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FIRST EMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
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1933 Wooddale Blvd.
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806

GIVING GOD 40 DAYS

October 4, 2016 ~ November 13, 2016



And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

(Joel 2:25)

**YOU ARE INVITED TO EXPERIENCE AN
INTIMACY WITH GOD LIKE NEVER BEFORE!**

ENTER INTO HIS PRESENCE

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UNPLUG, DETOX, TRUST GOD

UNPLUG

1 Thessalonians 5:17

DETOX

Genesis 2:7; Psalm 26:9; *Romans 3:25*

SEPARATION

Romans 1:23; 1 Peter 1:23; Luke 6:12; Matthew 14:13; John 6:15; John 8:1; John 14:39;
John 11:54; Genesis 12:2; Matthew 16:13; Matthew 16:16; Matthew 16:17; Matthew 16:18;
Matthew 16:19

DISCIPLINE

Luke 21:37-38; Luke 22:45; John 8:2; Luke 4:14; Luke 4:1; Luke 4:2; John 16:33

REPENTANCE

TRUST GOD

Mark 9:29; 1 Corinthians 10:13; James 3:8; Isaiah 55:7; Genesis 6:5; Proverbs 12:25;
Romans 7:19 -21; Psalm 73:3; Psalm 89:3; Psalm 89:19, 23-24; Psalm 89:34-35

A COVENANT WITH GOD

ABOUT PRAYER

Psalm 51:12; Jeremiah 30:17; Joel 2:25

ABOUT FASTING

Exodus 34:28; Esther 4:16; Daniel 10:3

SEASONS

Season 1: Me and God

Jeremiah 7:16; Jeremiah 7:17-19; Psalm 36:7; Jeremiah 33: 3, Psalm 51:12, John
8:36, Mark 1:41, Mark 1:40, Isaiah 61:1, John 8:36, Genesis 29:31, Genesis 29:34,
Genesis 29:35, Genesis 30:9-21, 1 Kings 3:11,13, Leviticus 27:42, Malachi 3:10, 1
Kings 3:7, 9

Season 2: Toxic Words castrate hope and life

Proverb 10:11, Psalm 49:3, Psalm 145:21, Proverb 8:8, Job 31:30, Psalm 39:1

Season 3: Toxic thoughts flat-line the mind

1 Corinthians 2:16, Isaiah 55:7, Genesis 6:5, Matthew 9:4, Psalm 94:11, Matthew
22:37

- Season 4: **Toxic emotions** hold us in bondage
Genesis 31:36; 41-42, Genesis 28:13-15, Genesis 31:29, Genesis 31:27,30, Genesis 31:31, Genesis 31:12-13, Genesis 31:32-35, Genesis 31:42, 30:37-43, Genesis 27, Ephesians 4:23
- Season 5: **Toxic Actions** weaken our spiritual immune system
Luke 17:21, Proverbs 6: 16-19, Romans 7:19 -21, Proverbs 20:19, 6:16, Proverbs 11:13, ***Psalm 26:11, Acts 17:11***
- Season 6: **Toxic Fears** infiltrate the heart
Matthew 2:3; Matthew 2:16, Psalm 23:4, **2 Titus 1:7, Psalm 56:4**, Psalm 64:1, Psalm 118:6
- Season 7: **Freedom**
Joel 3:14
- Season 8: **Restoration**
Joel 3 :18, Joel 2:19, Joel 2:23, Joel 2:25, Joel 2:27, Joel 2:28

FAREWELL

Acts 20:32



Seven years ago, God called First Emanuel to a 40 day corporate fast. Each year the Holy Spirit gives instruction on the focus of the fast. In the 130th year of our existence, 27th year of my Pastorate, and in the 7th consecutive year of our fast, God is calling for consecrated time in prayer and fasting for the Church. We are a body of Baptized believers that God has appointed a very specific purpose in Kingdom. As the body of Christ our assignment is clear, Kingdom building. We cannot build when one part of the body is tearing down. We cannot effectively lift when we allow the distractions of the world to overwhelm us. Finally, we cannot fulfill the call of God until we yield our wounded and broken vessels to God for his miraculous restorative power.

I enter into prayer and fasting with you over the next 40 days in great expectation of hearing from God. I enter full of faith, in Glory and honor of the most high God, the author and finisher of my faith. I enter in anticipation of the manifestation of miracles, signs, and wonders. Finally, I enter with all my being, surrendering all to God, because I trust God. Enter this journey with me.

Pastor Charles J. Southall, III

THIS JOURNAL

Our fasting and prayer journal consists of eight seasons with five days per season. We suggest scriptures and offer prayers as God leads us to pray. Some of our prayers may not be your specific situation. These are personal prayers of the author(s). You will witness many personal conversations with God. Enter into your own personal dialogue as God gives you utterance through the reading of scripture and your period of fasting, prayer, praise, and meditation.

Our format this year is different in that we invite you to engage in self-assessment and reflection by answering questions, writing your own prayer and “digging deep.” For instance, Season One, “Me and God,” requires honest soul searching. There are days in season one where you may not feel like digging deep within to talk to God about issues that have been vexing your spirit for decades. We submit to you that this fast is not the time to procrastinate. If you have to put the assignment down and come back to it, that is encouraged, just don’t ignore the call to seek God for instruction, healing, deliverance, and restoration in your life. Do not be afraid to write in your journal. We are not going to ask you to review your journal. You may want to keep it in a secret place because this is between you and God, but the journaling will help you be accountable to yourself and God.

Finally, the primary source for scripture references in the journal is the King James Version of the bible. In instances where another version of the bible is used, the bible version is identified: New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

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I thank God for yet another opportunity to deliver the Word to his people through the gift and ministry of writing. I pray your strength and perseverance as we enter into this journey together.

Min. Sandra Cabrina Jenkins, M.Div.

UNPLUG, DETOX, TRUST GOD

This is the beginning. This is year 7 of our 40 day corporate fast under the leadership of the 7th Pastor, Dr. Rev. Charles J. Southall, III, of First Emanuel Baptist Church. We begin our journey with an invitation to Unplug, Detox and Trust God.



WHY AND HOW TO UNPLUG

Unplugging would be easy if all we have to do is yank the plug out of the wall, disable the Bluetooth, and disconnect from Wi-Fi. But no, the world is attached to all things cyberspace that allows us to share “stuff” with strangers, family, friends, the enemy, and more.

58% of the entire adult population uses some form of social networking platform.¹ 70% say they use Facebook daily (including 45% who do so several times a day).² Almost half (49%) of Instagram users are on the platform daily, with 32% who say they go on Instagram several times a day. Finally, we spend 1.72 hours per day on social network platforms.³ This is not a problem or meant as judgmental or ridicule, it is just speaking truth to the fact that we are predictable creatures. Businesses invest heavily in monitoring our behavior and habits as consumers to understand how to market their brand.

Conversely, 55% of Americans say they pray every day, while 21% say they pray weekly or monthly, and 23% say they seldom or never pray.⁴ These statistics are problematic considering God has called us to a continuous life of prayer. (“...pray without ceasing...for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Unplugging can facilitate a meaningful connection with self and ultimately God. Over the next 40 days, consider gradually unplugging (if it is not work or ministry related) and releasing yourself from Snap Chat, Vine, Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Periscope, TV, Net flicks, Hulu, and cyberspace in general. The restorative power of our God is not in that 1.72 hours spent in cyberspace. **UNPLUG!**

¹ Nicole B. Ellison, Cliff Lampe, Amanda Lenhart and Mary Madden, Maeve Duggan, *Demographics of Key Social Networking Platforms*, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/demographics-of-key-social-networking-platforms-2/> January 9, 2015

² Maeve Duggan, Nicole B. Ellison, Cliff Lampe, Amanda Lenhart and Mary Madden, *Frequency of Social Media use*, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/frequency-of-social-media-use-2/> January 9, 2015

³ Jason Mander, *Daily Time spent on social networks rises to 1.72 hours*, Globalwebindex, Blog/Post, <https://www.globalwebindex.net/blog/daily-time-spent-on-social-networks-rises-to-1-72-hours> January 26, 2015

⁴ Michael Lipka, 5 facts about Prayer, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/04/5-facts-about-prayer/> May 4, 2016

DETOX

Medically speaking, God created the human body that “is well designed to eliminate wastes and toxins, and a number of organs play a role...The kidneys and the liver do the main removal work. They draw substances out of the bloodstream and process them for the body to excrete as feces and urine.”⁵

We spend an incredible amount of money on diets, substances, and activities that are not medically or scientifically proven to rid our bodies of toxins. The mechanics of cleansing and healing the body was built-in by our Creator. Yes, some require medication to help regulate the organs to properly function, but it was a fore thought of God to create the human body to naturally cleanse, heal and restore itself. God not only fashioned the body in this manner, but God foreordained the process by which our very soul would be incubated from death and destruction. Let’s be clear “*man became a living soul*”⁶ **not** *live flesh*. Admittedly, a part of our stewardship is to take care of this shell of the body that houses our soul, for it is the soul that preserves LIFE and defies DEATH: “*gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.*” (Psalm 26:9)

Sin is the toxin that threatens the sanctity of our soul. The excretion and release of this toxin, sin, is only by the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ.



We offer a detox regimen which guarantees elimination of toxins; and it’s free. God, the creator of this regimen, however, paid a costly price that all might be free: *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (Romans 3:25).* The only thing it will cost you is unwavering faith and obedience and to surrender all to God. Here is how it works:

DETOX Regimen

SEPARATION + DISCIPLINE + TRUST GOD

◆ **RESULT: FREEDOM FROM TOXINS** ◆

◆ **RESTORATION** ◆

In our context, to detox is to cleanse the mind, body, and heart of toxins: *toxic words, toxic thoughts, toxic emotions, toxic actions and toxic fears*. This toxic mix is sin and detrimental to the living soul.

⁵ Tavernise, Sabrina, :Fancy Juice doesn’t Cleanse the Body of Toxins,”
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/21/health/juice-cleanse-toxin-misconception.html> , April 20, 2016

⁶ Genesis 2:7

◆ Step One ◆ SEPARATION

The first step in our regimen is separation.

The very nature of our being is to be in communion with others. God ordained the family in the very beginning. We naturally gravitate to people to whom we can form a bond because we desire relationship. Relationships require love, sacrifice, compromise, and commitment. Relationships may flourish but sometimes relationships are unhealthy and fail. Unhealthy or failed relationships are a sign that toxins have seeped in and are eroding the core of its existence. What may not be natural for us (or come easy for us) is to separate ourselves from relationships in order to commune with God. This separation is not neglecting the relationships God has blessed us with. This type of separation removes and releases self so that we can hear God and talk to God. Of course there are toxic relationships that we must eliminate from our lives in order to experience the wholeness and fullness of God in our lives. (*Toxic relationships will be addressed in our "Trust God" section and more fully in Season One, "Me and God."*)

Jesus detoxed through separation on several occasions. It was not that Jesus had to free himself of toxic words, thoughts, emotions, fears, or even sin, but Jesus understood that he had to always maintain a constant position of prayer and obedience to the Word. The same is required of us! Please do not beat yourself up if you fall short of Jesus' infallible nature and have not been able to maintain a constant position of prayer and obedience to the Word. God knows the nature of man. That is why God sacrificed his Glory that he may redeem us "*And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,... (Romans 1:23)* in order that we may be "*...born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1:23)*

Scripture gives us several examples of acts of separation by Jesus:

- ☐ *And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a **mountain to pray**, and continued all **night in prayer** to God. (Luke 6:12)*
- ☐ *Jesus ... departed thence by ship into a **desert place apart**:...(Matthew 14:13)*
- ☐ *When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a **mountain himself alone**. (John 6:15)*
- ☐ *Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives. (John 8:1)And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. (John 14:39)*
- ☐ *Jesus therefore **walked no more openly** among the Jews; but **went** thence unto a country **near to the wilderness**, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. (John 11:54)*

In John 11:54, we see where Jesus had to alter his steps. He had to separate from his kindred, his Jewish heritage and practices. It's time for you to ask some pretty hard questions:

- ☐ Are you ready to alter your steps?
- ☐ Are you willing to shift as the Holy Spirit gives direction?
- ☐ Are you ready to separate in order to draw nearer to God?

◆ Step One ◆ SEPARATION Continued

- ☐ Are you continuing in relationship because is it what is comfortable, familiar, and safe?
- ☐ Are we fearful of change and rejection if you separate from what is slowly killing our spirit woman/spirit man?
- ☐ Are you ready for the truth?

As heirs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God has purposed our lives for all things great. (*Genesis 12:2*) Our heritage of greatness requires us to separate from all that separates us from God. We have to remove ourselves from toxic environments. Toxic environments are prevalent amongst the Triple Cs.

- **Chatter** – mindless, harmful, trash conversation
- **Clutter** – anything that is in excess; meaning not necessary for your existence
- **Chaos** – foolishness, mess, darkness, deceptive behavior

The Triple Cs guarantee absolutely **no separation**. It is **impossible to invoke** the presence of God in the midst of chatter, clutter, and chaos. We need alone time with God so that we may hear and receive instruction. We need alone time with God to worship and honor God. If chatter, clutter and chaos are not excised from your life, there can be no separation. Finally, chatter, clutter, and chaos hinder the move of the Holy Spirit in your life. The Holy Spirit reveals all truth to us. Chaotic chatter and clutter stifles the opportunity to hear and receive truth.

