delaying anger and avoiding the pursuit of revenge. Patience as an attribute of the Fruit of the Spirit is not about personality or temperament, it is about a total conviction that God is in control, and this understanding brings us total balance and resolve. When we are impatient, we hinder the work of God in our lives; impatience leads to aborted purpose. Great things take time to develop, but we live in a fast paced world that demands everything to happen quickly. If we want to experience the purpose of God and participate in His great work, we must learn patience and perseverance.

### **Daily Questions:**

- What is the relationship between patience and peace?

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- How can peace and patience protect us from the snares of the enemy?

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- What do you learn about patience in the passages of Scripture above?

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**Guided prayer:** Lord give me the ability, through Your Holy Spirit, to be patient and persevere. Don't allow my impatience to be a hinderance to Your purpose being fulfilled in my life. May the Fruit of Your Holy Spirit be present in my life and overpower my personality and temperament. Help me stay committed to Your process, Your purpose and Your will. In Jesus name, amen.



## Day 17 (11/20): Kindness

**Daily Reading:** Luke 6:27-31, Matthew 7:12, Galatians 6:9, Ecclesiastes 11:1-2.

**Daily Word:** The essence of kindness is to treat others the way we would like to be treated. It 's not so hard to act kindly with people we love, it doesn't even require that much effort . The fruit of the Spirit manifests itself even more gloriously when there is no personal interest directly tied to our kindness. When the immediate reward is not so obvious, the eternal reward is more excellent. Following the progression of the attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit we notice that one attribute leads us to the other. We started with love, which leads us to joy, and the inevitable result is a life of peace. After being filled with love, joy and peace, we become more patient (longsuffering) and also kindness is manifested. The work of the Lord is perfect and we should embrace all that the Spirit of God produces in us. We should not be controlled by bitterness, we must let ourselves be shaped by what the Holy Spirit produces in us.

### **Daily Questions:**

- What is the relationship between kindness and longsuffering?

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- Think of an example of kindness that impacted you. What lesson did you learn from this experience ?

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- How can Kindness be a way to show the love of God toward someone else?

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- What lessons do you learn with the passages of Scripture above?

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**Guided prayer:** Beloved Holy Spirit, I present myself to You as an earthen vessel, use me as You wish. I desire to be a bearer of Your kindness. I ask that my life be a tool in Your hands to reveal Your glory to the world. Rebuke everything in me that is not kind and fulfill your will in me. Amen.



## Day 18 (11/21): Goodness

**Daily Reading:** Mark 10:17-18, 1 Corinthians 6 :1-8.

**Daily Word:** To understand goodness better, we need to review our definition of what is good. The word "good" has been diluted significantly in our language to mean "nice " or "pleasant". In fact, its meaning is deeper; "good" means: "to comply fully with what is required as to its nature, suitability, function, efficacy and purpose." The question that remains is, "who is requiring?"; the answer is, God. Only God is indeed good therefore, goodness can not be produced within ourselves because we would never be able to correspond with what God requires of our nature, suitability , function or efficacy. Only the Holy Spirit in us can produce true goodness. This means that when goodness is produced in us by the Spirit , we become a model of God's nature to the world; we have become a sample of heavenly culture in the midst of a corrupted generation. A Cardinal and Archbishop of the Catholic Church, Emmanuel Suhard, put it this way: "To be a living witness to the goodness of God is to be a walking mystery; it is to live in such a way that your life would not make sense if God did not exist ."

**Daily Questions:**

- What is the relationship between kindness and goodness?

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- Think of an example of goodness that impacted you. What lesson did you learn from this experience?

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- Expressing kindness and goodness means that sometimes we will have to give in and give up things that benefit us. How to deal with these situations?

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**Guided prayer:** Heavenly father, may my life be a display of Your goodness on the earth. I reject everything this world and culture consider acceptable and I remain committed to what pleases You. Keep me from the temptation of being awestruck by the things of this world. I want to be fulfilled in You and in You alone. Amen.



