



SECOND BAPTIST  
CONNECT

21 DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

Dear Faith Family,

What a joy it is to serve you and to be a small part of what God is doing at Second Baptist. I am truly humbled by all God has done in our church during the past year. Families are visiting and joining our fellowship, people are being saved, homes are being restored and God continues to increase our territory. While these things are wonderful, they are not the total picture of our church, community and world. There still exists a major need for genuine revival in our church. The next 21 days will draw our hearts into a focused time of prayer and fasting, as we seek to CONNECT with God, His Word and His Will for our lives and our church.

Each day you will read a selected passage of Scripture and read the insights of a fellow believer from the Second family. I would ask that you take time to not only contemplate the thoughts of your brothers and sisters, but meditate on the verses for yourself. Begin each devotional with prayer, asking God to teach you and change you.

So the question stands, Will you join us in seeking the Lord Jesus, allowing him to mold you and conform you to His will and seek His heart for our future?" If so, then I invite you to turn the page and begin your personal journey to God awakening your heart, and being made aware of the world's need for Jesus Christ.

For His Glory,

Justin Hiens

DAY 1: 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5  
SAM COLEMAN  
FEBRUARY 3, 2020

*Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!*

*2 Corinthians 13:5*

The first cars I drove as a teenager were classics—and by classics I mean they were 20-30 years old and terribly unreliable. I drove on a hope and a prayer that I would get to where I was going. As I drove I could hear creaks, ticks, knocks, bumps, squeals and squeaks. Each sound would make me anxious about what could go wrong, but I came up with a solution to fix my anxiety while driving: I turned the radio up loud. With the music blasting, I could cruise completely ignorant of the ominous noises coming from the car.

Now I know what I should have done. I should have taken the time to open the hood, find out what was making the different noises, and then just fix it in the comfort of my home with all the resources I need at my disposal. But I thought as long as I didn't look for a problem, it wouldn't really be there. As you can imagine, I spent a lot of time as teenager on the side of the road with a car that no longer made any noises at all!

Sometimes we treat our faith like I treated my cars. There may be warning signs that we choose to ignore. We know that something is going wrong but are afraid of what we'll find if we go looking. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul encourages us to go looking into our faith, to test it ourselves. The faults in our faith will show themselves eventually. It's up to us whether those faults are shown in the comfort and safety of prayer and introspection or if they will become evident in times of crisis and temptation.

As we prepare for the LifeAction Summit, we need to examine our faith so we can be open to revival when it comes. Don't wait until the week of revival to ask God to move in your life, start asking Him now. Ask the Lord what part of your life needs to be checked on. Ask Him to show you where you lack. And be prepared for Him to answer!

**DAY 2: HEBREWS 4:12**  
**LEROY SEGRAVES**  
**FEBRUARY 4, 2020**

*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

*Hebrews 4:12*

Today we will be looking at Hebrews 4:12. The verse begins with the words, "For the word of God". The first thing we need to do is understand what the term "word" is referring to in this verse. In many instances in the Bible the term "word" is referring to Jesus Christ. We see this in John 1:1 where it states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (referring to Jesus). We also see it in John 1:14 stating, "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".

However, the term "word" in Hebrews 4:12 is not referring to Jesus Christ. In this verse the term "word" is referring to God's full, total, complete message to mankind. In the past God had spoken through dreams, angelic appearances and various miracles. God can still use those methods to communicate with us today, however, our primary contact and communication with God today is through His written word, the Bible. The Word of God is not just a collection of words from God but rather a vehicle for communicating God's ideas to man. The writer of Hebrews makes four very distinct statements concerning God's Word, the Bible.

First, God's Word is living, it's life-changing, it's dynamic, and it causes things to happen. It drives home warnings for the disobedient and promises for the believer. Second, God's Word is active as we allow it to work within us. God's Word is not something that we passively hear and then ignore. It actively works in our lives, changes us, and prods us to become actively engaged in God's work. Third, God's Word is sharper than a double-edged sword penetrating to the soul and spirit. With the sharpness of the surgeon's knife, God's Word cuts to the very core of our being and reveals who we are. It exposes what is truly within us—the good, the bad, and the ugly. The fourth statement is that God's Word judges the very thoughts and attitudes of our heart. I have told my Sunday school class numerous times, "what we do here in secret is open scandal in heaven." God sees it all! We need to listen to God's word and allow it to shape our lives!

**DAY 3: PSALM 37:7**  
**AMBER PARKER**  
**FEBRUARY 5, 2020**

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!*  
*Psalm 37:7*

Raechel Myers once said that we cannot begin a conversation about justice anywhere but at the cross of Jesus. To paraphrase, life is not fair. We will rob ourselves of the joy of this life if we are constantly worrying about how someone else is getting ahead in this world.