We are privy daily to revelations from God, but we have to separate from toxic environments to receive. Peter's identity of the Christ is a perfect example of why we can't be caught in states of chaos, chatter, and clutter. Jesus' inquiry:

Jesus:	Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (Matthew 16:13)
Peter Responded:	Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16)
Jesus:	Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed <i>it</i> unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 16:17)

Peter's ability to know that Jesus is "*the Christ, the Son of the living God*" is significant. A toxic heart and mind or a chronic gossip would never have been in a position to see Christ. And look at what happens after God's revelation that Jesus is "*the Christ, the Son of the living God*", the manifestation of the blessings and promises:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; and **the gates of hell shall not prevail against it**. (Matthew 16:18)

And **I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven**: and **whatsoever** thou shalt bind on earth **shall be bound in heaven**: and **whatsoever** thou shalt loose on earth **shall be loosed in heaven**. (Matthew 16:19)

So, "let nothing separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

DETOX THROUGH SEPARATION!

◆ Step Two ◆ DISCIPLINE

The second step of the detox regimen is discipline. Separation is a form of discipline. Jesus is discipline. Jesus was disciplined in Prayer and Word. A strong prayer life and becoming a student of God's Word inevitably leads us to a life of discipline.

Prayer

Scripture reveals that Jesus was predictable. Jesus began his day with prayer (*and when **he rose up from prayer**, ...Luke 22:45*) and transitioned into ministry (*and **early in the morning he came again into the temple**, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.*(John 8:2)).

At night, Jesus separated himself for time with God. It was a routine without fail. It was predictable that Jesus would pray day and night, teach, separate, and then pray again.

Word

Luke 21:37-38 exemplifies the discipline of the study of the Word.:

- *And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; (**WORD**)*
- *and at night he went out, and abode in the Mount of Olives (**SEPARATION**)*
- *And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him. (**MINISTRY**)*

There was never a time in recorded scripture where it is revealed that when the Word was present, the people were absent. The manifestation of the Word in the flesh led the people to hunger and thirst for the Word. We do not have the Word in the flesh walking on earth with us today, but we do have the transformative power of the Holy Spirit which reveals all truth to us.

We can benefit from the example of discipline of the people in the temple that went to hear the Word everyday all day. The word is vital to our existence. Our flesh is weak. The Word of God disciplines the flesh. We are warned of temptation (*In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer;*)⁷ yet promised a way of escape from the temptation: “...but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape...”⁸ Even Jesus, the Word, which was “...made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth,” had to use the Word in time of temptation. Observe Jesus’ status, before, during and after the temptation.

*And Jesus **returned in the power of the Spirit** into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. (Luke 4:14)* This verse references Jesus’ return from a wilderness experience. Note Jesus’ status prior to the wilderness experience is the same during and after the wilderness experience: “...

⁷ **John 16:33** These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

⁸ **1 Corinthians 10:13** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

♦ Step Two ♦ DISCIPLINE Continued

Jesus ... full of the Holy Ghost ... was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness.” (Luke 4:1) It is the power of the Holy Spirit that allowed Jesus to withstand the temptations of Satan in his moments of weakness. (Luke 4:2)

Next, witness the authority and power of the Holy Ghost in Jesus’ weakened physical state:

Devil: If thou be the Son of God (Luke 4:3)

Jesus: “It is written...” (Luke 4:4)

Devil: “...all this power will I give thee...” (Luke 4:6)

Jesus: “...get the behind me, Satan: for it is written...” (Luke 4:8)

Be disciplined in the word. Digest the Word of God. Make the Word of God alive in your life. It truly is a matter of LIFE or DEATH.

Repentance

Historically when God’s people sought God for his restorative power, God was consistent in his response to their cry: (A) Repent and (B) Fast. God is the same God today as he was during Joel’s prophesy.

Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, all a sacred assembly; Gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders....Joel 2:15-16

Repentance of our sins is a prerequisite to the realization of our restoration. Discipline will make us predictable before God. The discipline of prayer and the Word is the antidote for the toxic mix that is trying to suffocate our very soul.



Finally, we have to Trust God. This is the final step of our detox regimen. The very thought of separation, for many, causes anxiety, fear, and even grief. Separation will weaken relationships, strengthen relationships, restore relationships or destroy relationships. Many of us resist discipline because we mistakenly believe it takes away our freedom to be independent and do as we please. This is why it is so vital that we Trust God. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can separate ourselves from toxins. We have to Trust God to remove the toxins. The release of this toxic mix, “... *this kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*” (Mark 9:29) Hence, our focus over the next 40 days:

- Season 1: **Me and God**
- Season 2: **Toxic Words** castrate hope and life
- Season 3: **Toxic Thoughts** flat-line the mind
- Season 4: **Toxic Emotions** hold us in bondage
- Season 5: **Toxic Actions** weaken our spiritual immune system
- Season 6: **Toxic Fears** infiltrate the heart
- Season 7: **Freedom**
- Season 8: **Restoration**

If you trust God, enter into covenant with God. We have drafted a covenant that addresses the prayer focus of this fasting and prayer journal. However, we encourage you to personalize the covenant. You have the freedom to *add to* or *delete clauses* in the covenant. This is personal and sacred to you. Once you make the adjustments then you can enter into your personalized covenant with God. Take your time. Do not rush into the covenant. Once you sign and date it, place it in a secret place. Review it daily, if not a few times a day.

✝ A Covenant with God ✝

I _____ over the next 40 days enter into covenant with You, God, to
Unplug, Detox, and Trust God.

- ☐ I covenant with You, God, that I will reduce or eliminate my “plugged-in” time over the next 40 days.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, that when I am tempted to plug-in that I will shift my time to prayer, meditation, journaling, and/or studying God’s word.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to detox my mind, body, and heart by fasting from toxic words.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to detox my mind, body, and heart by fasting from toxic thoughts.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to detox my mind, body, and heart by fasting from toxic emotions.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to detox my mind, body, and heart by fasting from toxic actions.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to detox my mind, body, and heart by fasting from toxic fears.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to trust You, God, to restore my family.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to trust You, God, to release me from people and/or things that have me in bondage.
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to _____
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to _____
- ☐ I covenant with You, God, to _____

Signature

Signed this _____ day of October, 2016.



THERE ARE MILLIONS OF BOOKS PUBLISHED ABOUT PRAYER. WE DEVOTE THIS SPACE TO SIMPLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTEMPLATE WHAT PRAYER IS TO YOUR LIFE. WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN TELLING YOU HOW TO PRAY, WHEN TO PRAY, WHERE TO PRAY OR ANY OTHER DIRECTIVE ON PRAYER. PRAYER IS ABOUT YOU AND GOD. THE MODEL PRAYER, ORIGINATED BY JESUS, IS SUFFICIENT. (MATTHEW 6:5-13)

TAKE THE TIME TO STUDY THE MODEL PRAYER. TO HELP WITH YOUR STUDY, WE OFFER WHAT PRAYER IS, WHAT GOD IS TO PRAYER, AND THE MANIFESTATION OF PRAYER. WE INVITE YOU TO JOT DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS ON PRAYER IN THE SPACES PROVIDED BELOW.

Prayer is:

Prayer is personal. Prayer is intimate. Prayer rises from the soul. Prayer invokes the presence of God. Prayer is an act of submission. It is intentional, purposeful, sacred, and Holy. Prayer is you and God. Prayer is God and you. Prayer has no boundaries. Prayer has no formula. The beat of your heart is prayer. Prayer is timeless. Prayer is peace. Prayer is loud. Prayer is silent. Prayer pierces the heart of our God.

Prayer is -

God is Prayer:

God hears our prayers. God answers our prayers. God honors our prayers. God expects our prayers. God is -

Prayer restores:

- ☐ *Restore to me the joy of your salvation...(Psalm 51:12NRSV)*
- ☐ *For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds...(Jeremiah 30:17)*
- ☐ *And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. (Joel 2:25)*

Follow the discipline of Christ during this period of prayer and fasting.



Fasting raises three common questions – how to, when to, and what to? The most simplistic answer for all attempts to define fasting is to deny the flesh. Denying the flesh will never contradict any definition of fasting. Whether you are of the opinion that fasting is limited to food, or eliminating certain pleasures of life, it is all denying the flesh. Our bodies naturally crave different things and when we say no to the craving, it is a denial of the flesh.

One has to be disciplined to deny the flesh. It has to be intentional and purposeful. This means you have to be in tune with the physical body and with your spiritual being. You have to want to deny the flesh. You have to labor at denying the flesh. When that urge arises to quench a thirst, satisfy an appetite or pacify the body, a concerted effort has to take place in order to deny this urge. It is similar to you receiving a cease and desist letter or order instructing you that you have to immediately cease from an activity. You no longer have the authority to engage in that activity. In a fast, you tell your flesh it no longer has authority to control your appetite, actions, or thoughts. When you deny the flesh, the Holy Spirit is in charge.

We dare not define the type of fast that you should embark upon when we enter into a period of fasting and prayer. Rather, our focus is to educate on what God requires of us in this process of denying the flesh. The Holy Spirit reveals all truth to us. If we are in the flesh, we create a buffer between self and the Spirit of God. To allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the flesh inhibits our opportunity to experience a move of God in our lives.

Earnestly take the time to seek God prior to entering this period of fasting and prayer.

TYPES OF FASTS

□ Absolute Fast

- **Moses** engaged in an **absolute fast** on Mount Sinai when he did not eat for 40 days and 40 nights: *And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. Exodus 34 :28*
- **Esther**, after learning of King Ahasuerus' decree to destroy, massacre, and exterminate all of the Jews, instructed the people: *Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. Esther 4:16*

ABOUT FASTING CONTINUED

- ☐ **Partial fast:** Daniel abstained from eating meat or drinking wine. It appears that he only ate vegetables: *I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth,*” Danie10:3

DON'T DIET, FAST



Fasting may end up being a diet if we are missing the following key components:

- ☐ **Dedicated Time with God**
- ☐ **Prayer**
- ☐ **Praise (Corporate & Private)**
- ☐ **Worship (Corporate & Private)**
- ☐ **Meditation**
- ☐ **Listening for God's voice**
- ☐ **Reading, hearing, and studying the Word of God**

Remember:

- ☐ The key to God honoring your fast is that your fast is unto God.
- ☐ A fast unto God will not be harmful to your health.
- ☐ Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in the type of fast or the things from which you are to abstain in order to truly experience intimate time with God.
- ☐ An absolute fast **does not mean** that you will fast from all liquids and all food for the entire 40 days and 40 nights. An absolute fast can last as short as a few hours that you have designated to abstain from food or drink while in prayer and meditation with God.
- ☐ God honors and measures our hearts.
- ☐ If for medical reasons you are unable to fast from food, abstention and sacrifice of whatever the Holy Spirit leads you to is pleasing and acceptable to God.

SEASON 1

Me & God

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

Tuesday, October 4, 2016

To

Saturday, October 8, 2016

Many of us enter into corporate or personal periods of fasting and prayer prematurely. ***It is premature*** because we enter distracted. We don't ***unplug*** until the night before or the morning of the beginning of the fasting and prayer period, or we don't ***unplug*** at all.

It is premature because we have not grasped the significance of ***discipline, detoxing and separation***⁹ before we enter into this most Holy and sacred space with God. We mindlessly and prayerlessly determine the food, liquid, or activities we are going to fast from or sacrifice. We automatically assume because we crave certain things or obsess over one thing or the other, that this must mean this is the perfect something to abstain from during this period of fasting and prayer. We forget to seek guidance from the Holy Spirit on what and how to fast.

Tragically, ***it is premature*** because we cannot figure out how to release "other people's burdens" that were never meant for us to bear. These burden bearing situations can be classified as symbiotic¹⁰ in nature. This means you are the "host" and they are the "parasite." Only the parasite benefits in this relationship. If you don't release, you cannot fully enter into this sacred journey.

This is why Season One is set aside as your "*me time*." For five (5) days give yourself permission to be selfish. For five (5) days you can shamelessly make it all about you, that is, *You and God*. We have a tendency to ignore our spiritual deficit and plunge into praying for everyone but ourselves. The Holy Spirit leads us to pray for others all the time; however, when you are entangled in a parasitic symbiotic situation, intercession may not be fruitful. A cry for strength, deliverance and restoration may, however, be wise. Think it not foreign to be forbidden to intercede. God did this to Jeremiah. God's prophet was forbidden to offer a whisper of a prayer on behalf of the people: "*As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I do not hear you.*" (Jeremiah 7:16 NRSV) This rejection of intercessory prayer by God had to do with the disobedience and idolatry of the people. (Jeremiah 7:17-19). The relationships that you are challenged with or struggling through exist. God has heard your cry, your petitions, and knows the voice of your mourning. God has secured that situation. You are covered, that relationship is covered. Trust God to be God and position yourself under the shadow of God's wing, for "*...the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*" (Psalm 36:7) It's time to take care of your spiritual needs. Call on God, he will answer: "*Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.*" (Jeremiah 33:3)

The first five days of our fasting and prayer period requires reflection and self-assessment. All are in need of the restorative powers of God. We have identified five common areas where most of us at one point in life sought God for restoration or have been restored: (1) Brokenness; (2) Addiction; (3) Bondage; (4) Pain; and (5) Finances.

