

# FORWARD



21 DAYS OF FASTING AND PRAYER



# EASTING & PRAYER DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

God responds to those who seek Him. As we begin 2021 and come before God in fasting and prayer over the next 21 days, God will renew our expectations, give us new perspectives, and launch us forward into His plans and purpose for our lives.

Our theme for these 21 days is 'Forward'. God's purposes do not change regardless of our circumstances. Instead, He empowers us to move forward in His plans, taking new ground in every area of our lives.

Each week in this devotional has a specific focus - Standing Strong, Being Led by the Holy Spirit, and Taking Ground. Each day includes a devotional reading with some suggestions for prayer and reflection. There is also a portion of scripture that you can read, which will take you through the book of Acts by the end of the 21 days. As you read the devotional, allow God to speak to you! Take time to reflect, pray and respond to God's word. Allow Him to change your heart and lead you into the things He has prepared for you this year!

## WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline where we intentionally abstain from food for a period of time. We deny our natural desires, humble ourselves, and take time to focus on God.

Fasting should be accompanied by dedicated time of prayer and the study of God's Word as we align ourselves with God's will. If you don't know where to start, each day's devotional contains a passage of scripture and a simple prayer that you can follow.

Fasting is not an effort to change God's mind or gain His approval, but rather, it changes our attitude and perspective, and reminds us to depend fully on God. Fasting also precedes a move of God. The Bible describes some examples:

Moses, in seeking a spiritual breakthrough, spent 40 days alone with God without eating or drinking until he received The Ten Commandments (Exodus 24:18).

David sought a personal breakthrough as he fasted to keep himself humble (Psalm 35:13).

Daniel fasted and prayed as he sought a breakthrough for the exiled people living in rebellion against their God (Daniel 9:3-4).

Jesus Himself entered a 40-day fast before launching His public ministry (Matthew 4:1-2).

# EASTING & PRAYER DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Before starting this devotional, take time to prepare yourself. Decide what you will fast and write down what you are believing God for. The more prepared you are as you enter these 21 days, the more you can expect God to do.

## DECIDE WHAT TO FAST

*Full fast:* abstain from all solid food

*Partial fast:* abstain from one or two meals a day, or from a certain type of food or drink

*Other fasts:* abstain from other activities (e.g. entertainment, hobbies, social media) to focus on God

## SET SOME GOALS

Write down some specific goals or areas in your life that you're believing God to speak to you about. Begin with the goal of knowing God more intimately and hearing His voice more clearly. If there are areas in your life where you are needing a breakthrough, commit them to God and believe that He can work in your life as you fast and pray. Most importantly, remain open to whatever God wants to speak and do as you seek Him!

## SHARE THE JOURNEY WITH SOMEONE

As we embark on a journey over the next 21 days as a church, we're doing this together! Find someone who can journey with you - your spouse, a close friend, or someone from your Connect Group. Go through the devotional together. Commit to sharing with each other what you sense God is speaking to you and doing in you over the next 3 weeks.

## TUNE IN

There is also a worship playlist that you can take with you through the next 21 days, with songs that echo the themes in this devotional. Listen to it in your quiet time, in the car, or wherever you are, and make it your soundtrack for the season!

# WEEK ONE

This first week, we begin our journey by ***Standing Strong***. God has empowered us to stand strong and be courageous, even when we go through difficult circumstances. We must stand firm and not concede any ground that God has given to us, and move forward in His plans and purposes!



# REMEMBERING GOD'S PROMISES

I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you— from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites.' No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

**JOSHUA 1:3-5**

## DEVOTIONAL

When God makes a promise, we can be confident that it never changes and will be fulfilled! Even though the Israelites had to wait 40 years to see the fulfillment of God's promise, Joshua stood firm in believing he would step into the promised land. God came through for them, and He still comes through today.

**When we anchor ourselves on God's promises, we can stand strong.** God promised Joshua that He would never fail or abandon him. Because of God's promise, Joshua was unfazed when he encountered enemies more formidable than him. What promises has God given you? Hold onto them and don't let obstacles derail you from seeing those promises fulfilled!

**We need to act in faith on God's promises.** God's promises often come with a condition or call to action. God told Joshua "wherever you set foot, you will be on land that I have given you". So Joshua had to keep moving forward, advancing, and taking territory. If God has spoken to you to make some decisions, don't delay! That step of faith is the key to receiving your promise.

**Until the promise is fulfilled, know that God is with you!** More important than the promise itself, is the God who makes the promise. God told Joshua that He would not fail or abandon him. In the same way, God is with you and for you today. What are you believing God to do this year? Ask God for a specific promise and allow Him to speak to you.

## REFLECT

1. Identify a promise that God has given to you. Remember how you received it and thank God for it.
2. What is a step of faith that God has asked you to take in relation to that promise? Share it with someone and make a decision to take that step today!

## PRAYER

Dear God, I know that Your promises never fail. Teach me how to anchor myself on Your promises and help me to stand strong even in the midst of difficult circumstances. I choose to put my trust in You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READINGS: ACTS 1 & 2**

# RESISTING TEMPTATION

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

**1 CORINTHIANS 10:13**

## DEVOTIONAL

When we give in to temptation, the saying “one step forward, two steps back” can be a description of our walk with God. We take one step forward into God’s plan for us, but sin causes us to take two steps back. However, that doesn’t need to be our experience! God has given us all that we need to resist temptation, so that every step we take leads us closer to God’s purpose for us.