We, as believers, often think that we have the right to point fingers at those who don't have the same values. We forget that salvation and a relationship with Jesus is a gift that we chose to accept. We choose to do life with Jesus. When we say "yes" to Him, we are set apart. We become different. The problem, more often than not, is we expect the world to change with us. We set the bar and then start to shake our heads and cross our arms when others don't reach it. And, here's the deal.... We can't hold the world accountable to a standard that it does not want.

If I am worrying about what the world is doing, I don't have the time to make sure that I am doing what needs to be done for His Kingdom. God's got this. The fight is fixed. He already knows how this all ends and my fret and worry will not change a single thing. He doesn't need me to blow my whistle and call foul. My job is to make sure I am doing what He asks of me and He will take care of the rest.

Jesus said in John 12:47, "If anyone hears my words and doesn't keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save it."

Well, if Jesus didn't come to judge, I am certainly not going to try my hand at it. This world has enough problems without me being one of them. I may not be able to save the world, but I can do my best to point it to the One who does. A good place to start is to tell our own story of redemption. Everyone loves a good story and the ones that He writes are always the best.

My hope is that God wrestles with each of us during this time of devotion. May the script He writes for us be an encouragement for others to seek out a love story written just for them.

**DAY 4: ROMANS 8:26-27**  
**PAT EDMUNDSON**  
**FEBRUARY 6, 2020**

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

*Romans 8:26-27*

I have often had the thought that it is a wonderful thing that our God and the Holy Spirit are in charge of our lives and not us. We are sometimes blundering idiots, so to speak, when we are caught up in the troubles that we face. Sometimes our lack of faith shows through even to those outside the faith, even though this is not our aim at all.

J. Vernon McGee said, "Have you gone to God sometimes in prayer when you actually did not know what to pray for? All you could do was just go to Him and say, 'Father.' You could not ask anything because you didn't know what to ask for."

I know that you and I have had many times such as this, when things have weighed so heavily on our hearts and minds that only one word comes to mind as we begin our prayer and that word is, "Father." Our human minds are just not set to understand everything that we face in this world.

God loves us so much and understands us so well that He has provided the services of the Holy Spirit to step in and guide us through those tough times when we do not have the understanding of where to go or to turn. Only God, through the Holy Spirit, is able to guide us through our pains and sufferings—physically, mentally, and emotionally—and keep us in His will.

Notice in these verses also that the Spirit loves us so much that He also groans along with us in presenting our cases to the Lord. During His earthly ministry, Jesus groaned over the trials and tribulations of His people. The Holy Spirit turns His groaning into prayer to direct us into the will of God. Isn't it a wonderful fact that God loves us so much that He has sent the Holy Spirit to intercede and guide us through the awful and strength-draining times we must face day to day. The very best way we can overcome uncertain times of today is to know that He is in control and look forward to the day when all groaning and tribulations will be gone and we are all in the presence of our blessed Savior.

DAY 5: PSALM 77:11-12  
TONYA DIXON  
FEBRUARY 7, 2020

*I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old. I will meditate on all your work, and muse on your mighty deeds.*

*Psalm 77:11-12*

I really like the "TimeHop" app on my smart phone. The reason it's so enjoyable is I get to see what stories or photos I shared on social media years ago. I'm reminded of milestones my five children have made, places we've traveled, and experiences we have shared with family and friends. The Psalmist in this passage didn't have a phone or scrapbook to remember how God had blessed him or worked in his life. However, he still could recall in his memory the amazing works he knew God had done. Interestingly, he writes about remembering the faithfulness of God when the previous verses 1-10 only speak to his intense turmoil of the present.

The Year 2019 was a dark one for me. My health was failing, I was experiencing daily physical pain, and my disabled daughter was struggling and needing lots of tests and long distance hospital visits. Everywhere I turned there was another problem, delay, shut door, or complication with insurance. Yet in my darkest moments, when I was crying out in my bed for God to relieve me of my suffering or just take me home, His Spirit gently recalled His promises to my mind. We often don't understand why God allows us to suffer. As the psalmist cries out in verse 9, "Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" I cried out so many days in my emotional and physical pain "WHY GOD? WHY? You KNOW I love you. Why are you allowing this to happen?"

After verses 11-12 the psalmist declares in vs.13, "His way is holy." He is realizing that suffering reveals the holiness of God. He continues, "You are the God who works wonders; you have displayed your might among the peoples." Even though he is still in the midst of deep agony and trouble, he declares after these pivotal verses 11-12 that God will be glorified through his darkest days. His faith is strengthened, because he trusts that his unchanging God who has done it before will do it again. He is writing to point others to Him in worship, praise, and adoration because his hope is in who he knows He is.