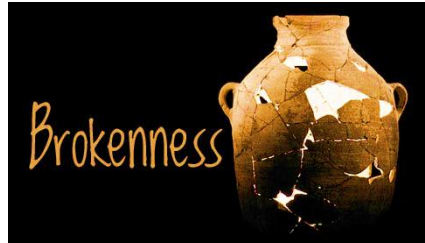
⁹ If you do not understand the significance of the use of the highlighted terms ***discipline, unplug, detox, and separation***, please take the time to review the first few pages of the journal, ***Detox, Discipline, Trust God*** (see pp. 6-8)

¹⁰ In biology, symbiotic refers to any diverse organisms that live together, but in this case, the relationship is not necessarily beneficial to both. Parasites, for example, have a symbiotic relationship with their hosts, but only the parasite benefits, Vocabulary.com Dictionary <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/symbiotic>

Season one requires you to examine **brokenness** in your lives and your family's lives. You will have the opportunity to consider whether the brokenness has created harmful habits or **addictions** for you and/or your family. The tragedy of not healing from brokenness is that it positions you as easy prey for people and things that want to lure you into **bondage**. Brokenness from pain is sometimes unbearable. You will have the opportunity to aggressively seek God to restore you from a place of pain. Finally, financial restoration is in order not just for our personal wants and needs, but for Kingdom. We seek God in this season on some tough financial issues in our families.

Let us begin.

DAY 1 (10/4/2016)



Psalm 51:12

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

Today is the beginning of “*Me Time*.” This is a process to be honest with yourself and God. We first begin with a self-inventory about your awareness of “self.” This exercise is not assigned to have you just acknowledge brokenness and leave you in that state. This assignment is designed to help you honestly reflect and talk to God about YOU. YOU can trust God with YOU. The power of our salvation overcomes, mends, and heals our brokenness. Talk to God.

Check all that apply to you:

_____ I am not broken. There is nothing about me that needs to be restored.

Reflect on when God restored you from your brokenness:

List areas in your life that are broken and you want restored:

Now, answer these questions:

Do I trust God to put the pieces back together again in my life?

- _____ Yes, 100%
- _____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%
- _____ Sort of, 50%
- _____ No
- _____ My life is too messed up;
- _____ Too many shattered dreams;
- _____ Too many disappointments;
- _____ My heart is not just broken, it is splintered

What do you want to say to God about the broken pieces of your life?

Finally, follow the example of the psalmist and remind God that it is about “Me and God”:

But as for me, my prayer *is* unto thee, O LORD, *in* an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation. (Psalm 69:13)

Now it is time for you to pray for yourself:

My Prayer for Me:

MY FAMILY’S BROKENNESS

The next phase of your assignment today is to single out family that may fall in that symbiotic¹¹ relationship. This means you are the “host” and they are the “parasite” and this parasite is sucking the very life out of you. Here is a list of family members. I only list their relationship to you, but, to make it personal, perhaps you may want to put the name in the blank.

Sister, Brother, Mother, Father, Uncle, Aunt, Nephew, Niece, Grandmother, Grandfather, Husband, Wife, God-son, God-daughter, Daughter, Son, Step-son, Step-daughter, Cousin, Father of your children/child, Mother of your children/child, Son-in-law, Daughter-in-law

Check all that apply to you:

_____ I have no brokenness in my family. Everything is just fine!!!

THIS IS WHERE YOU INSERT THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP OR PUT THE ACTUAL NAME

Do I trust God to put the pieces back together again in _____ Life?

_____ Yes, 100%

_____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%

_____ Sort of, 50%, it’s been years since _____ has been himself/herself.

_____ No

_____ is too far gone.

_____ does not want to change.

We have tried everything for _____. It is hopeless.

¹¹ In biology, symbiotic refers to any diverse organisms that live together, but in this case, the relationship is not necessarily beneficial to both. Parasites, for example, have a symbiotic relationship with their hosts, but only the parasite benefits, Vocabulary.com Dictionary <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/symbiotic>

What do you want to say to God about the brokenness in _____ life?

Do you believe God can put the millions of pieces of _____ life back together?

_____ I want to believe

_____ I do not know

_____ I believe

Do you understand that _____ brokenness it is not your burden to bear?

DAY 2

(10/5/2016)

**Mark 1:41**

And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

Today we have to dig a little deeper within self and disturb wounds that have not healed properly. This may hurt because the local anesthesia has not quite taken effect. Actually you should not want to be anesthetized, because the numbness that you have allowed to take over certain parts of your life is the reason we are seeking God to “restore self”.

Our scripture focus today is the story of a Leper seeking healing. The Leper approached Jesus in a spirit of urgency, he begged for his healing. (Mark 1:40) The Leper surrendered self, he knelt before Jesus. The Leper confronts Jesus with truth, “you can heal me if it is your will.” (Mark 1:40) The scripture tells us that Jesus showed compassion and immediately cleansed the Leper.

That same compassion Jesus exhibited in this story is the same compassion Jesus has for us. And God is still an “immediate kinda God.”

Check all that apply to you:

_____ I do not have any addictions. I am able to control myself in all areas of my life.

Reflect on when God restored you from your addiction(s):

Do I trust God to take away the harmful pleasures, desires, appetites, and addictions from my life?

_____ Yes, 100%

_____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%

_____ Sort of, 50%

_____ No, but I am hopeful. I am not ready to release and be free from some pleasures, desires, appetites, and addictions.

What do you want to say to God about needing help to walk away?

MY FAMILY'S ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS

This is where you put in the family relationship (i.e. brother, mom,) or put the actual name.

_____ I have no addictions in my family.

Reflect on the restoration of _____ from addictive behavior

Do I trust God to take away the harmful pleasures, desires, appetites, and addictions from _____ life?

_____ Yes, 100%

_____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%

_____ Sort of, 50%, it's been years since _____ has been himself.

_____ No,

_____ is too far gone.

_____ does not want to change.

We have tried everything. It's hopeless.

What do you want to say to God about _____ to addictive behavior?

Do you believe God can deliver _____ from the addiction(s)?

_____ I want to believe

_____ I do not know

_____ I believe

Do you understand that _____ brokenness it is not your burden to bear?

DAY 3 (10/6/2016)

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF BONDAGE



Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound;

Check all that apply to you:

_____ I am free. I am not in bondage.

Do I trust God to release me from people that have me in bondage?

_____ Yes, 100%

_____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%

_____ Sort of, 50%

_____ I am not sure. I really have to assess whether my relationships, life situations and issues are bondage.

Check all that apply to you:

_____ Certain persons can provoke me and make me come out of character before I realize it.

_____ It is important to me what others think about me

_____ I have habits I just can't seem to get rid of. I stop for a little while, then I pick the habit back up again.

If you checked off any of the boxes, that is a form of bondage. Do not fret, throughout this journey, God will reveal to you why you are free from bondage. Be encouraged, for *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* (John 8:36)

Do I trust God to release me from things that have me in bondage?

_____ Yes, 100%

_____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%

_____ Sort of, 50%

_____ I really have to assess what things, if any, in my life are keeping me in bondage. Take the time to list what things, objects, gadgets, places separate you from God:

What do you want to say to God about being in bondage?

MY FAMILY'S BONDAGE

This is where you put in the family relationship (i.e. brother, mom,) or put the actual name.

Do I trust God to release _____ from the people and things that have him/her in bondage?

_____ Yes, 100%

_____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%

_____ Sort of, 50%

_____ No, sadly, I do not think _____ recognizes this is bondage.

What do you want to say to God about *releasing you from carrying the burden* of
_____ bondage?

Do you believe God can release _____ from bondage?

_____ I want to believe

_____ I do not know

_____ I believe

Prayer Focus:

Spend time today in prayer, meditation, and praise about the freedom and power of your salvation.

**Genesis 29:31**

When the LORD saw that Leah *was* unloved, He opened her womb...

Sometimes we do not think that God is paying attention to the struggles in our lives. Here we have Leah depressed and sad because her husband does not love her, but her sister. God knows Leah's pain and blesses her to bear children. Leah attributed her fruitfulness to God. She acknowledged that it is God that is blessing her with children because she is unloved. But Leah still tries to earn the love of her husband.

Rejection can render unbearable pain. Rejection may cause one to abandon self by desperately seeking self-worth in the validation of others. Poor Leah made this mistake. Leah really thought that her husband would love her because God showered favor upon her. This is what Leah thought, "Because the Lord has looked on my affliction, surely now my husband will love me." By the third child Leah says, "now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." (Genesis 29:34)

How many times have we attempted to force love, compromise the integrity of our heart, and then find ourselves just feeling rejected and unloved? Leah obviously went through a period of seeking love, but she eventually glorified and honored God for the blessings of life: *And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD."* (Genesis 29:35)

We have to allow ourselves to rise-up out of the pain of rejection and abandonment. Leah knew her husband did not love her, but she still praised God. Admittedly, Leah continued to compete with her sister for husband's affections,¹² but, in her pain, in her search for love and validation, she managed to honor and praise God.

Can you see yourself in a "Leah praise"

_____ Yes, but I need God to help me get there.

_____ No that is not my story, I have not suffered from the pain of rejection or abandonment in any aspect of my life.

Reflect on when God restored your self-worth in the midst of your pain of rejection and abandonment: (If you never lost your self-worth by seeking the validation of others for the sake of love, then move on to the next instruction)

Ask God to guide and shield you from manipulating and compromising self to gain what someone else has no desire or capacity to give to you.

¹² See Genesis 30:9-21

**Your Finances,
God's Wealth**

1 Kings 3:11,13

God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right...I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life,...(NRSV)

For most, the quest for our personal financial stability and our family's financial stability is a constant in our lives. We work, we save, we spend. Some work, do not save, and live outside of their means. While some do not work, borrow, and have no vision for wealth.

God has ordained wealth for his people, not just living pay check to pay check. God's vision for the wealth of his people is witnessed from Genesis to Revelation. The scripture most familiar to us is *Matthew 6:33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* Our scripture focus for today, Solomon's wealth, walks us through the act of seeking first Kingdom and the righteousness of God. But first, we have to acknowledge that the source of our wealth is God. God provides the means for our wealth:

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee **power to get wealth**, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day. (*Deuteronomy 8:18*)

There are consequences in not understanding the source of our wealth. The spirit of deception immediately takes control. We are deceived when we measure our success by man's standards. The prophet Ezekiel had to deliver the news to King Tyre that his kingdom would perish because of his misplaced trust in his wealth:

By your wisdom and your understanding you have amassed wealth for yourself, ...
By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your wealth, and your heart has become proud in your wealth...Therefore thus says the Lord God: because you compare your mind with the mind of a god, therefore, I will bring strangers against you...they shall thrust you down to the Pit... (*Ezekiel 28:4-8 NRSV*)

Solomon understood the source of his wealth. Solomon understood the magnitude of the opportunity before him when God appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon and said "Ask what I shall give you. (1 Kings 3:5 NRSV). Solomon feared God and revered God for the honor of placing him as king over God's chosen people. The only prayer Solomon could muster was one for advancement of Kingdom:

And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

Our obedience to God's word is attached to our wealth. Our wealth is attached to our stewardship. Stewardship is accepting and caring for the responsibility of Kingdom through your substance, talents, gifts, and time.

Trust God for his word. Trust God for his word that the (tenth) tithe is Holy unto him. (Leviticus 27:42) Trust God that the 90 percent will not only sustain you, but position you for the increase. Seek God for wisdom and understanding of God's word that **if you** *"bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. (Malachi 3:10 NRSV)*

Finally, finances can be a source of stress in our lives. Marriages end in divorce over finances. Familial relationships are severed over finances. But if we follow the lead of Solomon and confess to God in humility and humbleness of heart that "I do not know God, but give me understanding," (1 Kings 3:7, 9), then you will be in position to receive the overflow of blessings promised in God's word.

Take this inventory of your finances. Only you know your financial situation. Be honest with your self and God. Tell God you do not know how to do this, but you are trusting God to lead you to God's plan for wealth.

Do I trust God to restore my finances?

- _____ Yes, 100%
- _____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%
- _____ Sort of, 50%
- _____ No,
 - _____ my finances are in shambles.
 - _____ I have too many creditors and too much debt.
 - _____ My FICO score is in the "terrible" category!!!

Do you have a budget? ____ Yes ____ No, I just pay my bills and if anything is left, it's my mad money

Do you have a savings? ____ Yes ____ No, I cannot afford it right now.

Do you have a retirement plan? ____ Yes ____ No, I cannot afford it right now.

What do you want to say to God about being a better steward of your substance?

Begin writing down your plan for God's wealth

MY FAMILY'S FINANCIAL FORCAST

This is where you put in the family relationship (i.e. brother, mom,) or put the actual name.