**We need to humble ourselves before God.** Pride tells us that we can resist temptation on our own and that we don’t need God. The truth is, turning to God is the only way we find the spiritual strength to withstand temptation.

**Bring temptation into the light.** Secrecy keeps us trapped in temptation, but openness exposes the schemes of the enemy. When we are open before God and others about the temptations we face, God shows us a way out! Expose temptation while it is still small - a wayward thought, a fleeting desire for the worldly things - and don’t allow it to grow.

**Pray!** When you face temptation, confess your weakness before God, and ask Him to give you the strength to resist. Don’t go on this journey alone. God has placed leaders above us whom we can be accountable to. Find someone who you trust that can pray with you and challenge you, even as you take steps forward in God’s plans and purposes.

## REFLECT

1. Are there certain times during the day when you feel susceptible to temptation? Take active steps to flee from sources of temptation and turn your focus towards God during those times (e.g. by declaring a verse over your life).
2. Is there an area in your life where you constantly face temptation? Commit it to prayer and speak with a leader who can pray and journey with you.

## PRAYER

Dear God, I humble myself before You. I acknowledge that I am not strong enough to overcome temptation on my own. I need Your strength to truly overcome. Lord, I commit to not trying to do it on my own. Instead, I choose to rely wholly on You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY’S READING: ACTS 3**

# STANDING FIRM



Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

**EPHESIANS 6:13**

## DEVOTIONAL

The purpose of a soldier's armour is to protect vital parts of his body during a battle. Missing just one piece of his armour renders him vulnerable, open to the enemy's attack. The Bible tells us that we are fighting a spiritual war - against the principalities, powers and rulers of darkness in this world. We, too, need to be equipped with spiritual armour in order to fight our battles and stand our ground.

**Prepare yourself for battle.** We must first recognise that we have an enemy! He does not play by the rules and will choose to attack us in the areas that we are weakest in. Unless we prepare ourselves, we are exposed to the enemy's attacks. We also need to be familiar with the full armour of God. Every soldier who goes to battle must know what he is equipped with in order to fight well. Paul instructs us to put on the full armour of God. When the enemy attacks us with lies, we can protect our minds with the helmet of salvation that assures us of who we are in Christ. When we are tempted to sin, we can fight back with the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God!

**Don't give up ground.** Is there an area in your life that is constantly being attacked by the enemy? Don't remain passive! Make a decision today that you will not cede ground because of the enemy's attacks. Be fully equipped, stand firm and believe that you will be victorious over the enemy.

## REFLECT

1. Identify an area of your life that is constantly under attack by the enemy (e.g. feelings of worthlessness, plagued by guilt, shame or worry).
2. Prepare yourself for the enemy's attack by equipping yourself with a specific truth in God's word (e.g. Psalm 139:14).

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for giving me all that I need to stand firm against the attacks of the enemy. Help me to identify the areas of my life that I am weak in and show me how to resist the enemy's attacks. I confess my dependence on You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READING: ACTS 4**

# BEING DEVOTED TO GOD

Rather, cling tightly to the Lord your God as you have done until now. “For the Lord has driven out great and powerful nations for you, and no one has yet been able to defeat you. Each one of you will put to flight a thousand of the enemy, for the Lord your God fights for you, just as he has promised. So be very careful to love the Lord your God.

**JOSHUA 23:8-11**

## DEVOTIONAL

Joshua was one of only two people who journeyed from the wilderness and into the promised land. In his final message to the nation of Israel just before he died, Joshua reminded them twice of God’s faithfulness - that He was the one who fought on their behalf, and that He had never failed to bring victory to the Israelites. He commanded them not to associate with the people who lived in the lands or with their gods, but to remain wholly devoted to God alone.

**Our devotion to God positions us for breakthrough.** When we are fully devoted to God, our thoughts and actions come into alignment with His. We learn to persist through difficult times because of an unrelenting commitment to His call and His cause. These are the ingredients that precede breakthrough and help us punch above our weight, putting to flight a thousand of the enemy!

**Our devotion will be tested but we must hold on.** Joshua told the Israelites to cling tightly to God - he knew that there would be temptation and tests that would try and draw them away from God. The Bible says that in these last days the love of many will grow cold. As you start this new year, decide in your heart that this will be a year where you remain fiercely devoted to God’s purposes for you!

Begin with the small things. Don’t neglect your times of personal devotion, prayer, and the gathering of God’s people. Choose to remain devoted to God!

## REFLECT

1. What are some obstacles stopping you from trusting that God will give you victory? Surrender those thoughts to God and ask Him to give you a new perspective.
2. Think of one practical way that you can continue to express your devotion to God when you face difficult situations (e.g. thanking God for all that He has done for you).