What is so beautiful about memorizing scripture is that the Holy Spirit can remind us of His works through His Word hidden in our hearts, without our even needing to open our Bibles. Have you ever been in the middle of pouring your heart out in prayer of desperation to God and a verse of Scripture suddenly pops into your head? It didn't just come to your mind randomly. That is God's Spirit in you reminding you of who He is! Dwell on it and treasure it. It is His answer to your very need.

DAY 6: JOEL 2:12-13  
JUSTIN HIENS  
FEBRUARY 8, 2020

*“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.*

*Joel 2:12-13*

Revival is spoken of, preached about and prayed for on a consistent basis. Yet, revival still tarries around us. As you read this devotional I want to invite you to do the one thing that is required for revival to come. Draw a circle around you figuratively and realize that you cannot control what takes place outside of it. However, as you focus on yourself and your heart, I want you to heed the words of the prophet, Joel. When is the last time you were broken for your sin and for the Lord to move in a mighty way? While fasting and weeping and mourning are essential to revival, I think the key is found in verse 13. Joel says, “Rend your heart and not your garments.”

In the Old Testament, a sign of repentance was to rend or tear their garments as an external testimony of brokenness. Joel was not concerned with how we looked to others, but rather how we were broken before God himself. What would it look like to rend your heart before Him this day? Maybe you are hesitant to deal with your sin and wayward ways, but take heart that God is not waiting to punish you for your sin. Instead, Joel reminds us that God is “compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.” So as you consider your heart and your walk with Christ, let me plead with you to not leave that circle until your heart has been torn for revival.



## DAY 7: PROVERBS 28:13

JERRY WILLIAMS

FEBRUARY 9, 2020

*"Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy."*

*Proverbs 28:13*

We sin by thinking, speaking, acting evil or omitting good. These things separate us from God. Raise your hand if you didn't sin today or yesterday! Solomon, who was said to be the wisest of all men, wrote this proverb we're considering today. The proverbs give instruction on how to live wisely and successfully in the fear of the Lord.

This scripture is strictly universal in that it applies to every living human being and to all people who ever lived on this planet. Since we were old enough to know right from wrong, our conscious minds would continue to convince us to hide and cover up our sins. It doesn't matter how big or small the sinful act was. Maybe you stole a cookie from the cookie jar but you told your mama, "No, it wasn't me!" In the beginning Adam and Eve tried to hide from God after they sinned.

The idea of guilt is considered medieval, obsolete, and unhealthy. However, our standard as a believer is the Bible, although the world shuns it. David realized it was the heavy hand of God upon him when he kept silent about the sin he committed with Bathsheba. Psalm 51 tells of David's godly sorrow.

More importantly, our hidden sin prevents us from prospering and a dark cloud follows us around. It's as if we're shackled in our mind and spirit but we're too proud to admit it. Who do we think we're fooling? Because God is omnipotent and omnipresent, He is aware of it all.

Billy Graham said sin is so serious that God's son had to die in order to pay for it. Most of us have heard this but think about it again: Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay. However, 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Praise His Name!

God says if you will, I will. If I will humble myself, seek His face and abide in Him, then He'll hear from heaven, heal, and work in my situation. God wants to restore us and extend His mercy.

DAY 8: 1 JOHN 1:9  
KATIE KEATHLEY  
10, 2020



*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*1 John 1:9*

After a day full of errands, mom was helping Nora and Ollie out of their car seats when she noticed two freshly inked heart symbols drawn on the back of her headrest. Mom realized then she had a decision to make. She could get angry or use this as a teachable moment.

While it was obvious as to whose hand was at work here, she graciously gave both an opportunity to come clean. For fear of what was to come in the form of punishment, both tried to hide of their guilt behind this unforgivable act.

Mom explained she wasn't sure how Ollie could have done this, as he was strapped in his carseat on the opposite side of the car. He was not one to draw hearts if given the opportunity. She then directly asked Nora if she was responsible for drawing on the back of her headrest. Nora slowly lowered her head, her lips began to quiver and her eyes filled with tears. She suffered needlessly, as it brought her great shame when her sin sold her out to someone she deeply loved.

Don't we all act this way? Our guilt and shame are either too much to confess to God OR we use Jesus going to the cross as our own daily soap cleansing for our sins. Whether we confess or not, God already knows. But good news is—He didn't wait for us to better ourselves as a condition of atoning for our mistakes. Rather, He sent His son, Jesus Christ, to be the ultimate substitution for our sins. Yes, consequences often result from our disobedience but it's through our brokenness that we learn where healthy humility lies. And through our humility, we grow to understand that God uses it to bring us gratitude, not shame.