Do I trust God to deliver _____ from poverty?

_____ Yes, 100%

_____ Pretty-much, maybe 75%

_____ Sort of, 50%

_____ No,

_____ can't keep a job.

_____ does not want to work.

We have tried everything, _____ is hopeless.

What do you want to ask God about this situation?

Is it your financial responsibility to take care of adult family members? ____ Yes ____no

What if the family member has children and they will be homeless if you do not help?

Do you believe God can bring increase in _____ life?

_____ I want to believe

_____ I do not know

_____ I believe

Prayerfully prepare yourself to share with _____ God's plan for our wealth. God will reveal to you when it is time for you to share the plan.

SEASON TWO



TOXIC WORDS CASTRATE HOPE AND LIFE

FAST FROM TOXIC WORDS

Proverb 10:11

**The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life:
but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.**

**Sunday, October 9, 2016
To
Thursday, October 13, 2016**

Targets of painful and hurtful words struggle to maintain a sense of self. If you keep hurling daggers, knives, and spears at your target, the outer layer will eventually become so tattered and torn that the covering, or outer layer, falls off. Imagine that covering is the target's emotions, heart, and self-esteem. Once the covering or outer layer is gone, the risk of more intense exposure to pain exist and inevitably infection sets in. The eating away of the core layers of existence takes place. The pain is so unbearable for the recipient that they do not know how to cover or protect that open wound, so they in turn infect others. Painful and hurtful words flow from the wounded's mouth, and the cycle continues.

Target practice is what we are doing when we injure others with our mouths. Satan has tricked us into thinking that our neighbor, our family, co-workers and even the Body of Christ are all walking bulls-eyes. Just think about a target. You would have to throw knives, daggers and spears at the target consistently over a long period of time for the outer layer or the face of the target to no longer be recognizable or to just fall off.

Toxic words destroy the spirit of a man, a woman and of children. Season two is designed for you to fast from toxic words. You have to make a concerted effort to think before you speak. The daily scriptures are affirmations or prayers about what God expects and requires of us to do with our mouths.

This formula may help you get through season two and prayerfully the rest of your days!

- Meditate on and speak the scripture for the day throughout the day
- Write down what God reveals to you about the use of your mouth
- All day, everyday be intentional in your petitions to God that the Holy Spirit reveals to you when you are yielding to Satan to wound someone.
- If you stumble and allow toxic words to spew from your mouth, pray the Holy Spirit allows you to immediately recognize the error.
 - Acknowledge to the recipient of your knives, daggers, and spears that you are sorry and ask for forgiveness
 - Repent



DAY 6 (10/09/2016)

Today's Scripture: *Psalms 49:3*

My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

God's Revelation to me about Psalm 49:3:

Today's Prayer: God increase in me understanding of the power of words from my mouth. Grant me the wisdom to speak truth to others and to recognize when Satan is using me as an instrument of destruction. Amen.

Did any toxic words climb out of your mouth today? If so list the words _____

Speak those same toxic words to yourself and jot down how you feel:

Did you apologize to the target of your toxic words? ____ Yes ____ No

If you did not apologize, pray the Holy Spirit's guidance on how to approach the recipient of your knives, daggers, and spears to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

Did you repent? ____ Yes ____ No.

DAY 7 (10/10/2016)

Today's Scripture: Psalm 145:21

My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

God's Revelation to me about Psalm 145:21

Today's Prayer: God, our Father, today I will speak only praise from my mouth. Please, Lord, receive the praises of my lips. Forgive me for the times I have allowed knives, daggers and spears to inhabit the same mouth from which I offer praise. Have mercy on my soul. In the blessed name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

Did any toxic words climb out of your mouth today? If so, list the words.

Speak those same toxic words to yourself and jot down how you feel.

Did you apologize to the target of your toxic words? ____ Yes ____ No

If you did not apologize, pray the Holy Spirit's guidance on how to approach the recipient of your knives, daggers, and spears to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

Did you repent? ____ Yes ____ No

DAY 8 (10/11/2016)

Proverb 8:8

All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.

God's Revelation to me about Proverb 8:8

Today's Prayer: Lord, today I cannot honestly say that "all the words of my mouth are in righteousness", but I do want to grow to that level. I will however, Lord, speak and embrace Proverbs 8:8 with the expectation that "all my words can be in righteousness" and that my conversation will not contradict my discipleship or witness in Christ Jesus. Amen

Did any toxic words climb out of your mouth today? If so, list the words.

Speak those same toxic words to yourself and jot down how you feel.

Did you apologize to the target of your toxic words? ____ Yes ____ No

If you did not apologize, pray the Holy Spirit's guidance on how to approach the recipient of your knives, daggers, and spears to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

Did you repent? ____ Yes ____ No.

DAY 9 (10/12/2016)

Job 31:30

Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.
God's Revelation to me about Job 31:30

Today's Prayer: Lord our God, if I ever spoke a curse upon someone's soul, please forgive me. In spite of any pain that may be inflicted upon me, let me not fall into temptation and sin against the knife, dagger, and spear thrower. I refuse to allow myself to be a bulls-eye for the enemies target practice. I thank you for the power and strength of my salvation. Amen.

Did any toxic words climb out of your mouth today? If so list the words _____

Speak those same toxic words to yourself and jot down how you feel:

Did you apologize to the target of your toxic words? ____ Yes ____ No

If you did not apologize, pray the Holy Spirit's guidance on how to approach the recipient of your knives, daggers, and spears to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

Did you repent? ____ Yes ____ No.

DAY 10 (10/13/2016)

Psalm 39:1

I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

God's Revelation to me about Psalm 39:1

Today's Prayer: Dear God, I surrender my mouth. I only want to speak when you give me utterance. Help me, Holy Spirit. Amen.

Did any toxic words climb out of your mouth today? If so, list the words.

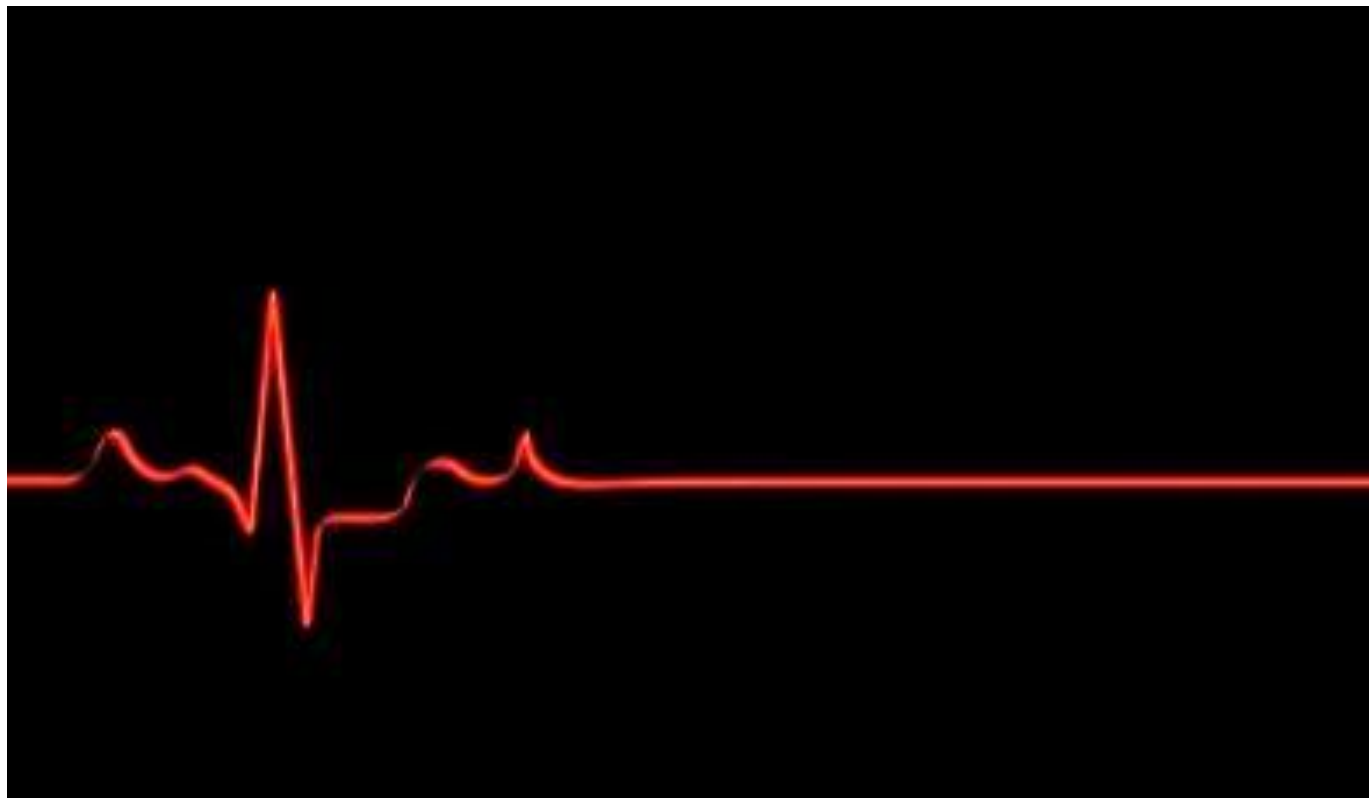
Speak those same toxic words to yourself and jot down how you feel.

Did you apologize to the target of your toxic words? ____ Yes ____ No

If you did not apologize, pray the Holy Spirit's guidance on how to approach the recipient of your knives, daggers, and spears to apologize and ask for forgiveness.

Did you repent? ____ Yes ____ No.

SEASON THREE:



TOXIC THOUGHTS FLAT-LINE THE MIND FAST FROM TOXIC THOUGHTS

1 Corinthians 2:16

*For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he
may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

**Friday, October 14, 2016
To
Tuesday, October 18, 2016**

THE PLACEBO EFFECT OF TOXIC THOUGHTS

*A placebo is anything that seems to be a "real" medical treatment -- but isn't. It could be a pill, a shot, or some other type of "fake" treatment. What all placebos have in common is that they do not contain an active substance meant to affect health. Sometimes a person can have a response to a placebo. The response can be positive or negative. For instance, the person's symptoms may improve. Or the person may have what appears to be side effects from the treatment. These responses are known as the "placebo effect." Research on the placebo effect has focused on the relationship of mind and body. One of the most common theories is that the **placebo effect is due to a person's expectations. If a person expects** a pill to do something, **then it's possible** that the body's own chemistry can cause effects similar to what a medication might have caused.¹³*

There is no expectation of anything but death from toxic thoughts. That expectation is from Satan, not God's living soul, us. Like the placebo, toxic thoughts appear real. There can be no reality in toxic thoughts because of the transformation and renewing of the mind that occurs in our new birth as born again believers. We have the mind of Christ.

In season three, our concentration is on what we allow in our hearing, our thought processes, and the identification of negative relationships in our lives. We cannot live in a bubble and shut out all toxins, but we can monitor our thoughts by not exposing ourselves to negative and unfruitful environments. Most importantly we have to check ourselves and make sure that we are not creating negative and harmful thoughts for ourselves.

Your special assignment for this season is to jot down any toxic thoughts. First in the morning before you leave home or begin your daily activities. Second, at mid-day, and finally review your day by noting the times that you have entertained negative thoughts about yourself or others. Each day you will also meditate on the daily scripture, but at the end of each day (or at some point during the day) write down what it means to *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Phillipians 2:5)*

¹³ WebMed, the Placebo Effect: What is it? <http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/what-is-the-placebo-effect>

DAY 11 (10/14/2016)

Isaiah 55:7

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

God's Revelation to me about Isaiah 55:7

Today's Prayer: Father, forgive me of all unrighteousness. Give me clarity of thought and discernment of your will so that I may not fall into temptation. Grant me the courage to walk away from all things negative. Amen.

Toxic Thoughts (Morning)

_____ None this morning
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Mid-day)

_____ None this afternoon
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Evening)

_____ None this evening
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Phillipians 2:5)

DAY 12 (10/15/2016)

Genesis 6:5

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

God's Revelation to me about Genesis 6:5

Today's Prayer: Father, I thank you for your saving Grace. Thank you for sparing us from the wrath of the law. I thank you for loving us to the point of a sacrificial lamb to redeem us from death. Deliver me from wicked imaginations. In the blessed name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Toxic Thoughts (Morning)

_____ None this morning
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Mid-day)

_____ None this afternoon
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Evening)

_____ None this evening
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Phillipians 2:5)

DAY 13 (10/16/2016)

MATTHEW 9:4

And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

God's Revelation to me about Matthew 9:4

Today's Prayer: Lord God, have mercy on me. I thank you for your word today. Forgive me for the times I have been judgmental or condemned others. I desire not to be as the hypocrites walking in darkness and ignorance. Teach me all truth. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Toxic Thoughts (Morning)

_____ None this morning
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Mid-day)

_____ None this afternoon
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Evening)

_____ None this evening
_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Phillipians 2:5)

DAY 14 (10/17/2016)

Psalm 94:11

The LORD knows our thoughts that they are but an empty breath.