## PRAYER

Dear God, I know that You are fighting on my behalf and that in You, I will experience victory in every situation. Help me to remain devoted to You by obeying Your commandments, and draw me closer into Your presence. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY’S READING: ACTS 5**



# SETTING OURSELVES APART



Then Joshua told the people, “Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do great wonders among you.”  
**JOSHUA 3:5**

## DEVOTIONAL

The presence of impurities reduces the electrical conductivity of metals. This is why the copper wiring used in light bulbs needs to be pure, so that when an electric current passes through, bright light is emitted! In the same way, we need to set ourselves apart so that the full power of God can work through our lives. Here's how:

**Pursue holiness.** Sin separates us from God and derails our calling and ministry. Romans 6:12 says we should not let sin control the way we live. So take the active step to reject sin and commit to living a life of holiness each day! This means repenting when you sin but also purposefully choosing to honour God in our thoughts, speech, and actions.

**Make kingdom choices.** There are many choices we make that may not be sinful but don't set us apart for the kingdom of God. How we spend our time, the relationships that we cultivate, the lifestyle that we lead - in each of these things, we can make choices that lead us more towards God, or more towards the world. Make choices today that will make you more like Christ and that build the kingdom in your life.

## REFLECT

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal thoughts, attitudes or behaviors that are not right in your life. Choose to renounce them and commit them to God.
2. Setting ourselves apart is an intentional decision. What is one way that you can cultivate an active obedience to honour God in your life?

## PRAYER

Dear God, I confess that I am weak in my own strength. Without You, I have no power over sin. Help me to break away from habitual sin and strengthen me in my weaknesses. I ask for Your grace and strength as I commit to set my life apart for You and to live in holiness. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READINGS: ACTS 6 & 7**

# STANDING ON GOD'S WORD



Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock.

**MATTHEW 7:24-25**

## DEVOTIONAL

The structural strength of a house depends on its foundation! When the foundation is strong, it can withstand the test of time. It is the same with our lives and the Word of God!

**Make God's word your foundation.** The Bible contains spiritual truths and practical wisdom that we can build our lives on. Unlike anything else you might read - the news, books or your Instagram feed - the Bible brings life. The Holy Spirit works in our lives when we read God's word, convicting us of areas that do not please Him, guiding us through different seasons in our lives and equipping us to navigate times of uncertainty.

**Act on what you read!** James 1:22-24 says that those who hear God's word but don't act on it fool themselves. A foundation is not just built by understanding how to build one - it is built when that knowledge is applied and put in practice. In our lives, this is expressed through our obedience to the Word.

**Begin each day in God's word.** Build your day's foundation right by reading the Bible. Start by committing one verse to memory today and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truths and wisdom from the verse.

## REFLECT

1. Knowing that God's word is a sure foundation and anchor in every season, how will this affect your response to trials and difficult situations?
2. Are there areas in your life that are taking time away from time that can be spent on God's word? Set limits on the time spent on those activities.

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for providing Your word to guide, lead and direct me. Speak to me and show me how I can apply Your word in my life. Give me an understanding of Your word and the obedience to act on it. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READING: ACTS 8**

# BEING STRONG IN PURPOSE



But Peter and John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.”  
**ACTS 4:19-20**

## DEVOTIONAL

In Acts 4, the leaders and elders of the religious council threatened Peter and John to stop preaching about Jesus, after they had witnessed the disciples heal a crippled beggar. In front of the entire council, Peter and John remain unfazed. They boldly declared that their purpose was to tell everyone about all that they had seen and heard, and that they were not going to stop.

**Our purpose will be tested.** The call of God is exciting and inspiring - He has called us to be His witnesses and share the gospel! Like Peter and John, we should expect to face opposition and testing. You might be going through a period of testing and opposition because of your decision to pursue God's purposes for your life. Take heart, you're not alone!

**We must hold fast to what God has called us to.** Decide that it is better to obey God than to fear man. Pray and ask God for boldness and strength - just like Peter and John - to stand against opposition and not give up ground. God is standing with you in such moments and will give you the courage to stay the course. People are watching and your response in such situations will set an example of someone standing strong in God's purposes.

**All things will work out for good.** Romans 8:28 says that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose. Because of the conviction that Peter and John had, the council released them and they continued preaching about Jesus. God is on our side! If He begins a good work in you, He will see it to completion!

## REFLECT

1. Identify instances where you've faced opposition because of your decision to pursue God's purpose for you. Did you give in to the pressure? How can you stand strong when you face pressure again?
2. What has God called you to in this season? (e.g. to serve as a Connect Group Leader) List down some practical ways to remain faithful to that calling.

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for Your faithfulness in my life. I know that You work all things out for the good of those who love You and are called according to Your purpose. Even though I may not fully understand challenges that I go through, help me to remain strong and faithful to Your calling. I choose to trust in You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READING: ACTS 9**

# WEEK TWO

This week's focus is on **Being Led by the Holy Spirit**. Jesus promised us that He would send the Holy Spirit into our lives as our helper, comforter and guide. After the Holy Spirit fell on the early believers on the Day of Pentecost, they were empowered to preach the gospel, perform miraculous healings, bringing hope and freedom wherever they went. The same Holy Spirit that fell on the early believers is alive and present in us today!

To step forward into God's plans and purposes for our lives, we need to develop a growing reliance on the Holy Spirit. How does this happen in our lives? We develop a reliance on the Holy Spirit when we first know the Holy Spirit, learn to discern His voice, and are willing to submit and obey His leading in our lives. As we begin to grow in our reliance on the Holy Spirit, we become empowered to fulfill our God-given purpose in our lives.



# BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit  
**EPHESIANS 5:18**

## DEVOTIONAL

What we are filled with changes us. A person that is filled with alcohol eventually succumbs to the influence of alcohol. If you've ever felt a "food coma", you know that filling yourself with too much food at lunch means struggling to stay awake for your afternoon classes and meetings!

**The Holy Spirit changes us to be more like Christ.** The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal "force" or "power". He is a Person. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and helps us to know the truth (John 15:26). He helps us in our weakness and teaches us how to pray (Romans 8:26-27). When we allow the Holy Spirit to enter our lives, we come under His influence and control. This means that the Holy Spirit begins to influence every area of our lives - our thoughts, perspectives, words and actions.

**Be filled with the Holy Spirit!** In Ephesians 5:18, Paul tells believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This means we are to "make full, to fill up" continually with the Holy Spirit. We cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit if we simultaneously allow wrong desires, thoughts and attitudes into our lives. Begin each day in a posture of surrender to the Holy Spirit and allow Him into every area of your life! If you are baptised in the Holy Spirit, make praying in tongues a regular discipline. If you're not, pray and ask for the baptism of the Holy Spirit!

## REFLECT

1. What have you allowed into your life today? (e.g. negative thoughts, worry, wrong attitudes) As you identify these areas, surrender and yield each area to God.
2. Is there an area in your life that you have sought to control in your own strength? Ask God to show you what these areas are and invite the Holy Spirit into those areas.

## PRAYER

Dear God, help me to empty myself of everything of this world and fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I choose to surrender every area of my life to You and submit to the Holy Spirit's leading in my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READING: ACTS 10**

# LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.  
**ROMANS 8:5-6**

## DEVOTIONAL

A common practice amongst elite athletes is visualisation. Visualisation is a technique used by athletes to prepare and condition themselves to perform at their peak. They rehearse their performance in their minds and envision themselves emerging as the winner of the race. In fact, scientific research shows that athletes stimulate the same region of their brains during visualisation as they do when they perform the actual physical actions. That's the power of our minds!

**The Holy Spirit gives us the right focus.** When the Holy Spirit is absent in our lives, our focus soon becomes fixed on what may be valuable to the world, but of no worth in God's eyes. Our vision becomes fixed on what is fleeting and temporal. The Holy Spirit is our source of wisdom, and He will help us to see the things in life that have eternal value and please God. These things become the focus of our time, energy and resources. Soon, our perspective begins to look like God's perspective - what matters to God becomes what matters to us!

Today, make a decision to allow the Holy Spirit to control your thoughts and determine your focus. We do this by yielding to the gentle promptings of the Holy Spirit and resisting our fleshly impulses. As we do so, we find ourselves pursuing the things that matter to God - things that possess eternal value.

## REFLECT

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the things that are temporary and fleeting that you have allowed to become your focus.
2. What are some things that are of eternal value and are pleasing to God that you want to focus on this year? (e.g. discipling and helping a new believer to grow in their walk with God)

## PRAYER

Dear God, I choose to fix my eyes on things that are eternal and turn away from everything else that is of no worth. Holy Spirit, I surrender my thoughts to You. Come and take control and help me to focus on the things that please You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READINGS: ACTS 11 & 12**

# HEARING THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

**JOHN 16:13**

## DEVOTIONAL

“Stop! Don’t touch the kettle, it’s hot!” When we were young, our parents would shout at us whenever we came close to injuring ourselves. These warnings were loud, direct and clearly spoken to us. Just like our parents, God desires to speak to us in a clear and direct way through the Holy Spirit. However, we are sometimes surrounded by other voices, which tend to drown out the voice of the Holy Spirit.

**We need to recognise the voice of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is present in us, and desires to be involved in every aspect of our lives. Just like a child needs to recognise the voice of his parent, we need to recognise the voice of the Holy Spirit.

**We must discern the voice of the Holy Spirit.** One key to discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit is that His voice must align with God’s word! What the Holy Spirit speaks to us will never deviate from God’s word.

**We must decide to act upon hearing the Holy Spirit.** As we begin to recognise the voice of the Holy Spirit, we must also act on what He says. When we respond in obedience to the Holy Spirit, His voice becomes clearer and more recognisable. It also becomes easier to obey what the Holy Spirit tells you to do!

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. In an age where it’s hard to discern what is true and what is false, recognising the voice of the Holy Spirit is our protection against the lies of the enemy. Don’t listen to other voices that sow worry and anxiety in our lives! Instead, choose to guard what we listen to and learn to recognise the voice of the Holy Spirit.

## REFLECT

1. What are some noises that have taken the place of the Holy Spirit’s voice in your life? How can you reduce the attention that you give to these noises?
2. Begin each day by inviting the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Instead of feeling the urge to constantly speak during your times of prayer, quieten your heart, invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you, and listen for His voice.

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for sending us the Spirit of truth. Help me to recognise the voice of the Holy Spirit in my life and give me the courage to obey His leading. Help me to discern and know what to allow into my life, and shut out the voices which are not from You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY’S READING: ACTS 13**

# PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.  
**ROMANS 8:26**

## DEVOTIONAL

“Words cannot express how I feel” - this phrase can sometimes describe our emotions when we encounter a difficult or impossible situation. Overwhelmed by our circumstances, we often struggle in knowing what to pray for or how to pray. When we don't know what to pray for or how to pray, the Holy Spirit will help us!