That day, mom was given the perfect opportunity to teach Nora and Ollie about sin, confession and forgiveness. What started out as sinful disobedience now serves as affirmation for our family. Just like God, mom wanted Nora to willingly admit she had sinned so she could experience the joy in knowing that we have been passed over by our sin through Jesus Christ.

If we want the loving promises of God, we have to be willing to live a life that is pleasing to God with a joyful and obedient heart, that includes coming clean to God through our confession of sin.

DAY 9: JAMES 4:10  
SHELLY WEBB  
FEBRUARY 11, 2020

*Humble yourselves in the sight the Lord, and he will lift you up.  
James 4:10*

What does humbling ourselves really mean? It's described as an action or thought offered with or affected by a modest estimate of one's own importance— not proud, arrogant, haughty or assertive. Bowing before the Lord means recognizing that our worth comes from God alone. To be humble means leaning on His power and His guidance, and not our own independent way. Although we do not deserve God's favor, He wants to lift us up and give us worth and dignity, despite our human shortcomings.

Some translations use the word, "exalt," which means to raise someone up to a high position or status. Trust Him to exalt us when the time is right without trying to get that glory for ourselves. We agree not to make our daily lives about ourselves and our God promises to make it about us when and how He sees fit.

That is how Jesus lived... He made himself lowly and nothing. He became a servant even to death. Then when the time was right God exalted Jesus to the highest place. (Phil 2:7-9)

God call us to walk the same path: humility today, God's glory forever. We are lifted up so that filled with His grace, we can be a more effective force for good and holiness on the earth. When He lifts us up, He takes us out of our narrow self-focused concerns and gives us a sense of His grandeur, His power and His love.

God cares for us. He is mighty. He calls us to humble ourselves under Him. Not because He is a controlling God that wants you to bow down to Him because you are nothing, but rather because He wants to exalt us and care for us. This grows our reverence (fear) of God by allowing Him to do His work in us and through us. As we humble ourselves, that is when we truly worship Him. We're trusting Him with what's going on in our lives and believing He is the provider instead of ourselves. Are we doing all that we can in giving Him reverence, trusting Him with all that we are, and allowing Him to do His good work in us?

DAY 10: ROMANS 12:2  
DANNY CARR  
FEBRUARY 12, 2020

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

*Romans 12:2*

Let's look at this verse and break it down. "Do not conform to the pattern of this world". We must not conform to the things of the world. We must not conform to men or to the evil of this world. The world wants to control your mind, but God wants to transform your mind. We face decisions every day to live as God would have us to or to conform to the world. We cannot serve both. We must not give ourselves to the world, but instead give everything we are to God—

"But be transformed by the renewing of your mind." When we accept Christ, we are new, we are different, we are in fact transformed into a new creation. The renewing of the mind is the renewing of the whole man. Through this, we can die more and more to sin, and live more and more in righteousness. In renewing your mind you give your body, your mind and your soul. Only in Christ can we have this true renewal.

"Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will." God's will, His plan for your life is what we should always seek. His plan for you is so much bigger and better than anything we could ever think of or imagine. His will is good and is good for us. It is pleasing to God. For us to be where God wants us to be, we must conform to His will and serve Him accordingly. His will is perfect and only His plan for your life is perfect, because only He is perfect.

Those who are truly transformed in Christ can and will be able to test and approve what is God's good, pleasing, and perfect will. Each morning we should give ourselves to God and seek His will for our lives, striving to serve Him as He wants us to. By doing this, we can live as the new person He has made us, and can truly be different, and live for Him.

**DAY 11: 2 CORINTHIANS 7:1**  
**CHERRY HIENS**  
**FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*  
*2 Corinthians 7:1*

What an encouraging verse for our daily walk with God!! If you go back to the few verses above in 2 Corinthians 6:16-18, God is reminding us that He is our God, therefore we are to be set apart. Because of the promise of Him as our father, we should daily cleanse our lives of the things that are defiling or hindering our walk. Many see holiness as an unattainable goal and God as a harsh dictator with impossible standards. But these verses are a reminder that He loves us. We are His children and He desires nothing but the best for us.

However, we cannot have complete joy and peace in our salvation if we allow ourselves to continue in sin. The only way to obtain holiness is by cleansing our lives of sin and diving into the word of God. True worship begins with a heart that is broken over sin.

John 15:3-5 says, Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

I pray we would examine our hearts and cleanse ourselves and then abide in Jesus and let him continue to sanctify us and make us holy.

**DAY 12: PSALMS 119:9-11**  
**BRAD BOUCHER**  
**FEBRUARY 14, 2020**

*How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought you; Do not let me wander from your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against you.*

*Psalms 119:9-11*

This section of Psalms (vv. 9-16) deals with victory over sin. Young people in particular need to learn to heed and hide the Word that they might overcome temptation. As you read the Word and meditate on it, it cleanses your inner being, just as water cleanses our internal bodies of toxins.