## Day 19 (11/22): Faithfulness

**Daily Reading: 2 Timothy 1:12, Proverbs 28:20, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Luke 16:10.**

**Daily Word:** The last three attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit reveal the self-ward aspects of Christian living. We start with faithfulness (original word PISTOS, meaning faith or faithfulness), it is the ability to trust God without vacillating, as well as being a reliable steward and showing an example of God's faithfulness and trust-worthiness. This attribute of the Fruit of the Spirit is something that needs to be cultivated and requires constant maintenance. Loyalty starts with small things, this is the true test of character. In the Kingdom of God, those who are faithful in the little things are well suited to take on greater opportunities for responsibility. If we are not zealous with our commitments and responsibilities, we will not be a good example of the Lord's faithfulness.

### **Daily Questions:**

- What are some ways we can become an example of God's faithfulness?

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- Do you find it more challenging to be faithful with a little or a lot? why?

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- In your opinion, how is faithfulness related to the previous 6 attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit?

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**Guided prayer:** Beloved Holy Spirit, I praise You for Your faithfulness, and I submit to You as my source of authority. Teach me how to behave, how to live so that the Lord's faithfulness is illustrated in my life. Fill my heart with conviction, produce Your fruit in my life and use me for Your glory. Amen.



## Day 20 (11/23): Meekness

**Daily Reading: Numbers 12 :3, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 , Matthew 5:5.**

**Daily Word:** Meekness, as an attribute of the fruit of the Spirit, has nothing to do with personality or temperament; It is also not a sign of weakness. Meekness is strength under control, it is ferocity tamed; meekness is the perfect display of authority. A person who shows aggression or lack of control, does not transmit strength, but insecurity. Only those who have experienced God 's faithfulness live in meekness. If we have experience with God's faithfulness, we know that He has never failed, nor will He fail; this brings us tranquility and ease. In other words, there is no need to offend anyone or get angry, because God remains faithful and, sooner or later, the enemy will have to bow before the authority of our God.

### **Daily Questions:**

- Moses was called "very meek, above all men on earth." Do you identify this with a display of weakness or strength? Why?

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- What does Paul's statement mean to you: "the power of God is made perfect in weakness"?

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- How does meekness reveal the character of Christ?

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**Guided prayer:** Lord teach me meekness; I do not want to be controlled by my emotions. May Your Holy Spirit produce in me the strength necessary to say "no" and walk away. Help me deal with those around me in a way that reveal Your nature and not mine. In Jesus name, Amen.



## Day 21 (11/24): Self Control

**Daily Reading:** Philippians 2:12-13, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 1 Corinthians 10:23-33, Proverbs 25:28 , Proverbs 16:32 , 1 Peter 4:1-7.

**Daily Word:** Self control has to do with the total mastery of our reactions with regard to our character, morality, feelings, emotions, thoughts and conduct. Self control speaks of God's expectation that we control our impulses and desires. Evidently, it is not possible to produce this attribute of the Fruit of the Spirit without the express work of the Holy Spirit in us; on the other hand, the Holy Spirit will not produce His fruit in us without our doing our part. It is God who does the work, but we are the ones who work it out. Paul goes so far as to suggest that something doesn't necessarily have to be sin in order to need to be avoided. He suggests that we ask 3 basic questions to determine if something is useful or not: is it useful ? Does it edify? Will it glorify God? Self -control is an intervention mechanism of the Holy Spirit to prevent us from being enslaved by our own desires; we can not be servants of ourselves, we must be servants of the Most High God.

### **Daily Questions:**

- What will your search for the fruit of the Spirit lead you to do differently in your daily life?

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- How should we practice self control? How did this time of Fasting contribute to your spiritual fruit-bearing process?

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- What differences do you identify in your relationship with the Holy Spirit as a result of these 3 weeks of fasting?

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**Guided prayer:** [You are the one who will write the last prayer of our fast. Be intentional in your declaration to the Holy Spirit, commit to practical changes in your daily life, and try to synthesize your learning in gratitude to the Lord for this time of consecration.]