**The Holy Spirit helps us to pray when we don't know how to pray.** In Romans 8, Paul describes the Holy Spirit as a Helper who helps us in our weaknesses. When our words fail us, the Holy Spirit steps in, praying and interceding on our behalf, with “groanings that cannot be expressed in words”. These prayers are prayers that God understands, because the Holy Spirit is able to communicate perfectly with God.

**The Holy Spirit helps us to pray according to God's will.** Sometimes, we pray with the wrong motives or for the wrong reasons. Because the Holy Spirit understands God's will perfectly, He helps us to pray according to God's will.

Let's cultivate the habit of setting aside time daily to pray in the spirit. Every prayer matters to God. Whatever the request, the Holy Spirit who lives in us knows our request and how to approach the Father.

## REFLECT

1. Before you pray for God to move in a difficult or impossible situation, begin by first asking the Holy Spirit to reveal God's will and purpose, so that you can pray according to His will.
2. List down some reasons why it can sometimes feel difficult to pray in the spirit (e.g. it's hard to stay focused). Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to persist and perseverance in prayer.

## PRAYER

Dear God, I thank you for the Holy Spirit. Give me a desire to not rely on my own understanding, but on the Holy Spirit who will lead me to pray prayers that are aligned with Your will. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READINGS: ACTS 14 & 15**



# RECEIVING A FRESH REVELATION

13 When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, “Are you friend or foe?” 14 “Neither one,” he replied. “I am the commander of the Lord’s army.” At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. “I am at your command,” Joshua said. “What do you want your servant to do?” 15 The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did as he was told.

**JOSHUA 5:13-15**

## DEVOTIONAL

In Joshua 5, Joshua was on the brink of attacking the fortified city of Jericho when he encountered a divine messenger on the road with sword in hand. In that moment, Joshua did not know if the divine messenger was on his side or if he was the enemy. When the messenger announced that he was the commander of the Lord’s army, Joshua immediately recognised that he was sent by God and fell face down on the ground in worship and reverence.

**Receiving a breakthrough begins with a fresh revelation of who God is.** In the midst of a difficult situation, God desires to reveal Himself strong. If you are believing for financial provision, God desires to reveal Himself as Your provider. If you are believing for healing, God wants to show Himself as Your healer. When we receive a revelation of who God is to us, we receive the assurance that He knows and understands all that we’re going through. How does God reveal Himself to us? One way that He does so is through the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 1:17 Paul describes the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of wisdom that helps us grow in our knowledge of God. When we ask the Holy Spirit, He gives us a fresh revelation of who God is in our lives.

**Don’t just seek God only when you need Him.** In all you do, begin by first asking the Holy Spirit to give you a fresh revelation of who God is. Desire to know Him more personally and intimately. Purpose in your heart to first seek God first before taking any step ahead and hear Him tell you what He wants you to do.

## REFLECT

1. God’s word reveals who He is. Cultivate the habit of reading and meditating on God’s word daily and allow God to reveal His character and attributes to you.
2. Is there a situation or challenge that you are facing now? Encourage and strengthen your faith in God by asking Him for a fresh revelation of who He is!

## PRAYER

Dear God, I know that You are active and present in my life and that You desire to reveal Yourself to me through the Holy Spirit. Give me a fresh revelation of who You are in my life and give me the courage to take a step of faith in obedience to anything You say to me. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY’S READING: ACTS 16**

# ANointed FOR A PURPOSE

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.

ISAIAH 61:1

## DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever visited a Singapore embassy while you were traveling overseas? The embassy and the resident ambassador is sent to a foreign country to act as representatives of their country. The ambassador's authority does not come from his or her own personal standing but is given by the country that sent him or her there. As believers, we too have been given the authority from God to act as His representatives here on earth!

**The Holy Spirit is the one who sends and empowers us.** During His own time of ministry, Jesus demonstrated His God-given authority to fulfil His purpose here on earth - to preach the gospel of salvation, comfort the brokenhearted and proclaim freedom to those who are bound. This is exactly what God has intended for us to do. The good news is that it is not dependent on our strength or ability. It is the Holy Spirit who will give us the right words to say, show us the right things to do, and help us pray prayers that are in line with God's will and purpose. The Holy Spirit also empowers us with spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 tells us that the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts, not for our own benefit, but so that we can help one another.

**God has anointed us for the purpose of reaching those around us.** We are His representatives to those around us, but we need to partner with the Holy Spirit in order to represent Him well. We can identify needs in the lives of those we see around us and begin to ask the Holy Spirit to show us how to meet these needs!

## REFLECT

1. Why do we sometimes experience fear when we share the gospel?
2. Take a moment to identify a need in someone you know and ask the Holy Spirit to show you how you can meet that need in their life.

## PRAYER

Dear God, I know that I have been anointed by You to preach the gospel and meet the needs of those around me. Help me to not rely on my own strength, but on the Holy Spirit who enables me. I choose to be used by You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READINGS: ACTS 17 & 18**

# RELYING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

Then he said to me, “This is what the Lord says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.  
**ZECHARIAH 4:6**

## DEVOTIONAL

For toddlers, taking their first steps is not easy. They do not learn and grow just by relying on their own strength - their parents hold their hands as they learn to walk. Similarly, we grow and mature spiritually not through our own strength, but by relying on the Holy Spirit. He is our guide and counsel in our spiritual growth!