However, ALL ages need to memorize the Word, not just children and young people alone. Joshua was not a youth when God commanded him to memorize the Law (Josh. 1:8). Also, Jesus was able to quote Scripture when He faced Satan in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11).

The entire concept and purpose found in the first three verses of this section is that we accumulate a mindful (storehouse) of God's Word that it be within us for defense against sin. What are you doing with God's Word? Is it collecting dust on the night stand? Do you think you know enough? Campbell Morgan, speaking specifically of verse 11 explained, "The best Book, in the best place, for the best purpose!"

To keep and know the Word is to obey it, to walk in its commandments. Even Satan knows the Word, but he cannot obey it.

Memorize and obey the Word of God and declare victory over sin and death in your life. I want to challenge you, young or old, to embrace treasuring God's Word in your heart.

DAY 13: LUKE 18:1-8  
TAMMY GRAY  
FEBRUARY 15, 2020

Read Luke 18:1-8

It is significant that Jesus told this story. Who would know more about prayer and God's response than His own Son? Jesus set the example for praying. Jesus' prayers are mentioned often in scripture. In Matthew 6:9-13, He even gave us the model prayer. Mark 14:39 says, "Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words." This shows us that Jesus knew the importance of persistence in prayer.

In this parable, the widow was not known by the judge. She appeared alone before him. After her persistent pleas, he begrudgingly granted her petition. In contrast, we have the assurance that God knows us and loves us. We are never alone because Jesus is always with us. The judge is stern and impartial; however, our Father is compassionate toward His children. The judge was reluctant to grant the widow's petition, but God loves to answer our prayers. He is for us and not against us. Knowing this, we should go boldly before the throne of grace and be confident that He will answer.

It is easy to lose heart and believe that God will not answer our prayers. But we should not give up. God's timing is perfect. Often times, delays are not to give God time to change His mind, but time to change our hearts. The more time we spend in prayer, the closer we are drawn to God and His will. Our earnest prayers are pleasing to God and we can be confident of His desire to respond. Our prayers do not have to be eloquent, just heartfelt.

This parable shows that we should not lose hope when our prayers are not answered immediately. Colossians 4:12 says, "always laboring fervently in his prayers." Prayer is hard work! It should never be taken lightly. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to carry our concerns to the most High God. We should remain convinced of the power of prayer and view it as a first resource and not a last resort. We must have faith that our God knows us and loves us, that he is righteous, wonderful, perfect, kind, gracious and merciful. He is concerned and He knows our needs. Most importantly, God sees "the big picture" and knows what is best for us.

Lastly, the parable reminds us that we must know who God is, believe in His love for us and in His sovereignty, and pray without losing heart in order to demonstrate the kind of faith Jesus is looking for. On that day, may we all be found faithful, trusting that our prayers will be answered in His perfect time.

**DAY 14: 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17**  
**BRENDA HAZELWOOD**  
**FEBRUARY 16, 2020**

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*II Timothy 3:16-17*

*The Bible is the words of God to holy men as the Holy Spirit moved upon them. It is the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of Almighty God. As Jesus walked with His followers in His earthly ministry, He emphasized over and over the importance of the Word:*

*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My words.*

*John 14:23*

*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples and you shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.*

*John 8:32*

There are many denominations, doctrines, religions and even cults in this world. How can we know who is right? Thankfully God sent instructions down to earth in book form. He sent Jesus, the Word in flesh, as our example, who sent the Promise of the Father, the precious Holy Spirit, to live in us, to fill us with power, to teach us and lead us into all truth. What amazing love the Father has for us!

We are instructed in Galatians 1:8...“even if we or an angel from heaven preaches any other gospel (other than the gospel of the kingdom which they received from Jesus’ teachings), you are not to receive it and that person should be “accursed.” Every manufacturer packs instructions with their product. The Bible is our handbook, our manual, our instructions for earthly life. Studying it is imperative as we seek to live for Christ. It reproves, it corrects and instructs us in righteousness and how to become all that God has destined us to be. It teaches us that we are new creations, that we can be led by His Spirit, that we have authority over all the works of Satan and so much more. We do not have to fear or be anxious when trials come, as they surely will, because we live in a fallen world. We can be overcomers by knowledge of and faith in His Word and the Spirit of God in us.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman...rightly dividing the word of truth. II Tim.2:15



DAY 15: JAMES 1:22-25  
WAYNE MCLAUGHLIN  
FEBRUARY 17, 2020

Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in glass. For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forget what manner of man he was.

But whoso look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man is blessed in deed.

James 1:22-25.