God's Revelation to me about Psalm 94:11

Today's Prayer: Father allow no idle thoughts to occupy my mind today. I commit to fast from mindless tortuous thoughts. Relax my mind that I may hear your voice. Bring to my remembrance your Holy word so that I may meditate on it and not entertain evil. I trust you Lord to keep my mind this day. In the blessed name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Toxic Thoughts (Morning)

_____ None this morning

_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Mid-day)

_____ None this afternoon

_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Evening)

_____ None this evening

_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Phillipians 2:5)

DAY 15 (10/18/2016)

Matthew 22:37

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

God's Revelation to me about Matthew 22:37

Today's Prayer: Lord our God, I know that you command us to Love you with all of our being. Purge my heart and my mind of all impurities and toxins. Cleanse my thoughts of all sin and evil. Teach me how to love again. Amen.

Toxic Thoughts (Morning)

_____ None this morning

_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Mid-day)

_____ None this afternoon

_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Toxic Thoughts (Evening)

_____ None this evening

_____ I had a few. Here they are:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Phillipians 2:5)

SEASON FOUR



TOXIC EMOTIONS ARE BONDAGE
FAST FROM TOXIC EMOTIONS

Wednesday, October 19, 2016
To
Sunday, October 23, 2016

When Jealousy, Resentment and Fear Are Chasing You



³⁶“... ‘What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me?’ ...⁴¹These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. ⁴²If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night.” (Genesis 31:36; 41-42 NRSV)

Jealousy, resentment, strife, and envy are a toxic mix. This cocktail of emotions breeds anxiety, despair, hatred, and fear. The basic tenants of all these toxins are covetousness and ingratitude. Toxic emotions prevent one from appreciating their blessings because they desire what belongs to another. This toxic mix has the deceived declaring and decreeing in their minds and hearts that the person does not deserve or is not entitled to his or her blessings.

If someone is chasing you, that means you are going somewhere. There is no chase if you are stagnate. You are captive if there is no movement. A chase is purposeful and intentional. The chaser wants what you possess or resents that you possess what you have. When promise is attached to a chase, then we know God is in the chase with us. God’s role in the chase is as the revelator and the rebuker. Learn and understand the character of our God in Jacob’s chase.

DAY 16 (10/19/2016)

Genesis 31:36; 41-42 (NRSV)

³⁶“... ‘What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me?’ ...⁴¹These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. ⁴²If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night.”

So where are we in this story of Jacob's life? Why is JACOB SO FURIOUS? Why is he screaming IT'S BEEN TWENTY YEARS ...TWENTY LONG YEARS? Genesis 31 is one of the major transitions in Jacob's life. The manifestation of the promise is unfolding. It took twenty years, but it's here, it's time. Deposit this in your Soul: it's been seven years of First Emanuel Baptist Church fasting and praying...it's here, it's time.

Genesis 31:36; 41-42 is a good place to begin our investigation on what's going on with Jacob. We are starting at the end of a piece of Jacob's journey. All we see is a man who has reached his limits. A man, though angry, acknowledging his protector, God. This is just a snapshot of the last twenty years of Jacob's life. If you have never been introduced to Jacob through study, you would not know how Jacob got to this point.

In your life, people do not know how you got to the point where you are today. People lack knowledge about you either because they have not taken the time to know you; or they are strangers looking in and casting judgment; or they are the enemy plotting your demise; or agitators who want to create agendas and add storylines to your life. People do not know your backstory, the challenges, the chase, the delay, or even God's personal promises to you. Season Four is designed to enlighten you on the brazen manner in which the toxic emotions of jealousy, strife, resentment, and envy attempt to plot your life story and spoil your opportunity to receive the promise.

We begin Season Four by asking you to engage in the three steps of Detox, (1) Separation; (2) Discipline; and (3) Trust God.¹⁴ Once you have detoxed, you may begin.

Twenty years before Jacob began the journey that we are witnessing in Genesis 31, God spoke to Jacob. God appeared to Jacob in a dream and revealed to Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15)

- **I am** the Lord
- The God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac
- The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring
- Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth
- All the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring
- Know that **I am with you**
- **I will keep** you wherever you go
- **I will not** leave you until I have done what I have promised you

¹⁴ See pages 4-9 of the Journal; Detox Regimen

DAY 16 **(10/19/2016 continued)**

God is still the revelator. It may have been twenty minutes ago, two months ago, three years ago or a time you cannot recall, but God has revealed promises to you.

GOD IS TALKING TO YOU

_____ *I will keep you wherever you go; (Genesis 28:15)*
(Insert your name here)

_____ *I will bring you back to this land; (Genesis 28:15)*
(Insert your name here)

_____ *I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you. (Genesis 28:15)*
(Insert your name here)

NOW YOU TALK TO GOD

God I heard you when you promised to shelter me as I press to fulfill the call to:

God you promised me that:

DAY 17 (10/20/2016) **TOXIC EMOTIONS CREATE DELUSIONAL THOUGHTS**

Genesis 31:29 (NRSV)

It is in my power to do you harm; but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying,
...

This is Laban in his arrogance speaking to Jacob. Laban is delusional to think that he has power over Jacob. But we quickly see God, in all his Glory, power, and authority rebuke Laban (the chaser): “Take heed that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.” (Genesis 31:29) But look how Jacob responds to the illusion of power over him:

Laban questions Jacob: ²⁷Why did you flee secretly and deceive me and not tell me? ³⁰Even though you had to go because you longed greatly for your father’s house, why did you steal my gods? (Genesis 31:27, 30 NRSV)

Jacob’s Answer to Laban: Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. (Genesis 31:31 NRSV)

Jacob became so entangled with life, survival, being a father, a husband, a son-in-law, and a trickster that he forgot God’s revelation to him. When Jacob confessed to Laban that he was afraid,¹⁵ we see a temporary lapse of memory in Jacob. Yes, it was twenty years ago, when Jacob initially encountered God at Bethel; but, according to the promise, God was with Jacob and keeping Jacob throughout the chase. Before this confrontation with Laban, God appeared in a dream and released Jacob to return to the land of promise:

Angel of God to Jacob: “for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and return to the land of your birth.”

We too, like Jacob, get caught up in life and fall into the trap of toxic emotions. Our faith may begin to waiver. God’s voice becomes fainter to us because of all the confusion and chaos of the spirits of jealousy, strife, resentment and envy trying to consume us. We kick into survival mode which sometimes does not always include trusting God to protect and keep us and our family. Just as God released Jacob from his bondage after 20 years and gave him permission to receive the promise, God has released us from bondage and given us permission to receive *our promise*.

¹⁵ This confession of fear, has nothing to do with Jacob stealing Laban’s idol gods. It was actually Laban’s daughter Rachel, who is Jacob’s wife, that stole the idol gods. (See Genesis 31:32-35)

DAY 17 (10/20/2016 continued)

Pastor Southall in a not so recent Bible Study admonished us to “*stop looking for the season and look for God. We cannot afford to give up on the promise just because it has not manifested in the season that we deemed to be ripe. We have to stop saying ‘I’m walking into my season.’ Don’t walk into your season; walk into the will of God. God will perform it in whatever season he chooses. You just gotta trust him. Proof: ‘you do not know the time or the seasons which the Father hath put into his own hands. God controls what he is going to do; when he is going to do it; and what season he is going to do it in.’ So what that means Saints is that we don’t give up on God even when we give up on ourselves.*”¹⁶ **As you contemplate Pastor Southall’s admonishments on trusting God for the promise, reflect on your fear of man versus your trust in God. Answer the following questions.**

¹⁶ Dr. Rev. Charles J. Southall, III, First Emanuel Baptist Church, New Orleans, LA, October 11, 2016 Bible Study, Book of Acts, Chapter 1, verse 7.

DAY 17 (10/20/2016) **TOXIC EMOTIONS CREATE DELUSIONAL THOUGHTS** (continued)

HAVE YOU GIVEN UP ON GOD?

- ☐ Yes
☐ A little
☐ No, absolutely not!

Your Thoughts:

HAVE YOU GIVEN UP ON YOURSELF?

- ☐ Yes
☐ A little
☐ No, absolutely not!

Your Thoughts:

HAVE TOXIC EMOTIONS TAKEN YOU TO THE POINT OF FEARING MAN AND NOT TRUSTING GOD?

- ☐ Yes
☐ A little
☐ No, absolutely not!

Your Thoughts:

Pray for God to increase your faith:

DAY 18 (10/21/2016) **GOD SEES OUR AFFLICTION**

Genesis 31:42

If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night.”

Yesterday we saw that Jacob walked in fear of Laban, but today we see a fearless Jacob trusting God. Jacob knew that Laban meant him no good over the past twenty years; yet he was respectful to his father-in-law and kept his commitment to work for the privilege of being married to Laban’s daughters. The tragedy of Laban’s toxic relationship with his son-in law, was that it was also harmful to his daughters and his grandchildren. The spirits of jealousy, strife, resentment, and envy are so dark that it will consume the very vessel it has taken over.

Today’s Prayer:

Father in heaven; thank you for protecting me from the enemy. Lord forgive me for the times I have allowed myself to fear what man can do to me. Your word today encourages me; but I must confess I get weary. I know you see my affliction, but sometimes the delay in releasing me from the terrorists of my life is long and unbearable. I thank you for the covering of the Blood of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Talk to God about the afflictions in your life that you are still awaiting deliverance:

Your prayer for release from affliction(s):

DAY 19 (10/22/2016) GOD BLESSES IN SPITE OF US

Genesis 31:42

If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night.”

Today, we are revisiting Genesis 31:42. This time from the prospective of God blessing Jacob in spite of Jacob. What is interesting is that Jacob’s hands were not always clean in the relationship with his father-in-law. Jacob devised schemes and plans to out-wit his father-in-law,¹⁷ but in spite of Jacob’s toxic behavior, God kept the promise and delivered Jacob from the enemy to the promise. Honestly, Jacob’s behavior prior to the visitation of God at Bethel was not so stellar either. He was running around stealing birth rights, deceiving his father and running from his brother that was trying to kill him.¹⁸ Our natural instinct is to wonder, why did God choose this imperfect vessel to inherit the Abrahamic promise of greatness? That is not our business! Once we begin wondering who deserves the blessings of God, then we are subjecting ourselves to the toxic spirits of jealousy, resentment, envy and strife. Conversely, we are not to reject or rebuke the blessings and promises of God because we feel we are not worthy. To do so is contrary to the will and the word of God.

Today’s Prayer:

Lord our God, in spite of my sin, in spite of my transgressions, you bless me. I humble myself before you and ask your forgiveness of sin. Create in me a clean heart and renew a righteous spirit within me. Teach me to walk worthy of the call you have ordained for my life. Grant me the wisdom to understand your divine plan for my life. In the blessed name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.

My thoughts on God’s blessings in spite of me:

¹⁷ See Genesis 30:37-43

¹⁸ See Genesis 27

DAY 20 (10/23/2016)

Ephesians 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Prayer for today: Father this is our half-way mark; day 20. I come, first, grateful that I have not given up on this journey. Lord you know that I have been tempted to give into my flesh. My strength, however, is in you Lord. I have been tired, but you kept me from falling into darkness. Lord I have tried so hard to keep myself from being an instrument of confusion and a disobedient vessel. I thank you for your grace and mercy and the power of my salvation that pardons my sins and transgressions. Strengthen me to maintain my focus on **THE PROMISE**. I know that the temptation will come, but I trust you Lord to bring me out and keep me from falling. **You are my Lord, my Savior, and my Redeemer. Amen.**

As we exit season four and enter into the second half of our journey, carry with you God's covering in the chase to the promise: *(1) I am with you; (2) I will keep you wherever you go; (3) I will bring you back; (4) I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you. (Genesis 28:15)*

It is up to you to embrace the promise and not entertain man's alternative agendas for your life. Protect your mind against the toxic mix of emotions that attempt to overwhelm you. Continue to detox by separating yourself from all things that separate you from God. Seek God for clarity of thought, wisdom, and discernment of God's will. Finally, be at peace.

Complete this prayer in your own words:

Lord, in this season we have focused on others who possess the emotional toxic mix of jealousy, strife, envy and resentment. Now today Father, I come to you praying for a renewing of the spirit of my mind. I pray that I never fall to the temptation of any emotional toxic mix. Have mercy on me Lord for my self-destructive behavior by harboring spirits of jealousy, strife and resentment...

Your turn to pray:

SEASON FIVE:



DANGER

TOXIC ACTIONS

**TOXIC ACTIONS WEAKEN OUR
SPIRITUAL IMMUNE SYSTEM**

FAST FROM TOXIC ACTIONS

Monday October 24, 2016

To

Friday, October 28, 2016

Before we introduce Season Five, contemplate these things. We are entering the second half of First Emanuel Baptist Church's 7th consecutive year of a 40 day corporate fasting and prayer period. Be open to God. If God shifts your focus on the things from which you are to sacrifice and fast, be obedient. Finally, trust and surrender all to God.

□ **Fast Facts about Toxins and the Immune System**¹⁹ □

- **Toxins are poisons** produced by your body's own processes, or those occurring in nature, or obtained from manmade sources.
- Manmade sources come from pesticides in your food, chemicals in your water, that new car smell, toxic minerals used by industry and tons of other sources.
- The **body is designed to detoxify itself**. However, when external sources of toxicity are added to the mix those normal detoxification processes become **overwhelmed**.
- **External toxins** add to the "total body load". The liver is the body's main organ of detoxification. A fully functional liver supports immune system function.
- **The immune system is part of your body's detoxification arsenal.**
- **It's not possible to avoid environmental toxins.**
- Toxins destroy cells in the body.
- Toxins damage the immune system.
- Toxins reduce immune system function.

Exposure to environmental toxins may be hard to escape. The frequency and severity of toxic emissions are all regulated by governmental agencies and organizations committed to responsible stewardship of God's creation, the earth.

The Consequences of Breach of Confidence

A **breach** means: Something is **broken** •Something is **torn** •Something is **ruptured** •Something is **leaking out**• Something is **seeping in**

When there is a breach, the integrity of the structure is compromised. Where there is compromise to the structure, the structure may collapse or be rendered a danger for use. The most devastating consequence of a breach in some structures is that the impurities enter the structure and those impurities in turn excrete into the environment. Our spiritual immune system is compromised when someone breaches a confidence. A compromised immune system gives opportunity for the lethal process of corrosion and contamination to begin. A compromised spiritual immune system is unhealthy for the Body of Christ.

The Flint, Michigan water crisis is the perfect example of a compromised system. The corrosion of the pipes in the Flint water system is what allowed the lead to sip into the water. "The EPA discovered that the necessary **corrosion control** had not been added in the community water system when local governmental officials decided to switch from purchasing treated water to sourcing and

¹⁹ "Your Immune System, Toxins and Detoxification," <http://immunedisorders.homestead.com/Toxins.html>

treating its water supply from the Flint River.”²⁰ The poison in the Flint water system breeds sickness and even death.

A breach of confidence in the Body of Christ breeds pain, disappointment and sometimes despair. The EPA found that the State and city had not disclosed the risk of potential lead exposure to the public. This will not be our legacy. Season Five speaks truth to the consequences of a breached confidence.

²⁰ U.S. Environmental protection Agency, Office of inspector General, “Management Alert; Drinking Water Contamination in Flint, Michigan, Demonstrates a Need to Clarify EPA Authority to Issue Emergency Orders to protect the Public, Project No. 17-P-0004, October 20, 2016

DAY 21 (10/24/2016) **Avoid the Temptation of Gossip**

Romans 7:19 -21

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

A breach of confidence destroys relationships. Lives have been shattered because someone repeated what another shared in confidence. There are several actors that participate in a breached confidence: (1) the one who entrusted the confidence; (2) the one guilty of the breach; and (3) the listener and recipient of the “secret.” When that breached confidence is released into the atmosphere and someone picks it up and repeats it, then it transforms into gossip. The gossip transitions to an untruth. The truth will gradually dissipate and untruth will prevail.

Today the focus is on actor #3, **the one who listens as the confidant repeats the confidence** of his brother or sister. Even though the listener may not comment, the offense of the listener is that he/she did not rebuke or correct the gossiper. It is the nosiness in us that tempts us to listen to gossip or even to repeat a 3rd hand story that we have not confirmed as true. Today’s scripture explains that it is in the nature of human-kind to be sinful. Gossip is probably one of the most mindless offenses we commit against our brothers and sisters.

Be mindful that we are not exempt just because we did not breach the confidence. Wherever we fall in the spectrum of breached confidences, it is our responsibility to seek God with all honesty, humility and meekness for forgiveness. It is only the grace of God our Father that can deliver us from all sin and evil.

What is your position on the responsibility of actor #3, that only listens to the gossip, which is probably a breached confidence?

Complete this Prayer in your own words:

Lord, give me discernment of spirit so that I may recognize when a “casual conversation” is not so casual, but a potential instrument of harm and wound of the person that is the subject of gossip. Transform me into a *listener* for the edification of the Body of Christ and release me from being nosy and receiving a breached confidence. Father, help me to....

DAY 22 (10/25/2016) **Avoid the Temptation of Gossip**

Proverbs 20:19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Same Scenario as Day 21: Different Actor:

A breach of confidence destroys relationships. Lives have been shattered because someone repeated what another shared in confidence. There are several actors that participate in a breached confidence: (1) the one who entrusted the confidence; (2) the one guilty of the breach; and (3) the listener and recipient of "secret". When that breached confidence is released into the atmosphere and someone picks it up and repeats it, then it transforms into gossip. The gossip transitions to an untruth. The truth will gradually dissipate and untruth will prevail.

It may come as a surprise to some, but gossip is a sin. We are reminded in Proverbs 6: 16-19 that God "hates" and considers it an "abomination" to gossip, lie, and be the instigator of mess:



These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: ... feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

Many times we mindlessly gossip about someone. We may think that if the gossip is not mean spirited that it is not harmful. The secrecy and dishonesty of gossip is what makes it harmful. It is repeating something about someone without their knowledge, in their presence, or any confirmation as to the truth of the matter. Typically, the gossip was birthed out of a breach of confidence.

Today the focus is on actor #1, ***the one who entrusted a confidence*** with his brother or sister. More specifically, this confidant is a part of the Body of Christ.

Are people missing from your pew that you saw Sunday after Sunday?

- _____ Yes
- _____ I am not sure if they have disappeared or shifted to our 2nd service.
- _____ No

What if you learned that your Pew-mate is missing because they were injured by a breached confidence? Would you reach out to comfort and encourage?

- _____ Yes, absolutely
- _____ I probably would not. I am not that close to my Pew-mate(s). I am not sure how they would accept me reaching out.
- _____ No, that is not my business. That is between the offender and God.
- _____ This is a tough question. It actually is embarrassing, because I have not reached out to my brothers and sisters that I no longer see at church.

A Prayer for the pain of a breached confidence:

God our Father, I know your word has warned us about trusting man. I have trusted others with things dear to my heart and they have stabbed me in the back and used it against me. My heart has been battered so many times because of breached confidences from those I thought were "friends." May I be wiser and take heed to this proverb today. Give me discernment of spirit as to those that are worthy of my confidence. ***In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.***

DAY 23 (10/26/2016)

Proverbs 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Same Scenario as Days 21 & 22; Different Actor:

A breach of confidence destroys relationships. Lives have been shattered because someone repeated what another shared in confidence. There are several actors that participate in a breached confidence: (1) the one who entrusted the confidence; (2) the one guilty of the breach; and (3) the listener and recipient of “secret”. When that breached confidence is released into the atmosphere and someone picks it up and repeats it, then it transforms into gossip. The gossip transitions to an untruth. The truth will gradually dissipate and untruth will prevail.

Today the focus is on actor #2, ***the one guilty of the breach***. More specifically, this confidant is a part of the Body of Christ.

The body of Christ benefits nothing from tearing each other down. All a breach does in the Body of Christ is help facilitate the opportunity for filth to seep in and cause unbelievable contamination within Kingdom. We cannot continue in this manner. Death is all around us. Souls have no clue that God is Love and Loves them. The level of toxicity is at the highest level in the Body of Christ. We must cease from being Satan’s instruments of destruction.

Complete this prayer in your own words:

Father, I do not want to be the instrument of confusion, the author of mess, or the one guilty of sowing seeds of discord. Bless me with a spirit of confidence that your Word reveals to us today. Touch my heart that I may be the one my sister or brother can trust to confide in when they just need to talk. Teach me how to just listen and be quiet...

Talk to God about restoring relationships in First Emanuel (or your church home):

DAY 24 (10/27/2016)

Psalm 26:11

But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

Prayer for Today: May the Spirit of truth within me destroy the spirit of deception that may attempt to overcome me. I pray that I do not waiver in what I believe and falsify who I am. Lord I only want to please you. May all that I do this day be representative and characteristic of Christ. I love you Lord. I bless your name. ***In the Name of Jesus I pray, Amen.***

Seek God on how to “walk in integrity”:

Talk to God about restoring relationships in First Emanuel (or your church home):

DAY 25 (10/28/2016)

Luke 17:20-21

²⁰And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: ²¹Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Jesus declares in **Luke 17:21** ~ *...the kingdom of God is within you*, this means we are Kingdom. Because we are Kingdom, the breaches in our lives directly affect Kingdom Living. The word of God admonishes and warns us of the destructive behavior of gossip, lies, and lack of integrity in our lives. In Season Five, we focused on the effect a breach of confidence has on our spiritual immune system. The health and the strength of the Body of Christ, depends on our willingness to refrain from the toxic behavior of gossip and the act of breaching a brother or sister's trust.

Because **WE ARE KINGDOM**, we are required to implement a *corrosion control* system. We can learn from Flint's error in not creating a corrosion control system for their water supply. Chaos, sickness, and death is the result of Flint's error.

The Body of Christ can benefit from a corrosion control system. A corrosion control system is one where there is no compromise. The only agenda is Kingdom. The spiritual health of our communities, our families, and the church in which you have placed your discipleship are depending on the authority and power of your salvation.

Spend time today in prayer and fasting for God to reveal your responsibility in Kingdom:

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

SEASON SIX:
TOXIC FEARS
INFILTRATE THE HEART



FAST FROM TOXIC FEARS

*A man's conviction that he is God's child automatically tends to shift the basis of his relationship with all his fellows. He recognizes at once that to fear a man, whatever may be that man's power over him, is a basic denial of the integrity of his very life. It lifts that mere man to a place of pre-eminence that belongs to God and to God alone. He who fears is literally delivered to destruction.²¹ Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited**

Saturday, October 29, 2016
To
Wednesday, November 2, 2016

²¹ Thurman, Howard, *Jesus and the disinherited*/Howard Thurman; foreword by Vincent, 1976 Beacon Press, Boston, MA, pg. 51

***Fear** is stalking our community while
Ignorance arrogantly mistakes its strength in power.
Truth combats power and ignorance is intimidated by truth.*

The genocide of Hebrew children under the age of two shortly after Jesus' birth is an example of **ignorance's intimidation by truth**. Jesus was stalked at birth because ignorance feared its power would be usurped and its kingdom and territory diminished. (Matthew 2:3) Scripture tells us that King Herod and all of Jerusalem got nervous when they learned of Jesus' birth. (Matthew 2:16) King Herod was so intimidated that a "King" was born that he slaughtered all children under the age of 2 to make sure the King's Kingdom would never come to be. (Matthew 2:16) King Herod literally thought he could cut off the Kingdom of God to preserve his earthly kingdom.

There are people that are troubled by your very existence. The **integrity of our salvation** dictates we do not respond to fear in fear or with fear. What if the wise men had honored the request of King Herod and reported the whereabouts of Jesus and ignored God's warning that they were not to report back to King Herod? (Matthew 2:11). If the wise men had elected to obey man in disobedience to God, this would have been classified as an offense against God. This is what Howard Thurman meant in our introductory quote that "...to fear a man... lifts that mere man to a place of pre-eminence that belongs to God and to God alone."

Once fear consumes us it infiltrates our heart. When fear establishes domicile in our heart, it has influence over our mind. The proverb "... as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."²² is a warning to us that we are to preserve and protect our heart for "out of our heart flows the issues of life." (Proverb 4:23).

We have to protect our heart to avoid genocide of the mind. Yes, genocide of the mind. Think about the definition of genocide. Actually, many scholars have debated over the appropriate definition of genocide. One such definition compliments the life lessons God desires to impart to his people in Season Six:

Genocide has aptly been described as a 'disease of the spirit' against which the 1948 Genocide Convention has not proved to be an effective vaccination... genocide means any of the following **acts committed with intent to destroy**, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group...²³

In Season Six we want to identify toxic fears. Like genocide, toxic fears have as their mission the intentional killing and destruction of its target, you!

²² Proverb 23:7

²³ Jorgensen Nina H.B, "The definition of genocide: Joining the dots in the light of recent practice, International Criminal law Review 1:285-313, 2001. ©2002 Kluwer Law International, pp 285-286

Aleppo Syria²⁴**Psalm 23:4**

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Valleys

Bana al-Abed, a 7 year old Syrian girl tweets "sleeping as you can hear the bombs fall, I will tweet tomorrow if we are alive". - Fatemah #Aleppo pic.twitter.com/HfFvig9ccr²⁵ This is a valley of the shadow of death.

Geographically, valleys are typically at the bottom of mountains and located near rivers (streams of water). Valleys are a source of water with plenty of nutrients for fertile soil. The walls of valleys block wind and severe weather. Valleys provide a safe place for settlement and make invasions difficult.²⁶

Our focus over the next two days is valleys of the heart and valleys of the mind. These are valleys that cause your heart to fear and your mind to reject any possibility of hope. The little 7 year old Syrian girl that tweeted she will tweet again if she is alive the next day, has a fearless hope. This little girl is in a place of uncertainty. At any moment a bomb can hit her home and she is no more. Every day a bomb does not hit her home is confirmation of the sanctity of the Valley.

Today's Prayer: Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy; God, my Father, keeper of my soul, I give thanks that you are the source of my strength in a valley. We are a blessed nation dear Father in that we are not awakened by bombs dropping over our children's heads. But Lord there are so many other devices that Satan has launched against the family. We thank you for the continued hedge of protection over us, our children, and our family. We are grateful that as we walk through the valleys of life you are with us. We bless your Holy and Righteous name. Amen.

²⁴By Assad's bombs: Shell-shocked survivors dig children out of Aleppo
http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2013/02/03/article-2272881-17522F9F000005DC-764_964x521.jpg

²⁵Nicolas Kristof, New York Times, The Blot on Obama's Legacy, October 6, 2016.

²⁶Briney, Amanda, "an Overview of Valley Formation and Development,
<http://geography.about.com/od/physicalgeography/a/valleyformation.htm>

DAY 26 (10/29/2016) **Valley of the Shadow of Death Aleppo Syria (Continued)**

Talk to God about valleys of your heart. This would be a fear that has sickened your heart and is literally about to destroy you. (If this is not your story, skip to the next exercise).

Write a prayer of thanksgiving giving God thanks in advance for your release and restoration from your valley.

Write a 7 word prayer of thanksgiving for the valleys in your life.

Ask God to remove the spirit of doubt, fear and hopeless in your valley. -

**Psalm 23:4**

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Prayer for Today: Lord, I know that if death could have its way, it would consume my very soul. Father, I thank you for the miraculous blood of Jesus Christ. I thank you for redeeming me from the grave. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Shadow of Death

The US Department of Justice's *Census of Arrest Related Homicide Deaths* reveals that in 2011 **38%** of arrest-related homicide deaths were of the **black race/non-Hispanic**, while **33.8%** of those arrest-related homicide deaths were **white/non-Hispanic** and **23.2%** of the arrest related homicide deaths were Hispanic. As a whole, more than 50% of arrest-related homicide deaths were persons ages 18-34. 33.6% of the deaths were persons 25-34 years of age and 22.2% of the deaths were persons 18-24 years of age.²⁷

Is this a type of genocide of a generation? Sadly, these numbers reveal that it is the Millennial (anyone born between 1982-2004)²⁸ that have a high percentage of arrest-related homicide deaths. Read carefully, these ***arrest-related deaths*** are classified as homicides, murder. These are deaths by law enforcement that have been classified as a homicide. **That is a valley of a shadow of death.**

²⁷ Banks, Duren, Ph.D, Couzens, Lance, Blanton, Caroline, Cribb, Devon, RTI International, "Arrest-Related Deaths Program assessment: Technical Report," Table 5, pg. 22, <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5259> , March 3, 2015

²⁸ Bump Philip, "Here is when each generation begins and ends, according to facts" The Atlantic, <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/03/here-is-when-each-generation-begins-and-ends-according-to-facts/359589/>, March 25, 2014

DAY 27 (10/30/2016) **VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH** (CONTINUED)

Our communities can easily be paralyzed in a spirit of fear with these statistics. Our 18, 25, and 30 year olds fear encounters with law enforcement and law enforcement fear encounters with them. Fear facing fear is dangerous and creates a *shadow of death*.

Can you identify the fear in this valley of shadow of death?

Can you identify the ignorance in this valley of shadow of death?

Where is the power in this valley of the shadow of death?

THE QUESTION

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN:

*Fear is stalking our community while
ignorance arrogantly mistakes its strength in power?*

THE ANSWER

COMBAT FEAR AND IGNORANCE WITH TRUTH:

*Truth combats power
And
Ignorance is intimidated by truth.*

Truth is the word of God. The only assignment for today is to **speak truth to fear. All day speak. All day meditate. All day pray. All day intimidate ignorance by speaking truth.** Combat ignorance with the truth of life by sharing these 22 words with believers and unbelievers:

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;*



Animation by Luis Ruibal, Escaping Boko Haram: How three Nigeria girls found safety, BBC News, October 27, 2014 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29762252>

Psalm 23:4

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

The anguish, pain, and fear that a parent experiences when their child is kidnapped, gravely ill, or lost and wandering is indescribable. This is the valley that parents of the girls of Chibok, Nigeria experienced when close to three hundred girls were kidnapped from school by the terrorist group Boko Haram in 2014. Not only were the parents of the girls in a valley of the shadow of death, but so were the girls. Below are excerpts of an interview with three girls who survived and escaped from their predators six months after their capture:²⁹

Interview with the Girls

Lami: *It was Monday night. We had exams the following day. Then we started to hear shootings in the town. So we went out. We phoned our parents to tell them what was happening in the town. They told us to run away when we got the chance. We told them that the town was already surrounded so there was no way we could run.*

Maria: *The Terrorist said to us: "You're only coming to school for prostitution. Boko (Western education) is haram (forbidden) so what are you doing in school?"*

Maria: *They should pray to God to forgive them their sins. I'd also ask them to bring back the girls they have kidnapped because their parents are in distress. Some of the parents of the girls have already died. It was the thought of their girls that killed them.*³⁰

VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, CHIBOK, NIGERIA (CONTINUED)

²⁹ Stein, Chris, 21 Girls Kidnapped From Chibok School Released by Boko Haram, Nigeria Says, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/14/world/africa/boko-haram-nigeria.html?_r=0, October 13, 2016

³⁰ Escaping Boko Haram: How three Nigeria girls found safety, BBC News, October 27, 2014 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29762252>

Interview with the Girls

Hajara: *God will do what he wills, but I don't want to look at them because of what they have done to my life. They think they've ruined me, but God willing, they haven't ruined me. I'll continue with my education.*³¹

Hajara: *When I saw my elder and younger brothers, I fell to the ground crying. My mother and father were crying and all members of my family cried. **Before I reached home it was as if there was a death in the house. Mats were spread. People were consoling my father and mother thinking that I had died.***

There was an expectancy of death in the homes of the kidnapped girls. Fear was a successful stalker. The Spirit of fear paralyzed families so much so that grief overcame them. This was not a valley that they or even many of us could survive.

***Fear** is stalking our community while
Ignorance arrogantly mistakes its strength in power.
Truth combats power and ignorance is intimidated by truth.*

The kidnappers were overly confident in their power over the girls. They did not understand the power of Truth in the girls. Because the power of the Word was instilled in the girls they were able to survive this valley. The shadow of death did not consume the girls. The girls did acknowledge being afraid, but their fearless faith led them to profess and speak truth to power:
God will do what he wills, they think they've ruined me, but God willing, they haven't ruined me.

***Fear** is stalking our community while
Ignorance arrogantly mistakes its strength in power.
Truth combats power and ignorance is intimidated by truth.*

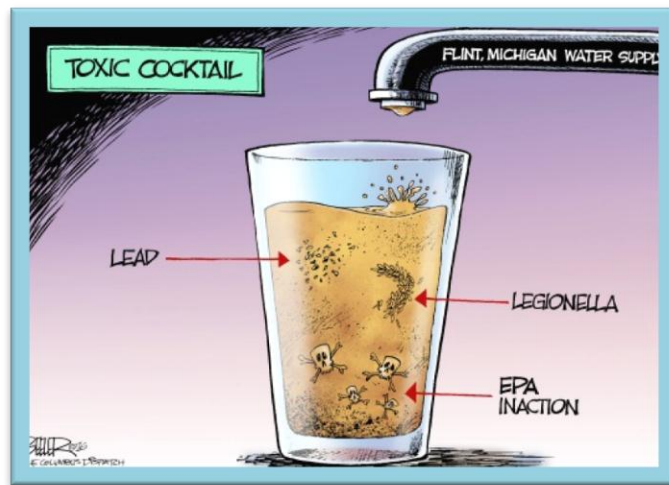
Write about the time(s) that you were in the valley of the shadow of death, afraid and alone, but fearlessly trusting God:

Ask God to calm your fears about your child or family member that is in a valley of shadow of death:

DAY 29 (11/01/2016) **VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH**

³¹Escaping Boko Haram: How three Nigeria girls found safety, BBC News, October 27, 2014
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29762252>

FLINT MICHIGAN



Psalm 23:4

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

The New York Times on the Flint Water Advisory Task Force Report:

“The facts of the Flint water crisis lead us to the inescapable conclusion that this is a case of environmental injustice.” ... In making that declaration, the five-member panel put a spotlight on a long-running civil rights issue: whether minorities and the poor are treated differently when it comes to environmental matters, relegating them to some of the most dangerous places in the country: flood prone areas of New Orleans that were devastated after Hurricane Katrina highly polluted parts of Detroit and the Bronx; and “Cancer Alley” in Louisiana, where residents who live near factories suffer disproportionately from disease.... The report concluded, “Flint residents, who are majority black or African-American and among the most impoverished of any metropolitan area in the United States, did not enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards as that provided to other communities.”³²

71 percent of the Earth’s surface is water-covered. Water is never sitting still. The earth’s water supply is constantly moving from one place to another and from one form to another.³³ Water was here when God created the heavens and the earth. Scripture tells us that God called water into submission by pouring its spirit upon the water:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:2)

After God’s Spirit inhabited the water, God positioned water and gave water order:

³² By Bosman, Julie, Water Crisis Inquiry Finds State Ignored Warning Signs, The New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/24/us/flint-water-crisis.html> , March 23, 2016

³³ How much water is there on, in, and above the Earth?, Water.usgs.gov/edu/earthhowmuch.html

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. (Genesis 1:7)

God gave water order and direction by strategically placing water in position as a source for survival. Man, however, in his own wisdom has attempted to possess, control, and alter the water source. This is why there is a crisis in Flint Michigan. State officials switched its water source to the Flint River in an effort to save money. No thought of whether this was a safe source that would yield clean water to the citizens of Flint.

The Flint water crisis is not only a valley of shadow of death, but it is another form of genocide. A select few that consider themselves the privileged have declared that fiscal conservatism is more important than safe water for the *least of these*. The repercussions from the toxic contaminates in Flint's water supply can be a valley of shadow of death for generations to come.

Today's Prayer: Lord, your word admonishes that we are not to fear what man can do to us. How are we to live in situations where we have no power and control over things such as our water supply? How can we live independently from reliance on those that have been vested with power and authority to maintain order and provide services to our communities? Please Lord, touch the minds and hearts of our government leaders; for you are a just God and you command Justice for your people. Lord eradicate the injustices that have been inflicted upon your people. In the blessed name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

We have lived in communities that have experienced environmental injustices, i.e. schools and homes built on toxic landfills, oil spills, breached levees etc. All are potentially valleys of shadow of death. God has been with us during these toxic valleys of a shadow of death. Acknowledge to God your feelings about the injustices you and/or our communities have experienced.

Ask God for instruction, direction, and clarity of thought on the role of the Body of Christ in toxic valleys of shadow of death:

DAY 30 (11/02/2016)

Psalm 118:6

The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

Today's Prayer: Father, over the last few days you have brought things to our attention that we may not have contemplated, meditated about, or even offered a prayer of intercession. Thank you for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in teaching us all things. As we leave this season dear Lord, we pray that "we fear no evil." We thank you that your "rod and your staff" are with us to guide us and to comfort us. We thank you that you will not leave us or allow any harm to come upon us. Release us Father of all toxic fears. Shield our hearts and minds from all sin and evil. Have mercy upon our souls. In the blessed name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Today reflect on the last four days and spend time in prayer for anyone of the following or all of the following:

- The Civil War in Aleppo, Syria (Children of War)

- Restoration and healing between our communities and law enforcement

☐

- The 100+ girls that remain in captivity of Boko Haram & girls and women over the world

☐

- environmental injustices (Flint Michigan)

☐

SEASON SEVEN:



FREEDOM

*Multitudes, multitudes
in the valley of decision:
for the day of the LORD is near
in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:14)*

Thursday, November 3, 2016

To

Monday, November 7, 2016

What are all those people doing in the valley? How can a valley be a place of decision making? Whose decision is it? It is God's decision! The Day of Judgment, the time for release of God's people is at hand.

DAY 31 (11/03/2016) **God is Committed to Restoration**

Joel 3:1-2 (NRSV)

¹*For then, in those days and at that time, when I restore* the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, ²*I will* gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and then I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations. They have divided my land,

Sometimes we place ourselves in shackles and throw away the key. We do this when we get overwhelmed by the circumstances in our lives and forget or ignore the promises in God's Word. We start trying to manipulate the course in life that God has set for us. We try to help God perform the miracle(s) in our lives.

In today's scripture, we find that it is God's will to restore us. We subject ourselves to bondage when we reject that restoration is in God's timing, and not in response to our demands or even our circumstances. God watched his Holy City, Jerusalem, come under siege on more than one occasion. He watched the enemy breach the walls of a city that was at one time fortified by his valiant armies. God saw his Holy Temple desecrated and burned. It was decades before God restored Jerusalem, his Holy City. Consider these things when you become overwhelmed in your present state of waiting. It is God's will to restore you; it is, however, in God's timing. God's timing is always perfect.

Check all that apply to you:

_____ I believe that it is the will of God to restore me

_____ There are things in my life that I want restored; but I do not believe that God will restore. Acknowledge those things to God:

_____ Sometimes I think that God will not restore my situation because of my sin. Talk to God about this:

Complete this Prayer in Your Own Words:

God I am really tired. I trust you Lord for your Word, but sometimes I do not think that you hear my cry. God I have been seeking healing and deliverance for a long time; but God you have been silent. Father, help me to understand

DAY 32 (11/04/2016) **The Valley of Jehoshaphat**

Joel 3:2-3 (NRSV)

²*I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and then I will enter into judgment with them there, on account of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations. They have divided my land,³ and cast lots for my people, and traded boys for prostitutes, and sold girls for wine, and drunk it down.*



In Season Six, we identified several valleys. Today, we want to look at a different kind of valley. Biblical scholars have suggested that the actual location of the Valley of Jehoshaphat is unknown. Well it is of no moment that archeologists and theologians cannot pinpoint the exact location of Jehoshaphat's Valley; it exists. The Hebrew translation of the name reveals that Jehoshaphat, יהושפט, means *"Jehovah-judged; whom Jehovah judges, i.e. whose cause he pleads; also of a valley near Jerusalem:—Jehoshaphat"*³⁴ or *"symbolical name of a valley near Jerusalem which is the place of ultimate judgment; maybe the deep ravine which separates Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives through which the Kidron flowed;"*

It is safe for us to conclude that the Valley of Jehoshaphat is a place of judgment. God is specific as to who will be in this valley of Judgment and why they will be in the valley of judgment. This valley is designed for those that have offended God's people. Judgment will be upon those that oppressed God's people; the nations that raped God's people and stole God's land. Judgment is upon those that enslaved women, men, boys, and girls. God did not create us to be in bondage.

After reviewing today's scripture focus, do you understand better why it is in God's timing as to when and how he will restore you? We are not suggesting that restoration will be held in abeyance until judgment day, but what this scripture suggest to us is that God is not blind to your situation nor is God necessarily silent in your situation.

God may not give you the answer that you are looking for, especially if you want to know when the trials and tribulations will cease, but what the Spirit of our living God will do is give you a spirit of comfort and peace to endure. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)*

As your prayer focus today, seek God for the spirit of wisdom and discernment.

³⁴ Strong's Number **H3092**

DAY 33 (11/05/2016) **From Captivity to Zion**

Joel 3:17 (NRSV)

So that you shall know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it.

Today, we see that God is specifically addressing his people and reaffirming the promises of God. God had to cut off the enemy in order to restore his people to their rightful place. The people have finally been delivered from the threat of the enemy. God is declaring that his Holy City shall remain Holy and a constant place of refuge for his people.

Meditation and Prayer for today:

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

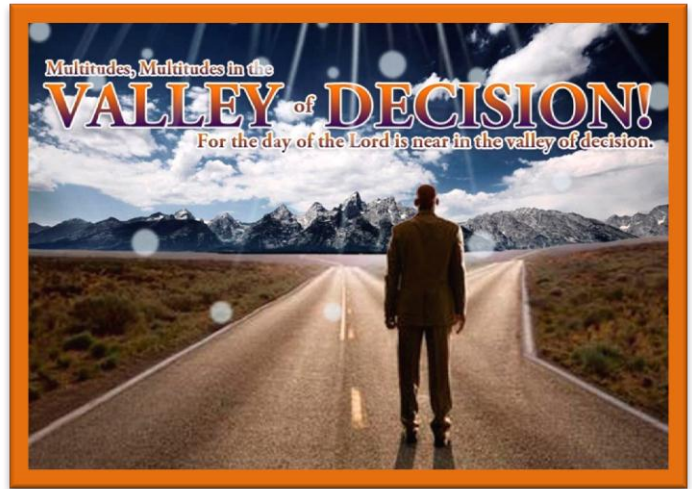
Joel 3:16 (NRSV)

...but the Lord is a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.

In our earlier discussion of the Valley of the shadow of death, we defined characteristics of a valley:

*The walls of valleys block wind and severe weather. Valleys provide a safe place for settlement and make invasions difficult.*³⁵

The “Valley of Decision” is the perfect refuge for God’s people. It is a place where God protects. The enemy is in the Valley with us, but God called the enemy in. The enemy is subject to the rule and will of God now. A Valley of Decision is confirmation that God has freed his people from the oppressive claws of the enemy. Your future is in the Valley of Decision.



Today's Prayer:

Father, life is complicated at times. The enemy is so clever at times it is difficult to discern their plan to cause me harm. I thank you for be my protector and posting your hedge of protection around me. Amen.

Meditation and Prayer for today:

[illegible]

³⁵ Briney, Amanda, “an Overview of Valley Formation and Development,” <http://geography.about.com/od/physicalgeography/a/valleyformation.htm>

DAY 35 (11/07/2016) **Don't Look Back**

Galatians 4:9

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

The Apostle Paul pleads to the church at Galatia to avoid the snares and temptations that held them in bondage. In Season One, you were asked to explore brokenness and bondage in your life. Now that we are almost at the end of our journey in this period of prayer and fasting, revisit your notes.



What is your plan of action to avoid the pitfalls of a relapse into bondage?

Before we enter into our final season, Restoration, reflect on what God has revealed in his Word over the past six seasons. The consistent message is that it is God's will to restore. Enter into your final season in a Spirit of Expectation. Trust God for his Word.

Today's Prayer:

SEASON EIGHT

RESTORATION



In that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the stream beds of Judah shall flow with water ; a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord and water the Wadi Shittim. *(Joel 3 :18 NRSV)*

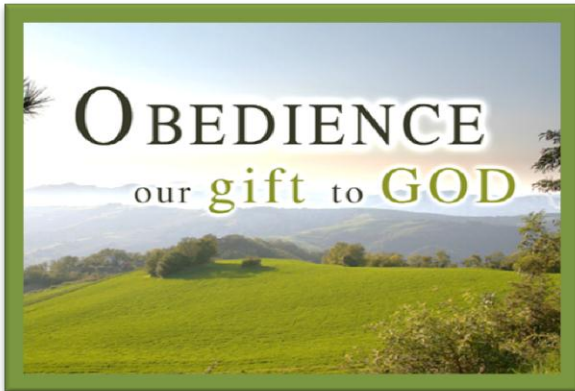
Tuesday, November 8, 2016
To
Saturday, November 12, 2016

DAY 36 (11/08/2016) **God Responds to Our Obedience**

Joel 2:19 (NRSV)

In response to his people the Lord said: I am sending you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a mockery among the nations.

In our scripture today, we see God establishing promises. We also see God affirming that the manifestation of the promise is in response to his people. **God said “I will send.” God said “you will be satisfied.” God said “I will no more.”** Interestingly, God is sending all things that will sustain the people not only physically but spiritually. In the Old Testament, the grain, wine, and oil are essential elements for an intimate relationship with God. Today our focus is what is God responding to? What exactly did “his people” do to provoke such a response from God?



The people did exactly what God called them to do. They had no choice. In the preceding chapters of the Prophecy of Joel, Israel is in a panic because of the threat of enemy invasion. The people are distraught because they cannot invoke the presence of God. The offerings have ceased to exist. Without God’s presence, there can be no instruction to the people. God’s voice is silent. They do not know what to do. The entire spectrum of human emotions is on display. Everybody is looking for answers to “Why?”; “How?”; “When?”

God, through his prophet Joel, commanded the following of the people:

Joel 1:13 Gird yourselves, and *lament*, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, *lie all night* in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God.

Joel 1:14 *Sanctify* ye a fast, *call* a solemn assembly, *gather* the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the house of the LORD your God, and *cry* unto the LORD,

In Joel 2:19, God is responding to the obedience of the people to his command in Joel 1:13-14.

God responds to our obedience as well. We too were called by God to consecrate ourselves and to enter into a period of sacrificial fasting and prayer. The instructions in Joel 1:13-14 is what we have been called to do. We just do not use the same phraseology or words today. Everything about a period of fasting and prayer is sacrificial. Lamenting, lying prostrate before God, and crying to God is a part of the process of restoration.

You may think it odd to revisit the call to fast with five days remaining in the fast; but God wants his people blessed. God wants us to recognize that we have received the promise. The promise is here. We are restored; but we cannot realize it in a carnal state of being. Be obedient to the call.

Today’s Prayer:

God, I have participated in this fast over the last 35 days. Now Lord I no longer want to be a participant. I sacrificially offer myself to you. I am willing to be obedient to the call. I do not understand fully everything that you command to your people in Joel 1:13-14, but I am willing to hear from you. I am willing to allow the Holy Spirit to guide me. I know that you respond to the prayers of your people. I understand there is promise attached to my obedience. **Amen.**

DAY 37 (11/09/2016) **God Responds to our Obedience**

Joel 2:19 (NRSV)

In response to his people the Lord said: I am sending you grain, wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied; and I will no more make you a mockery among the nations.

In the second quarter of this year, there was a Church School lesson entitled “The Consequences of Enemy Invasion.” As a part of that lesson, we discussed the process by which the people made offerings to God and how God responded to the people:

God requires daily offerings from his people, one in the morning and one at night. In both instances a lamb is sacrificed. God has a very specific recipe on how to dress the lamb (Exodus 29:40). It requires a specific measure of flour, oil and wine (Exodus 29:40). The grain offering (flour mixed with oil, *Numbers 15:4*) and the drink offering (wine, *Numbers 15:7*) had to be a part of this reverence and honor to God. God said:

⁴²It shall be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where **I WILL meet with you**, to speak to you there. ⁴³**I WILL meet with the Israelites** there, and it shall be sanctified by my glory; ⁴⁴**I WILL consecrate** the tent of meeting and the altar; Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate, to serve me as priests. ⁴⁵**I WILL dwell among** the Israelites and **I WILL be** their God. (Exodus 29:42-45 NRSV) The mandate of the grain and drink offering was not expected during their time of captivity and bondage in a foreign land. The grain and drink offerings are required only when they have possessed the land/territory that God promised: “...*when you come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving you...*” (*Numbers 15:1-2*).

Today, of course, we invoke God’s presence through prayer, worship, and praise, and by simply being a living soul that is willing to unashamedly surrender our being to God. Brunt offerings are no longer required. The ultimate sacrifice of Calvary affords us the opportunity to freely go to the throne of grace without anyone interceding on our behalf to ask for forgiveness.

Yesterday, a prayer was offered about God’s sacrificial call to us for this period of prayer and fasting; today talk to God about your obedience to the call:

DAY 38 (11/10/2016) **Early and Abundant Rain**

Joel 2:23 (NRSV)

O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before.

Today we do not offer any commentary on our scripture focus. We have only carved out potential areas of concentration in prayer and meditation for you today. Receive the power of this Word!



Vindication in three words:

Justification
Exoneration
Ratification

Talk to God about the blessing of vindication in your life:

You, God and Rain:

God has given you **early rain** for your vindication, justification, exoneration, ratification.
God has poured down **abundant rain**

What is your early rain?

Do you see the abundant rain in your life?

God has restored the early and the later rain

Not only has God restored what was, but God has elevated and added the increase.

Thank God for restoration and the increase in your life:

DAY 39 (11/11/2016) God Promises to Restore Us

Joel 2:25 (NRSV)

I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army which I sent against you.

Consider God's promise in his Word today. God is sorrowful and mournful about what the enemy has done to us.

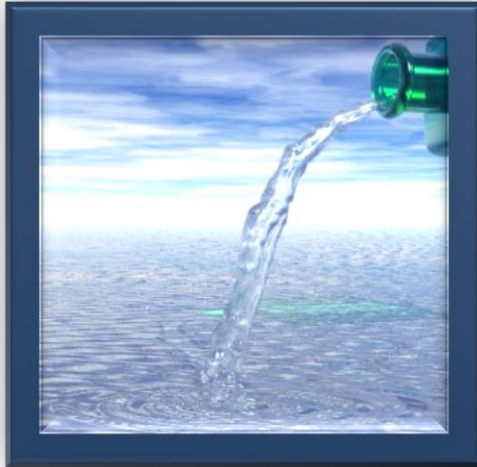
Complete this Prayer in your own words:

God you are such a loving God. You are talking about repaying me! I have sinned and transgressed all my days, but you want to repay me. I thank you for your mercy and your grace...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

Joel 2:28

Then afterward, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:



This is our last day together for this season of prayer and fasting. God has revealed so much to us individually, and as a Body of Christ. Joel 2:28 is where the Holy Spirit led us to conclude. The discussion is brief; but our journey and life of obedience to the will of God is perpetual.

Observations for today:

Notice, verse 28 begins with a transitional word/phrase ***“then afterward.”*** This is what God was up to before he commended his spirit upon all people; yes, that includes you and me.

God promised:

You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied (Joel 2:26-NRSV)

My people shall never again be put to shame (Joel 2: 26, 27-NRSV)

You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel (Joel 2:26, 27-NRSV)

In Joel 2:27, God declared that he is in the midst of Israel. Delete the word “Israel”. Make it personal and affirm what God is in the midst of for you.

“God is in the midst of _____.” Talk to God about him being in the midst of

_____.

Complete this Prayer in your own words:

Dear Lord, Pour, Pour, Pour!!! Endow me with your Spirit:



Thank you for joining us during this season of prayer and fasting! We have unbelievable and incredible love for you.

Acts 20:32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (RSV)

Pastor Charles J. Southall, III