**The Holy Spirit will give us understanding when we need it.** The way we understand and react to circumstances are often shaped by our beliefs and past experiences. This can limit our understanding of how God wants to work in and through us. For example, when we encounter a challenging situation (e.g. the loss of a job), we can easily lose hope and worry about how to provide for ourselves and our families. In these situations, the Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and understanding. 1 Corinthians 2:11-12 tells us that we have received the Holy Spirit so that we can know and understand God’s mind. As we begin to rely on the Holy Spirit, He begins to reveal God’s purpose for us even in the midst of our situation.

**It is the Holy Spirit who will empower us to overcome difficult situations.** As we choose to rely on the Holy Spirit, He gives us the courage and faith to trust God with our situation. He brings us from a place of anxiety and worry into a place of absolute confidence and trust in God.

Today, make the decision to rely less on yourself. Instead, choose to rely on the Holy Spirit. Seek the Holy Spirit’s direction in every decision you make, no matter how big or small.

## REFLECT

1. Why is it difficult to rely on the Holy Spirit?
2. Is there an area in your life where you are believing for a breakthrough? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what God is doing in the midst of your situation.

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for the promise of Your Holy Spirit. I know that when I choose to rely on the Holy Spirit, I will step into the plans and purposes that You have for my life. Help me to rely less on my own strength and knowledge and more on Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY’S READING: ACTS 19**

# WEEK THREE

Our focus for our final week in our 21-Day journey is on **Taking Ground**, where we take bold steps forward and experience victory in the different areas of our lives.

Even when everything around us seems to come to a standstill, God's desire is not that we shrink back or remain passive. Rather, God's desire is that we continue to advance and move forward, taking new territory and stepping into the plans and purposes that He has for us in this season. God is constantly doing a new thing in our lives, and we need to recognise what He is doing, and submit wholeheartedly to His leading.

This week, allow God to reveal truths to you, change your perspective and position you to step forward!



# CHANGING OUR PERSPECTIVE

Then the Lord took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That’s how many descendants you will have!” And Abram believed the Lord, and the Lord counted him as righteous because of his faith.

**GENESIS 15:5-6**

## DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever looked through a pair of sunglasses? Everything you see seems dull and muted, but in reality, things are not what they appear to be. When you take off your sunglasses, you will realise how bright and colorful your surroundings actually are. The truth is that there are things that can distort or limit our perspective.

**Don’t let your perspective dilute God’s promise.** In Genesis 12, God promised to give Abram the land of Canaan and that his descendants would fill the land. There was only one problem - Abram and his wife Sarai were childless! In spite of the hopelessness that Abram felt, God’s promises had not changed! Just like Abram, our perspective can be shaped by our present limitations, causing us to doubt God’s promises. When we focus on our limitations, what we see in the natural begins to take the place of our faith in who God says He is. Instead of believing that God will fulfill all the promises that He has made, we begin to focus on all the reasons why God’s promise will not be fulfilled. But the truth is that God is a promise-keeper and He will never fail us!

**God can give us a new perspective!** In the midst of our discouragement, God desires to give us a new perspective – one that is perfectly aligned with who He says He is and the promises that He has given to us. We need to step outside of our tents and look away from our current circumstances. When God gives us a new perspective, we receive a fresh faith to believe that God’s promises will come to pass.

Evaluate the areas which stop us from lifting up our faith. Hold on to God’s promises and look up towards His purposes. As we do so, faith begins to arise in our hearts and what looks impossible becomes a reality in our lives.

## REFLECT

1. Allow God to examine if there are areas in your life (e.g. in your work, relationships, or ministry) where you need a new perspective. Be prepared to respond as He speaks.
2. We begin to see God’s greatness when we worship Him. Devote some time to worship God and allow Him to change your perspective!

## PRAYER

Dear God, I choose to turn away from my limitations and circumstances and turn to You. I acknowledge that You are the Creator who can do all things. You are the Promise Keeper who never fails. Give me a new perspective of who You are in my life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY’S READING: ACTS 20**

# GROWING YOUR CAPACITY



But David persisted. “I have been taking care of my father’s sheep and goats,” he said. “When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I’ll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God!”

1 SAMUEL 17:34-36

## DEVOTIONAL

A dam is not built for days when there is no rain. Rather, a dam is built in expectation of the large volume of water that comes when there is a thunderstorm. Trying to build a dam only when there are signs of rain would be futile!

**Challenging circumstances are opportunities to grow our capacity.** Before God can lead us into new things, He first needs to grow our capacity. Before meeting Goliath on the battlefield, David already knew what it meant to face an enemy much stronger and bigger than himself. While tending to his flock of sheep, David defended them from attacks from wild animals. This gave him the courage, strength and capacity to eventually stand up to Goliath and defeat him. God is constantly working in our lives to grow us, even in the midst of challenging circumstances. When we recognise that God is working in our lives, we respond in a way that not only honours God, but also grows our capacity and character. Like David, we need to allow God to mold and shape us, in preparation for the greater things that He wants to do through us.