We should be doers of the Word. It's always good to do and not just hear only. Each day that I read God's Word and try to follow each passage. We must go out into our communities to serve and do God's will. It's not hearers of the law that are just before God, but doers of the law shall be justified. We are to be servants and not only hearers. To do is to serve through Jesus. We are encouraged through the aid of divine grace. We love and obey it's precepts. We embrace repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus. I always volunteer in the community in any way I can for God's glory. I wasn't that way until I was saved. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we give you the glory for what you have given us. Help us each and every day, Not only be hearers but doers as well. Lead and guide us to do your will. Bless us all that do the work in the name of Jesus. We pray that You will let others see good deeds in Your great name.

In Jesus Name.

DAY 16: JOHN 15:3-5  
AMY BURCHAM  
FEBRUARY 18, 2020

You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself: it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.

John 15:3-5

It is said that at the table with family and friends, intimacy is shared and grown. After the disciples and Jesus shared what would be their last meal together, Jesus begins to assure them of several things. They are reminded of who He is: the Bread of life, the Light of the World, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way and the Truth, the True Vine.

I imagine that these twelve men all breathed a hint of discouragement when hearing that last 'I Am' statement, while at the same time exhaling a breath of unexplainable gratitude. And then He speaks words of comfort and truth—all while knowing He will be betrayed by one, denied by all, beaten, rejected, and killed by the ones who have promised unhindered allegiance and sacrificial love.

He knows they will need to know, "You are already clean because of the words I have spoken to you. Remain in Me... and bear fruit." My brothers and sisters in Christ who have failed Him time and time again even while knowing that He is the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life... it's time to give yourselves some grace and come sit at the table with your Savior and hear Him speak truth over you. You, child of God, are already clean because of the words He has spoken to you. Remain in Him... and bear fruit.

**DAY 17: EPHESIANS 5:7-10**  
**CHRISTIE RODGERS**  
**FEBRUARY 19, 2020**

Therefore do not be partners with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.

Ephesians 5:7-10

We, as Christians, should be the Light in a world of darkness. This means that we are to be a friend to unbelievers but careful to never be associated with their sinful actions for this can cause damage to our reputation. Sometimes we try to “fit in” with particular individuals or groups that we think we want to be associated with due to their talents, status, good humor, etc., yet if they are not Christians, it may lead us down a dark road that we thought would be fulfilling. Satan has a way of making the dark look innocent and exciting.

We should be careful to choose Christian friends who are likeminded and will encourage us in making right decisions and help guide us in following God’s will for our lives. It is not hard to be distracted by the world and Satan’s evil schemes. As Christians, we must daily fight the battle by laying down self and living for the Lord. Therefore it is so important to stay close to the Lord in prayer and through His Word. Satan cannot take our salvation, but he can ruin our witness. How devastating to know that we could be a part of Satan’s plans instead of God’s plans or that we could turn someone away from the Lord by our own actions or words.

We are to be distinct from the world—the Light in the darkness. Others should be able to say that there is something different about us. Once we are believers, we can no longer live as we did before we knew Christ. Wanting to live according to God’s will instead of the world’s is to thirst after righteousness. The righteousness of God, through Christ, means that you are justified because your sins have been cleansed by Jesus. God blesses those who seek His righteousness and truth. We should seek daily to find the Lord’s will for our lives.

To be a mature Christian means that we should ask for God’s wisdom when facing major decisions as well as the small. To know God’s will is not done solely through prayer, but by also making a commitment to know His Word. We learn to conform to God’s will by daily dying to ourselves and conforming our thinking and behavior to the will of God. This is a constant lifelong process. Never forget that the life of the believer should look distinctly different from that of the unbeliever.

DAY 18: JOHN 14:15  
BARRY KEATHLEY  
FEBRUARY 20, 2020

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible has a lot to say about obedience. In the story of the Ten Commandments, we see just how important the concept of obedience is to God. Deuteronomy 11:26-28 sums it up like this: "Obey and you will be blessed. Disobey and you will be cursed." How important it was for God's people to submit to His authority and command.

Now in the New Testament, we learn through the words of Jesus Christ that believers are called to a life of obedience. And in Jesus, we find that perfect model of obedience. As His disciples, we are to follow Christ's example, as well as His commands. And our motivation for obedience is LOVE – *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* (John 14:15).

What a challenge! We say that we love God, but do we? It seems most difficult to be in full obedience. How do you love a neighbor that despises you? How do you help someone who has been dishonest and lied to you? How do you forgive someone who has hurt you, your family, or your children? Jesus has commanded us to love people like this. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit are you able to continue obedience during challenging and difficult times.

Each day we must simply surrender to His will. Spend time with Jesus. Pray and read the Bible. Trust Him. Allow the Holy Spirit to transform you from within. When you do this, you will grow in obedience and holiness.

I recently read this verse from Luke 6:46, "But why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and not do the things which I say?" I can only imagine how much richer and more blessed our lives can be if we will just learn to be more obedient. Many problems in our lives will not exist. We will experience God's greatest blessings and His unspeakable joy.

In 1787, John H. Sammis penned the wonderful hymn, "Trust And Obey". The lyrics speak volumes:

"When we walk with the Lord in the light of His word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way!  
Let us do His good will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey  
Trust and obey, for there's no other way,  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

**DAY 19: COLOSSIANS 4:2-4**  
**MELANIE KERN**  
**FEBRUARY 21, 2020**

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.*

*Colossians 4:2-4*

Name something you keep a watchful eye out for...GO! Doesn't that sound like a buzzer beater question on the long time running television game show, Family Feud? Although I didn't survey 100 random people, I did ask this same question to a handful of others, "A-N-D THE SUR—VEY S-A-I-D.....1) weather, 2) time, 3) traffic, 4) money, and last but not least, 5) children.

To be fair, I didn't explain to the participants my reasoning for asking. If it had been made known I was gathering information to write a devotion, I'm certain their #1 answer would've been....JESUS!

Isn't it ironic how our perspectives change when we are afforded all the reasons up front? We will never be given ahead of time the reasons for the things that are about to happen, good or bad, in our lives. However, the Lord gives instructions through Paul for us to better prepare and deal with each circumstance to come. In Colossians 4:2-4, it says we are to: Devote ourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

I don't have all the reasons why my husband passed away with brain cancer when our children were only 9, 7, and 4 years old. But the truth is without that suffering, I would've never learned what it meant to be chained to the mysteries of Christ. It's where HIS peace filled a void in my life that had been there as long as I could remember. It's when I learned to PRAY, and eagerly WATCH for Jesus throughout my day, and THANK HIM for all things given to me. It was through those circumstances my children were able to witness a love story unfold with their Heavenly Father, even in the absence of their earthly father. Even though we still mourn the loss, we are forever grateful for the changes the Lord brought about through it all.

Father, strengthen us, only through you. Equip us so that we may share how the mysteries of Christ are sufficient even when we don't have all the reasons why. Help us to be ever so mindful to PRAY, being WATCHFUL for the return of your son, and THANKFUL for the hope found in HIM. In Your Son's Most Precious Name. Amen.

DAY 20: I JOHN 3:19-22  
RUSSELL ZIK  
FEBRUARY 22, 2020

If I were to ask you, "Have you ever doubted?" I can almost guarantee you would say, "Yes." Having served in Pastoral ministry for 10 years, I have seen and heard how doubt often paralyzes Christians, causing unnecessary anxiety, sleepless nights, and for some mild to severe depression. The beloved apostle John, understands the reality of doubting God's presence, questioning whether God hears our prayers, or even whether one is truly saved. It is for this reason he wrote an entire letter giving followers of Jesus the confidence and reassurance they need in order to overcome crippling doubt whether it is coming from our own conscience or Satan himself.

"By this we shall KNOW that we are of the truth and reassure our hearts before him; for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and HE KNOWS everything." Notice John says, "whenever!" It is not a matter of IF, but WHEN you doubt. Doubting is normal. That being said however, our response to our questioning God, His will, and our salvation, is critical. In response to the Christians to whom John is writing, he gives two key truths for us to mediate upon when we experience moments of profound insecurity to anchor our souls amidst crippling doubt taking us back to God and His character.

The first truth is that God is greater than our hearts. Jeremiah says, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick, who can understand it?" Simply put, our hearts cannot be trusted. Yet there is one who is greater in whom we can trust, it is God Himself. John says in verse 20 "Whenever our heart condemns us, God is GREATER than our heart." God has given us promises we must mediate upon and hide in our hearts when the author of lies, Satan himself and our own deceptive hearts lie to us about God and our salvation. A second truth John wants us to understand is that God is omniscient. "He (God) knows everything." He knows what will happen in the next 5 minutes, he knows the number of hairs on your head, and he knows His children. Therefore, when Satan tempts you to doubt or your heart tempts you to question, run to the one who knows all things.

In conclusion, when that moment of doubt arises, KNOW you can confidently approach the omniscient God, who not only desires to answer your prayers but will answer your prayers as you seek to obey Him and love others knowing you have placed your faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. My prayer for you is that you will not allow doubt to cripple your faith but to grow your faith in the One who knows all things, even your doubts.