**It begins with faithfulness!** David was able to handle the greater things that God did through him because he was first faithful over the little that was entrusted to him. In order for God to use us to accomplish His plans and purpose, we must remain faithful over all that God has entrusted to us. Has God called you to be a Connect Group Leader? Be faithful over those who have been entrusted to you. As we grow in our capacity and remain faithful, we avail ourselves to be used by God to take new ground!

## REFLECT

1. Ask God to reveal to you the areas in your life where He wants to grow your capacity.
2. What are the roles and responsibilities that God has called you to in this season? List them down and commit to being faithful over them.

## PRAYER

Dear God, help me to be faithful to the things that You have called me to this season. I know and trust that You are working in every area of my life to increase my capacity. Thank You for working in and through me. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY’S READINGS: ACTS 21 & 22**

# DECLARING WHO WE ARE

There was a man named Jabez who was more honorable than any of his brothers. His mother named him Jabez because his birth had been so painful. He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and expand my territory! Please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!” And God granted him his request.

**1 CHRONICLES 4:9-10**

## DEVOTIONAL

In the Old Testament, it was common that names given by parents to their children often determine their future. In 1 Chronicles, we read the account of Jabez. The Bible tells us that his mother named him Jabez (“borne in pain”) because she gave birth to him in pain. Because of his name, those around him saw him as someone destined for a life of sorrow, pain, and hardship. However, Jabez knew who he was in God and boldly asked God to bless and prosper him.

**We need to know our God-given identity.** Before Jabez asked God to bless him, he had to first know who he was in God. To declare who we are in God, we first need to know what God says about us. God says that we are blessed, loved and highly-favoured! Dive deep into God’s word to know what He says about you and believe that nothing will ever change God’s heart toward you.

**Choose to reject the lies of the enemy.** The enemy will come and distort who God says we are (e.g. that we are worthless and not deserving of any love). When we choose to believe what the enemy says about us, we lose sight of God’s heart towards us. God’s word is an effective shield against the lies of the enemy. When the enemy tells us that we’re not deserving of God’s love, declare Romans 8:38-39 over yourself!

Today, make a decision to reject who the enemy says you are, and like Jabez, allow what God says about you to determine your identity. Have you given in to the identity that others have given to you? Don’t lose heart! Today, know that God’s heart towards you is good. He desires to move from where you are, to the place that He wants you to be. Believe that God’s heart towards you is good and boldly declare that over your life!

## REFLECT

1. What are some of the labels that you’ve allowed to become your identity? Surrender them to God and allow Him to reveal who you are in Him.
2. What does God say about you? List down some of the ways that God describes you from the Bible (e.g. fearfully and wonderfully made).

## PRAYER

Dear God, I thank You that Your thoughts towards me are good and that You desire to prosper me in all that I do. Today, I choose to assume the identity that You have given to me, that in Your sight, I am loved, blessed, and highly-favoured. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY’S READINGS: ACTS 23 & 24**

# SPURRING ONE ANOTHER ON

“If the Arameans are too strong for me, then come over and help me,” Joab told his brother. “And if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come and help you. Be courageous! Let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. May the Lord’s will be done.”

2 SAMUEL 10:11-12

## DEVOTIONAL

In 2 Samuel, the Israelites were confronted by their enemies who attacked them from the front and back. Joab, the commander of King David’s army, split the army into two, with half led by him and the other half by his brother, Abishai. Joab strengthened Abishai’s resolve and stirred his spirit by telling him that even though they were fighting battles on two fronts, that either of them would help the other if they were being overwhelmed. They were not fighting two separate battles, but together as one.

**We are called to stand with each other.** The people of Israel would only win the battle if both Joab and Abishai experienced victory on both fronts. Battles are not won alone! More often than not, our personal victories are possible only because others have come alongside us, believing, encouraging, and giving us strength as we fight for our breakthrough. In our lives, we may know of others who are in the midst of a battle. God has called us to stand by them and to do all that it takes to see them achieve their victory!

**We must be willing to sacrifice.** Choosing to stand by each other may mean sacrificing our convenience, our time, and even comfort. In fact, we might even be fighting battles of our own while helping others! Even when we find that we don’t have enough, the truth is that God is able to supply all that we need! As we choose to stand by each other, we find the strength and courage to stand, knowing that we’re not fighting our battles alone, and that God’s purpose will prevail.

Is there someone you know who is fighting a battle? Choose to come alongside and stand with them, and do all that it takes to support them until they receive their victory.

## REFLECT

1. How have others stood by you in the midst of a difficult situation? How did that make you feel?
2. Identify someone (e.g. a new believer) whom you can invest your time, effort and energy in. Commit to seeing the person grow in his walk with God.

## PRAYER

Dear God, open my eyes to those whom You have placed in my life. Give me a heart for those who are going through difficult situations. I know that You will enable me to stand with them until we see the breakthrough that will come from You. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

TODAY’S READING: ACTS 25



# RECOGNISE THE COMING BREAKTHROUGH

“But forget all that — it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.”

ISAIAH 43:18-19

## DEVOTIONAL

The tallest species of trees in the world can grow up to 110m and live for 1,800 years or more. However, it's easy to forget that even the biggest of trees grow from the smallest of seeds. What seems magnificent and majestic, actually started from a tiny seed that could fit into a child's hand.

**God is constantly at work in your life.** In Isaiah 43, God reveals Himself as a creative God who is always working behind the scenes. God does not want us to remain stagnant. Instead, He is constantly working in us, leading us into His plans and purposes for our lives. In times that you feel frustrated with the lack of progress or change in your life, don't give in to doubt! Instead, trust that God is actively working in you, even though you might not see it.

**Don't place a limit on what God can do.** In 1 Kings 18, Elijah prayed earnestly for rain after the nation of Israel experienced three years of drought. Even though the first sign of rain came in the form of a small cloud the size of a man's fist, Elijah knew without a doubt that God had answered his prayer, and that heavy rain would soon come. The great things that God desires to do in us often have small and insignificant beginnings. Don't despise the small beginnings! Instead, seize the moment and believe that what you see is just a glimpse of all that God will accomplish in your life.

When it feels as though nothing is changing in your life, encourage yourself by recognising that you are a “work-in-progress”! As we allow God to work in us, He brings us from glory to glory, until we experience the fullness of His plans and purpose for our lives.

## REFLECT

1. Is there an area in your life that you desire to see breakthrough in? List down the small victories and wins that you've seen in this area and remind yourself that a breakthrough is on the way.
2. What are some reasons that can cause you to stop short of your breakthrough? (e.g. fear of greater commitment, fear of inconvenience)

## PRAYER

Dear God, I believe You are the God of breakthroughs, and that You are actively leading me into the plans that You have for my life. Help me to be open to Your leading, knowing that You are walking alongside me to fulfil all that You have prepared for me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

TODAY'S READING: ACTS 26

# PRESSING ON



No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

**PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14**

## DEVOTIONAL

Completing a full marathon of 42.195km is no easy feat. Even for a seasoned runner to finish the race, he needs to choose to keep going despite the pain and exhaustion that may set in along the way.

The apostle Paul recognised that the Christian journey is just like a race. In Philippians 3, he teaches us how we can complete the race:

**Forget the past.** Our past mistakes, failures and shortcomings can hinder us from stepping into God's plan and purpose for our lives. You will not be able to run far if you carry the weight of your past. Choose not to be hindered by your past, and place your confidence in God!

**Look forward.** God has a plan and purpose for your life. Keep your eyes fixed on God's call for your life and take intentional steps in obedience that will bring you closer to His plans and purposes for you.

**Press on.** Unhindered by your past and fixed on what lies before you, make a decision to endure and persevere even when the going gets tough. Press on until you reach the goal!

Instead of letting guilt, shame or feelings of unworthiness discourage us, let's make a decision to maintain our focus and look forward to the eternal reward that awaits us at the end of our race. As we persevere, God will be there to teach, direct and equip us every step of the way – may the only time that we look back be to see how far we have come!

## REFLECT


1. Take a moment to list down areas in your life that are hindering you from moving forward (e.g. past guilt, wrong habits). What are some practical steps you can take to leave those areas behind?
2. When the going gets tough, one simple way to persevere is to look back and remind yourself of how far you've come. Celebrate the small victories, acknowledging that God is continuously working in you.

## PRAYER

Dear God, I thank You that You have a purpose and plan for my life. Today, I commit to leave the past behind, to look ahead and run the race You have called me to. Help me to fix my eyes on You and trust that You will help me to accomplish all that You have planned for me. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**TODAY'S READING: ACTS 27**

# PURSuing THE VICTORY



On the day the Lord gave the Israelites victory over the Amorites, Joshua prayed to the Lord in front of all the people of Israel. He said, “Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon.” So the sun stood still and the moon stayed in place until the nation of Israel had defeated its enemies. Is this event not recorded in The Book of Jasher? The sun stayed in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day.

**JOSHUA 10:12-13**

## DEVOTIONAL

In Joshua 10, Joshua held on to God’s promise of victory over Israel’s enemies and was not content until Israel achieved total victory. His conviction resulted in him asking God to cause the sun to stand still. In that significant moment of history, God did cause the sun to stop in mid-day, until the people of Israel completely defeated their enemies!

**The pursuit of victory begins with a conviction in our hearts.** In the pursuit of victory, there is no place for doubt. In the heat of the battle, it was Joshua’s bold proclamation that touched God’s heart. The key to winning the battles in our lives begins first with the conviction that God will accomplish all that He says He will.

**The conviction in our hearts determines our response.** When we know that God is on our side, we have the boldness to make faith-filled requests, knowing with full confidence that God will work on our behalf. We begin to take spiritual authority in the midst of our situation, confident in our identity as sons and daughters of God. Press on and contend for all of the promises that God has given to you, until you see them come to pass!

What are you believing God for at the beginning of this new year? Share that with someone who can pray and believe with you. Keep praying, keep declaring and keep living in faith as you wait for God to bring you your victory!

## REFLECT

1. What are some bold, faith-filled declarations that you can make over your life? Declare them over your life today!
2. Is there an area of your life that you have not experienced victory in? Commit your doubts to God, ask the Holy Spirit for a fresh conviction as you continue pursuing the promise of victory.

## PRAYER

Is there an area of your life that you have not experienced victory in? Commit your doubts to God, ask the Holy Spirit for a fresh conviction as you continue pursuing the promise of victory.

**TODAY’S READING: ACTS 28**