DAY 21: JOHN 13:34-35  
BETH WRIGHT  
FEBRUARY 23, 2020

*Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another.  
This is how everyone will recognize you are my disciples-  
when they see the love you have for each other.  
John 13:34-35*

In the way only He could, Jesus summed up all of the Ten Commandments in one utterance. He instructs us to display our love for and faith in Him by imitating the ways He showed His love for us. Jesus' life is the example and the pattern we are called to copy. (See John 13: 15) "In the same way I loved you...." What are some of the ways He demonstrated love that we can practice today

- Jesus spent a lot of time with the small group as He was preparing to change the world. People who need Jesus need your time—not all of it, but regular chunks of it. Quality time happens in the middle of quantity time.
- Jesus used simple language and illustrations from the everyday lives of common people. Avoid "Christianese" and deep theological concepts when sharing your faith. Love Jesus by simply telling what Christ has done for you and by walking out your faith before those who are watching.
- Jesus served and didn't demand to be served. He gave of Himself until He literally had to steal away to rest and pray; He patiently explained the parables to His disciples; He calmly ministered to the needs of everyone in the many crowds He encountered; and He even knelt in humility to wash the feet of the disciples—even those of Judas!! (John 13: 1-20)
- Finally, Jesus died to self in so many ways: He removed the crown of glory to come live among us and suffer all the pains and difficulties of a human being; He gave up His right to exaltation and kingship, but instead suffered reviling and persecutions; finally, He submitted to the enormous pain and torture of crucifixion. (See Mark 14: 36) Not all are called to give their lives, but can you commit your life to Him in such complete trust and faith that your very self (your dreams, plans, desires) take second place to His?

In what other ways did Jesus serve as an example of living out love? How can you display Him in your life today?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Personal Revival

IF WE DO NOT FIRST CONFESS OUR SINS, WE CANNOT EXPECT GOD TO HEAR OUR PRAYERS (Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken falsehood, your tongue mutters wickedness. Isaiah 59:1-3).

"Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (James 4:8)

There is no mystery about what it takes to experience the manifest presence of God. We must confess and repent of sin, drawing near to God. We know that He will then draw near to us, guiding us to lose our double-mindedness and gain the mind of Christ. Yet there are likely sins that are hidden to us that we ought to repent of as well. Having confessed and repented, the following verse promises us that our prayer will be of use.

"Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." (2 Ti. 2:21)

### Evangelization of the Unsaved

A revived church must engage in evangelism. However, the Bible makes it very clear that no one seeks after God unless the Holy Spirit first draws him. Therefore, we must pray that God would open hearts to repent and receive His Son.

- Pray that the captives of the devil would be released. ("and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." 2 Timothy 2:26)
- Pray that the dead would be made alive in Christ. (Ephesians 2:1-7)
- Pray for the lost to repent. ("I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Luke 13:5)
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:8)
- Pray for seeds to sprout and take root because they fall on receptive hearts. (Luke 8:4-15)
- Pray for revived Christians to be faithful in witnessing. (Acts 1:8)
- Pray for Pastor Justin, that he would share the gospel clearly.

We ought also to intercede on behalf of specific individuals for salvation, we ought to pray for specific social ills in the community, and we ought to pray for our leaders.



## Church Revival

Here we pray according to Scripture for the church as a whole. As Ephesians 6:18 says, "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints." See examples of topics below. Note: It is helpful to read the associated Scriptures to use as guidelines as we pray.

- Pray for devotion and purity to essential doctrines. (Jude 3)
- Pray that false teachers will be discovered and put out from the flock. (Revelation 2:20)
- Pray that the church will rediscover its first love of the work and person of Christ. (Revelation 2:4)
- Pray that unity, love, hope, holiness, and good works will be manifested by the church so that it can be effective salt and light. (John 17:21; John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 3:15, Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:16)
- Pray that pastors would preach the Word faithfully, reproofing and exhorting as necessary. (2 Timothy 4:2)
- Pray that Christians will grow up into maturity in the knowledge of Christ and His Word. (Ephesians 4:11-13)
- Pray for more Christians to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. (Acts 2:42)
- Pray for God to raise up workers and evangelists for His harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38)
- Pray for brokenness over the eternal state of the lost. (Luke 15:8-9)
- Pray for marriages and families to be strengthened. (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)
- Pray for humility. (1 Peter 5:6)
- Pray that the church will seek the wisdom of God and not of man. (James 1:5)

Let us remember that effective prayer is not checking off a checklist, but it is praying as the Spirit leads us according to God's Word for the things with which He burdens our hearts. It is never about doing things for God, but it is about God accomplishing His reviving work in and through us such that it touches others as well.



# CONNECT

This 21 Day Guide for Prayer and Fasting is written to **CONNECT** our hearts to God and **CONNECT** our church family one to another. Our hope and prayer is that the these days of seeking the Lord will culminate in spiritual awakening, breakthroughs and vision for the future.



**SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH**