

DEVOTIONAL

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THE BIBLE DESCRIBES FOUR MAJOR TYPES OF FASTING:

A REGULAR FAST - Traditionally, a regular fast means refraining from eating all food. Most people still drink water or juice during a regular fast. When Jesus fasted in the desert, the Bible says, "After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." This verse does not mention Jesus being thirsty.

A PARTIAL FAST - This type of fast generally refers to omitting a specific meal from your diet or refraining from certain types of foods. Daniel 10:2-3 says, "At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks (21 days). I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over." Certain foods such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, salads, or anything that is grown naturally can be consumed. This is called a “Daniel Fast.”

A FULL FAST - These fasts are complete - no food and no drink. Moses fasted like this 40 days, as did Elijah and Jesus. Acts 9:9 describes when Paul went on a full fast for three days following his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus: "For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything." Esther also called for this type of fast in Esther 4:15-16.

PRAYER AND FASTING - A DEFINITION

Prayer and fasting is defined as voluntarily going without food in order to focus on prayer, the study of God’s Word (as spiritual bread), and fellowship with God. Prayer and fasting often go hand in hand, but this is not always the case. It is when these two activities are combined and dedicated to God's glory that they reach their full effectiveness. Having a dedicated time of prayer and fasting is not a way of manipulating God into doing what you desire. Rather, it is simply forcing yourself to focus and rely on God for the strength, provision, and wisdom you need.

PRAYER AND FASTING - WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

The Law of Moses, in the Old Testament, specifically required prayer and fasting for only one occasion, which was the Day of Atonement. This custom became known as "the day of fasting" (Jeremiah 36:6) or "the Fast" (Acts 27:9). Moses (as did Elijah and Jesus) fasted during the 40 days and 40 nights he was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God (Exodus 34:28) in connection to the Day of Atonement (a time of fasting and national repentance). King Jehoshaphat called for a fast in all Israel when they were about to be attacked by the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chronicles 20:3). In response to Jonah's preaching, the men of Nineveh fasted and put on sackcloth (Jonah 3:5). Nehemiah prayed and fasted for Jerusalem's wall in ruin (Nehemiah 1:4), as Queen Esther asked for her people to fast with her for three days (Esther 4:15-16).

Prayer and fasting also occurs in the New Testament. Anna " worshipped night and day, fasting and praying" at the Temple (Luke 2:37). John the Baptist taught his disciples to fast (Mark 2:18). Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights before His temptation by Satan (Matthew 4:2), during the season of fasting and repentance that Jews observe before the Day of Atonement. The church of Antioch fasted (Acts 13:2) and sent Paul and Barnabas off on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:3). Paul and Barnabas spent time in prayer and fasting for the appointment of elders in the churches (Acts 14:23).

PRAYER AND FASTING - WHAT DOES IT ACCOMPLISH?

- **Release of Spiritual Power in your personal life**
- **Release of Spiritual Power in your ministry**
- **Release of Spiritual Power to break the power of the Delayer in your life**
- **Release of Spiritual Blessings over your life**

7 MAIN PURPOSES FOR FASTING - ISAIAH 58:6-11

- **Fasting to get freedom from addictions – (verse 6) Loose the Bonds**
- **Fasting to solve problems – (verse 6) Undo heavy burdens**
- **Fasting for revival and soul-winning - (verse 6) Let the oppressed go free**
- **Fasting to conquer mental and emotional problems - (verse 6) Break every yoke**
- **Fasting to meet the physical needs of others - (verse 7) Give to the poor and needy**
- **Fasting for clearer insight in decision – (verse 8) Light shall come forth (Illumination)**
- **Fasting for Health and healing - (verse 8) Check with your physician for medical approval**

THEME VERSE:

8 "For out of His fullness [the superabundance of His grace and truth] we have all **received GRACE UPON GRACE** [spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing, favor upon favor, and gift heaped upon gift]." **- John 1:16 (AMP)**

Week 1: Family & Friendships - Building Your Relationships with Grace Week 2: Fellowship & Forgiveness - Strengthening Connections in Grace Week 3: Finances & Future - Leveraging Your Resources through Grace

GRACE UPON GRACE -
21 Days of Fasting & Prayer

Week 1: Family & Friendships - Building Your Relationships with Grace

1. **Grace for Communication -** Ephesians 4:29
2. **Grace for Comforting Encouragement -** Romans 1:7b,12
3. **Grace for Considerate Care & Concern -** Titus 3:2
4. **Grace for Companionship -** Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
5. **Grace for Character-Building -** Romans 5:1-5
6. **Grace for Confronting Conflicts -** Matthew 18:15-16
7. **Grace for Covenant Relationships -** 1 Samuel 18:3

Week 2: Fellowship & Forgiveness - Strengthening Connections in Grace

8. **Grace for Compassion -** Colossians 3:12
9. **Grace for Close Friendships -** Proverbs 18:24
10. **Grace for Confessing Faults -** James 5:16
11. **Grace for Covenant Kindness -** Nehemiah 1:5
12. **Grace for Conflict Resolution -** Luke 17:3
13. **Grace for Connection -** Ephesians 4:15-16
14. **Grace for Community -** Hebrews 10:24-25

Week 3: Finances & Future - Leveraging Your Resources through Grace

15. **Grace for Changing A Poverty Mindset -** Deuteronomy 8:18
16. **Grace for Confident Declarations -** Job 22:26-28
17. **Grace for Cancellations of Debts -** Luke 7:41-43
18. **Grace for Creating Financial Plans -** Proverbs 21:5
19. **Grace for Creative Strategies of Success -** Joshua 1:8
20. **Grace for Communicating Your Vision -** Habakkuk 2:2
21. **Grace for Confessing a Fruitful Future -** Genesis 48:3-4,15

GRACE UPON GRACE

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer

Week 1: Family & Friendships - *Building Your Relationships with Grace*

Day One – Grace for Communication

Divine Directive:
Let no corrupt **COMMUNICATION** proceed out of your mouths: but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister **GRACE** unto the hearers. – **Ephesians 4:29 (GNV)**

Inspired Initiative:
COMMUNICATION is a graceful gift that builds and encourages healthy relationships among friends and family. God gives us the power to minister His grace to our listeners. This reveals the potential we have to build people up or tear them down with the words that we speak. 2022 is going to be a year of intentionality with everything we do and especially what we say. Let's start today as we pray to build our relationships with His abundant grace. Go ahead, declare it! **"GRACE UPON GRACE!"**

Prayer Perspective:
- Ask God to show you how you can **COMMUNICATE** more effectively to the people around you.
- Ask God's Holy Spirit to help you edify and build up others with your words.
- Ask God for the grace to **COMMUNICATE** His truth in love to those who are broken, hurting, and in need of your encouragement.

Day Two – Grace for Comforting Encouragement

Divine Directive:

7b…GRACE and spiritual blessing and peace be yours from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ…**12 That we may be mutually strengthened and ENCOURAGED and COMFORTED** by each other's faith, both yours and mine. – **Romans 1:7b,12 (AMPC)**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah! He is our merciful Father and **the God of all COMFORT, 4** who **COMFORTS** us in all our suffering, so that we may be able to **COMFORT** others in all their suffering, as we ourselves are being **COMFORTED** by God. **- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (ISV)**

Inspired Initiative:

In a world filled with so much discouragement, we as believers have been **GRACED** to bring **ENCOURAGEMENT**. God has empowered us by his Holy Spirit to comfort those that are hurting and are lost. We have the privilege of comforting others with the same **COMFORT** that we have received in our own personal lives. Through our transparency, telling others what God has done for us, we are able to restore hope in the world and mutually strengthen our fellow believers. Even our family who might not have a strong relationship with the Lord can become strengthened by our faith and how we persevere during difficult times. So let's not give up, and let's not stop praying until we rebuild every relationship from the ground up, and bring **ENCOURAGING COMFORT** to those around us.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to show you how you can be more **ENCOURAGING** to the people around you who need God's **COMFORT.**

- Ask God's Holy Spirit to lead you to someone who is discouraged so that you can share your story with them to bring them **COMFORT** in the midst of their suffering.

- Ask God to allow the **COMFORT** of the Holy Spirit to flow through you as you pray for people and believe for their healing or restoration from all that has discouraged them.

Day Three – Grace for Considerate Care & Concern

Divine Directive:
And remind them to **never tear down anyone** with their word or quarrel, but instead be **CONSIDERATE, humble, and courteous to everyone. - Titus 3:2 (TPT)**

Husbands, in the same way be **CONSIDERATE** as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.
- 1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)

Good people are **CONCERNED** that the poor are treated fairly. But the wicked don't **CARE. – Proverbs 29:7 (ICB)**

Inspired Initiative:
The Bible is full of examples and principles on how we should be **CONSIDERATE** to others. Paul taught Titus that **CONSIDERATE** people never tear others down with their words, just like Peter teaches us that a husband is **CONSIDERATE** to his wife and always desires to build her up (1 Peter 3:7). King Solomon describes good people as those who are concerned with others and show care to those who are hurting (Proverbs 29:7). Our **CONSIDERATION** of other people's feelings expresses the grace and love that God shows us. If we open our eyes to how much God loves us, and how much care and concern He shows us, then we will be able to open our hearts largely to share that same kind of **CONCERN** and **CARE** with someone in our path. Today, allow the Holy Spirit to show you the people around you who need your kind **CONSIDERATION** and **CARE**.

Prayer Perspective:
- Ask God to show you how you can be more **CONSIDERATE** to the people around you.
- Ask God's Holy Spirit to lead you to the people who need to experience His love.
- Ask God for the grace to use the right words that will build people up and never tear them down.

Day Four – Grace for Companionship

Divine Directive:

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his **COMPANION**. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. **– Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NKJV)**

Inspired Initiative:

God graces us with good friends and **COMPANIONS** to help us when we are in need. With the same **GRACE** we have received we have the power to help someone else who has been in similar situations as we have. This will be a year of enriching our friendships, deepening our relationships, and strengthening our connections to each other. How do we do this? With God's grace, we come together, work as a team, we accomplish our goals, and even find the grace to encourage one another when there are failures or painful mistakes that have been made. **COMPANIONSHIPS** stretch our capacity and build lasting friendships that are able to endure the most difficult of times. Let's build our lives together on God's **GRACE**, and lean on each other for strength whenever help is needed.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God for the **GRACE** to be a better friend to others.
- Ask God to give you the discernment to know who are good and godly friends.
- Ask God's Spirit to reveal to you how you can help a friend who has fallen.

Day Five – Grace for Character-Building

Divine Directive:

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this **GRACE** in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, **CHARACTER**; and **CHARACTER**, hope. **5** And hope does not put us to shame, because **God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit**, who has been given to us. **– Romans 5:1-5 (NIV)**

Inspired Initiative:

CHARACTER is not always easy to build in the midst of suffering, pain, and traumatic circumstances. Only through the **GRACE** of God can our tragedies transform us and prove who we really are under stress. The Holy Spirit pours so much love into our hearts and it empowers us to persevere under pressure, which then produces godly **CHARACTER**. Today we ask the Holy Spirit to continue to build our **CHARACTER** in the midst of uncertain times, giving us great faith and an abundance of peace for the future.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to give you the grace to stand firmly against all obstacles and attacks that try to destroy your **CHARACTER**.
- Ask God to give you the perseverance you need to endure tragedy regardless of what pressure you feel.
- Ask God's Spirit to flood your heart with an abundance of love as He builds your **CHARACTER** and gives you hope for the future.

Day Six – Grace for Confronting Conflict

Divine Directive:

1 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, **go and tell him his fault** between you and him alone. **If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16** But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' **– Matthew 18:15-16 (NKJV)**

Inspired Initiative:

There are so many reasons to feel offended in this life, but a life filled with **GRACE** opens up doors of opportunity for resolve and reconciliation. Jesus not only graces us with eternal life in the world to come, but He teaches us how to live in grace with others, even when there seems to be an unresolvable **CONFLICT**. Let's allow the Holy Spirit today to empower us as we attempt to show more grace to one another. No matter the **CONFLICT**, there's always a **GRACE** that God can provide to resolve it and reset our relationships.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to reveal the root of the **CONFLICT** or offense that needs to be properly addressed.
- Ask God to give you the strength to confront every **CONFLICT** with a greater measure of His **GRACE**.
- Ask God to restore the relationships that have been affected by offenses and disagreements.

Day Seven – Grace for Covenant Relationships

Divine Directive:
And Jonathan made a **COVENANT** with David because **he loved him as he loved himself. – 1 Samuel 18:3 (VOICE)**

… you shall love your neighbor as yourself:
I am the Lord. **- Leviticus 19:18b (NKJV)**

Inspired Initiative:
COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS and FRIENDSHIPS sometimes seem hard to develop. Every covenant in Scripture is an expression of God's **GRACE** to those He loves. Whenever two people establish a godly friendship or relationship, the Bible refers to it as a **COVENANT RELATIONSHIP**. Both individuals or parties become a blessing to each other, as they share their resources, and grace each other with covenant kindness. When Jonathan made a covenant with King David, it reflected one of the greatest commandments in the Bible, "to love your neighbor (or "friend") as yourself," from Leviticus 19:18. These are the kind of relationships we should nurture and cherish through God's gift of **GRACE**.

Prayer Perspective:
- Ask God to give you a revelation of what a true **COVENANT RELATIONSHIP and FRIENDSHIP** is, and how to identify them.
- Ask God to show you how to develop **COVENANT RELATIONSHIP** with those you love
- Ask God's Spirit to give you discernment on how to maintain healthy boundaries that are beneficial in all of your **RELATIONSHIPS**.

GRACE UPON GRACE

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer

Week 2: Fellowship & Forgiveness - *Strengthening Connections in Grace*

Day Eight – Grace for Compassion

Divine Directive:
Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with **COMPASSION**, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **– Colossians 3:12 (NIV)**

Inspired Initiative:
COMPASSION is more than just sympathy for those who are struggling. The expression of God's divine and invisible attributes are revealed through our ability to feel and show others **COMPASSION**. Our hearts awaken to the needs of others, our souls become more sensitive to the pain they're experiencing, and our hands and feet run to meet their needs. **COMPASSION** ignites the passionate flame of God's love within us, and moves us to action as we show mercy and kindness to everyone around us. So let's clothe ourselves with **COMPASSION** as we strengthen all of our human connections with a greater expression of God's love.

Prayer Perspective:
- Ask God to reveal the **COMPASSION** He has for you, as you ask Him to express His **COMPASSION** through you.
- Ask God to open your heart and your eyes to what others are going through and pray for wisdom on how you can help.
- Ask God's Spirit to clothe you daily in **COMPASSION**, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, so that you can become more aware of how you can make a difference in the world, one life at a time.

Day Nine – Grace for Close Friendships

Divine Directive:
A man who has **FRIENDS** must himself be friendly, but there is a **FRIEND** who sticks **CLOSER** than a brother. **– Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV)**

Inspired Initiative:
The best covenant **FRIENDSHIP** to examine in Scripture is one we read about on Day 7, as we prayed for "**Grace for Covenant Relationships**." God compares covenant love with His "friends" like the spiritual bond described in Scripture between David and King Saul's son, Jonathan. David and Jonathan's friendship is probably one of the deepest and closest **FRIENDSHIP** we read about in the Bible. They became friends as soon as they met and remained friends to the end. If you study the friendship of David and Jonathan you will find that they never let anything come between them, not career, or even family problems. The more their friendship was tested the closer they became. Even when Jonathan, Saul's son and prince, realized that David would be the next king of Israel, he never weakened his loyalty to David. We need **CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS** that are based upon covenant, for support, companionship, and even accountability. We need people who can speak into our lives when we need correction, and friends that will pray for us when we need help. Let's pray for the **GRACE** to discover **CLOSE FRIENDS** that will "**stick closer than a brother.**"

Prayer Perspective:
- Ask God to give you the grace to build strong relationships with close friends who can be prayerfully supportive of you.
- Ask God to give you the boldness to be more friendly to others.
- Ask God's Spirit to reveal to you who you can be a greater friend to, as you strengthen your connections with grace.

Day Ten – Grace for Confessing Faults

Divine Directive:

CONFESS to one another therefore your FAULTS (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) **prayer of a righteous man** makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]. **– James 5:16 (AMPC)**

Inspired Initiative:

CONFESSING FAULTS is not always easy to do. Only when we are in a secure place with strong friendships do we feel comfortable to bare our souls and reveal our faults. True friends show their support even when they don't agree with our behavior. No one likes to be judged or put down for flaws or mistakes. God's grace is expressed through His loving-kindness and mercy to forgive us of all confessed wrongdoing. Only then, can we discover our confidence in prayer. Removing the sin-barrier of pride and arrogance allows us to free ourselves from hidden faults and bad decisions we've made. When we truly repent, and turn back to God with all of our heart, soul, and strength, the healing and restoration begins. So let's confess our faults with grace, and forgive those who have offended us with mercy, so that our prayer life can become effective and powerful and produce lasting change.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to empower you with the grace to confess your faults and sins so that you can be healed and restored.
- Ask God to remove any pride or arrogance that may be hindering your openness and repentance.
- Ask God's Spirit to grace you with a fervent and effectual prayer life that is both heartfelt and life-changing.

Day Eleven – Grace for Covenant Kindness

Divine Directive:
And I said, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, Who keeps **COVENANT, LOVING-KINDNESS**, and mercy for those who love Him and keep His commandments.
– Nehemiah 1:5 (AMPC)

Inspired Initiative:
Our God is a Covenant God who showers us with **COVENANT KINDNESS**. His loving-kindness and tender mercies are expressions of His great love. This love is more than emotion or a feeling that He has for us because He is actually the source of all love. A love that is divine is eternal and superficial or temporary. He does not fall out of love with us when we make mistakes. Instead, it is that same everlasting love that picks us up when we have fallen and restores us back to fellowship with Him, like a "prodigal son" who has come back home to his father. Experiencing this kind of amazing love and grace empowers us to show **COVENANT KINDNESS** to those who are also in need for God's amazing love. Let's pray today for the **GRACE** to show **COVENANT KINDNESS** to everyone we meet.

Prayer Perspective:
- Ask God to show you His covenant kindness and how He loves us all no matter who we are or what we've done.
- Ask God to open your heart and your eyes to what others are going through and pray for wisdom on how you can help.
- Ask God's Spirit to clothe you daily in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, so that you can become aware of how you can make a difference in the world, one life at a time.

Day Twelve – Grace for Conflict Resolution

Divine Directive:

Be alert. **If you see your friend going wrong, correct him. If he responds, forgive him**. Even if it's personal against you and repeated seven times through the day, and seven times he says, 'I'm sorry, I won't do it again,' **forgive him." – Luke 17:3 (MSG)**

Blessed are the **peacemakers,** for they will be called children of God. **- Matthew 5:9 (NIV)**

Brothers, if anyone is **caught in any sin**, you who are spiritual [that is, you who are responsive to the guidance of the Spirit] are to **restore such a person** in a spirit of gentleness [not with a sense of superiority or self-righteousness], keeping a watchful eye on yourself, so that you are not tempted as well.
- Galatians 6:1 (AMP)

Inspired Initiative:

Every problem and obstacle becomes empowered with possibilities, when we communicate principles that embody **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**. We begin to cultivate clear communication instead of creating confusion. We must first be willing to incline our ears and use active and empathetic listening techniques. Then we should inquire with our heart to understand the root issues or basic reasons behind the conflict. Problem-solving, instead of trouble-making, should be our goal and ultimate outcome. We then can discover a biblical and strategic plan to address the current situation, with the desire to resolve issues and prepare the way for reconciliation. We should use open, honest, responsible communication so that we can see people restored back to their true purpose. So let's strengthen our relationships with **GRACE**, which will rebuild our relationships with God and others.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to give you the grace to resolve conflicts with a forgiving heart as you focus on restoration.
- Ask God to equip you with the tools to be a problem-solver and a peacemaker instead of a troublemaker.
- Ask God's Spirit to remind you every day to be humble and gentle with those who have wronged you or and become trapped in sin, so that you can become a catalyst of change and transformation that others can emulate.

Day Thirteen – Grace for Connection

Divine Directive:

15 But, **speaking the truth in love**, we may **grow up in all things** into Him, who is the head, Christ Himself, **16** from whom the whole body is joined together and **CONNECTED** by every joint and ligament, as **every part effectively does its work and grows, building itself up in love. – Ephesians 4:15-16 (MEV)**

Inspired Initiative:

We are all **CONNECTED** to each other as members of the "Body of Christ." Like the joints and ligaments of a human body, our **CONNECTION** is essential for the expression of life and love. The Apostle Paul uses this illustration as a way to describe how believers grow spiritually in **CONNECTION** to each other, just like a healthy growing body. Organs, muscles, bones and nerves that become disconnected cause pain, discomfort, or even disease. We feel in a similar way when we are disconnected from church attendance,

fellowship with other believers, and pastors or leaders who can guide us. We need each other if we are going to remain healthy and strong, as we stay spiritually aligned with Christ. So let's bridge the gap between different groups, cultures and generations, and get **CONNECTED** this year so that we can have real and lasting growth, and experience **GRACE UPON GRACE!**

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to help you see how important **CONNECTION** is for spiritual growth.
- Ask God to give you a stronger **CONNECTION** to other strong believers through fellowship and life groups.
- Ask God's Spirit to help you build up others in love as you allow yourself to become transparent and more relational within community.

Day Fourteen – Grace for Community

Divine Directive:

24 Let us consider how to inspire each other to greater love and to righteous deeds, 25 not forgetting to gather as a COMMUNITY, as some have forgotten, but **encouraging each other**, especially as the day of His return approaches.
– Hebrews 10:24-25 (VOICE)

Inspired Initiative:

We grow the most within **COMMUNITY** when the environment is filled with love and support, enabling us to grow in **GRACE**. We endeavor to create an atmosphere where people feel a sense of belonging, and can express shared values and ideas, in a family environment. One word defines the reason newcomers and first time guests sense an atmosphere where they belong, and experience a family environment that they can call "home." Without hesitation, it's the genuine love of God that they can feel from Him, as it flows through us. We become the conduit and catalyst for this magnetic draw that people feel, as they come into the **COMMUNITY** we've established. When we show mutual support to one another, and apply our strengths and abilities to help others that are weaker in faith, or who need our support and encouragement, a great sense of **COMMUNITY** is developed. So let's encourage one another, and offer our support wherever help is needed.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to grace you with a greater focus on community building and spiritual growth.
- Ask God to give you the desire to inspire others to express a greater love for one another and to live a life full of righteous deeds and kind actions.
- Ask God's Spirit to clothe you daily in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, so that you can become aware of how you can make a difference in the world one life at a time.

GRACE UPON GRACE

21 Days of Fasting & Prayer

Week 3: Finances & Future - *Leveraging Your Resources through Grace*

Day Fifteen – Grace for Changing A Poverty Mindset

Divine Directive:

But remember the Lord, your God, for it is **He who has given you the ability to acquire this WEALTH** so that he might confirm the **COVENANT** that he made with your fathers, which is still in force today. **– Deuteronomy 8:18 (NCB)**

One person **scatters his WEALTH**, but it still increases. Another hoards it unjustly, but this leads only to **POVERTY. - Proverbs 11:24 (EHV)**

Inspired Initiative:

Poverty and Prosperity often seem to be diametrically diverse realities. The **POVERTY MINDSET** can never imagine being prosperous, while a **PROSPEROUS MINDSET** never focuses on living in poverty. We know that rich people can lose their assets overnight by negligent or lavish spending, just as a person who's less fortunate can suddenly become wealthy through a lottery ticket. There is a common thread between both parties: mindsets and choices. Israel had to choose to believe their God, leave the poverty and slave-mentality of Egypt, and travel to the Promised Land where they would prosper in abundance. Four generations of Abraham's descendants were becoming enslaved to Pharaoh, with each successive generation inheriting a **POVERTY MINDSET**. The Lord sent Moses to deliver them and teach them about the ability to acquire wealth to confirm and establish His covenant. This promise was not only for Israel living in that generation, but it's also a promise to us as God's children. As generous people, if we scatter our wealth, we too will increase even more. The **POVERTY MINDSET** says "We don't have enough, and we will never have enough." With this type of thinking, generosity becomes unimaginable. For those who are financially blessed, not sharing their wealth with others is also unthinkable. So let's allow the Holy Spirit to renew our minds, and switch from poverty to divine prosperity in our thinking. Only with this renewed mindset can we become **GRACED** with the ability to use and leverage our wealth to build God's kingdom.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to reveal to you if you have inherited a **POVERTY MINDSET** that is blinding you from future blessings.
- Ask God to grace you with the ability to acquire **WEALTH** so that you can establish His covenant.
- Ask God's Spirit to renew your mind from thinking like a slave bound to poverty, and instead, to live as a child of God who is **BLESSED** and **PROSPEROUS** in every area of your life.

Day Sixteen – Grace for Confident Declarations

Divine Directive:

26 For then **you will have your DELIGHT in the Almighty**, and lift up your face to God. **27 You will make your PRAYER to Him**, He will hear you, and **you will pay your vows. 28 You will also DECLARE a thing, and it will be established for you.**
– Job 22:26-28 (NKJV)

4 DELIGHT yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. - Psalm 37:4-5 (NKJV)

Inspired Initiative:

CONFIDENT DECLARATIONS are the outcome of persistent and passionate prayer. When we delight ourselves in the Lord our desires conform to His. Our words are transformed to speak only what His Word **DECLARES**. Boldness arises in our hearts as we seek His face and pray to Him. When we come in alignment with what God desires, our thoughts, words, and actions become reflections of His plans and purposes. **CONFIDENCE** then has the power to make us bold and remove all fear and doubt from our lives. Our delight in the Lord and commitment to His ways shows our trust in Him to fulfill His promises.

When Job lost everything, including his family and his wealth, his three friends had mixed feelings about his loss and suffering. Job 22 records the words of Eliphaz, the first of three friends who came to check on him and give him counsel. Although Eliphaz was wrong about his friend's tragic situation being due to sin, his words in verse 8 reveal the power of prayer and the effects of **CONFIDENT DECLARATIONS**. Especially when we are suffering like Job, or are believing for a breakthrough in our lives

we need to declare God's promises. So let's make **CONFIDENT DECLARATIONS** today that express our trust in the Lord, to release the power of **DECLARING** His word.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to empower your words as you conform to His will.
- Ask God to give you the desires of your heart as you pray His word.
- Ask God's Spirit to **GRACE** you with the boldness to make **CONFIDENT DECLARATIONS** as you put your total trust in Him.

Day Seventeen – Grace for Canceling Debts

Divine Directive:
41 Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people—500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. **42** But **neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, CANCELING THEIR DEBTS**. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?" **43** Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he **CANCELED the larger DEBT**." "That's right," Jesus said. **– Luke 7:41-43 (NLT)**

Inspired Initiative:
Although this parable that Jesus told a Pharisee, named Simon, speaks of compassion and kindness that a lender showed a debtor who owed him money, it also teaches us about our need for having **DEBTS CANCELED**. Most of us owe a **DEBT** or **DEBTS** that we can't pay off. For instance, credit card **DEBT** is easy to acquire when our spending becomes greater than our current income. Debt can pile up when there is a loss of income, the death of a loved one, expensive medical care or assistance, or some other traumatic situation that requires us to spend more money than we have. If we are honest with ourselves, marketing plans for most products are really appealing and hard to turn down. Even boredom or loneliness can drive you to shop for "retail therapy." Jesus told a story that revealed love and compassion for someone who needed forgiveness for the debts that he could not pay. In the same way, God forgives us through His love and compassion and **CANCELS** all of our spiritual **DEBTS** that we owe. This parable concerning financial debt was used by Jesus to reveal the weight of sin in our spiritual lives that we need to be released from. We should also make every attempt to free ourselves of all financial debt this year so that our generosity will have no limits.

Prayer Perspective:
- Ask God to forgive you of all of your spiritual **DEBTS** and to free you from any bondage that could hold you back.
- Ask God to give you the compassion to forgive someone else's **DEBT**.
- Ask God's Spirit to show you how to be free of financial **DEBT** so that you can be generous in giving God your time, talent, and treasure.

Day Eighteen – Grace for Creating Financial Plans

Divine Directive:

The **PLANS of a hard-working person lead to PROSPERITY**, but everyone who is always in a hurry ends up in **POVERTY.**
– Proverbs 21:5 (GW)

Don't BUILD your house and ESTABLISH a home until your fields are READY, and you are sure that you can EARN A LIVING.
- Proverbs 24:27 (GNT)

"Is there anyone here who, **PLANNING to build a new house**, doesn't first sit down and **figure the cost** so you'll know if you can complete it? If you only get the foundation laid and then **run out of money**, you're going to look pretty foolish. Everyone passing by will poke fun at you: '**He started something he couldn't finish.'**
- Luke 14:28 (MSG)

Inspired Initiative:

A FINANCIAL PLAN helps us organize and prioritize our financial goals. The purpose of this strategy is to **PLAN** out the steps we'll need to achieve our goals. **FINANCIAL PLANNING** secures our future, consolidates and pays off our debts, provides advice for investments, and prepares our retirement.
Solomon reminds us of this focus, telling us that "**a hard-working person leads to prosperity**." If we are too busy to properly plan out our future it can cause us to end up in poverty. Jesus also taught his disciples about planning their financial future in connection to a man building a house or tower and counting the cost. These words mirrored the wisdom of King Solomon, who in Proverbs 24:27, warned his readers to make sure that they were financially ready to build a new home. Without **FINANCIAL PLANNING** we will spend beyond our earnings, waste precious resources on pleasures, and lack the provision for living generous lives. So let's lean on the Holy Spirit, as we pray and study God's word, and plan a future for our family that will leave a legacy of blessing for generations to come.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to reveal His **PLAN** for your future and the wisdom that you'll need to see it come to pass.
- Ask God for the **GRACE** to work hard, earn a living, and count the cost of the financial goals you have.
- Ask God's Spirit to help you **organize and prioritize your financial goals** as you trust His discernment for every decision.

Day Nineteen – Grace for Creative Strategies of Success

Divine Directive:

Let the words from the book of the Law be always on your lips. Meditate on them day and night so that you may be careful to live by all that is written in it. If you do, as you make your way through this world, **you will prosper and always find SUCCESS.**
– Joshua 1:8 (VOICE)

11 I know the PLANS I have for you," announces the Lord. "**I want you to enjoy SUCCESS**. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come. **12 Then you will call out to me. You will come and PRAY to me. And I will listen to you.**
- Jeremiah 29:11-12 (NIRV)

Inspired Initiative:

Joshua was **SUCCESSFUL** in conquering the Promised Land because he studied the instructions that Moses, his mentor, taught him in the wilderness. God's word is a gift of wisdom to overcome every obstacle and endure our wilderness of daily trials. **SUCCESS** is more than financial freedom or monetary gain. True success is a strategy that God Himself reveals to His people to fulfill their divine purpose. God graces us with the wisdom of His word to equip us with a **STRATEGY OF SUCCESS**. We must study these instructions in our daily struggles so that we can enter God's perfect rest and abundant provision. Our worries will become replaced with worship, our fears of the future with victorious faith, and our problems will be overcome by divine provision, when we seek God in everything. We will become careful and discerning in our choices and avoid the pitfalls we've made in our past. God's **GRACE** and mercy can shield us from past failures and tragic mistakes. If we meditate on God's word daily we will discover successful strategies found in Scripture. So let's devote ourselves to a daily meditation of His word to learn His secret strategies and experience His prosperity.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to reveal His **STRATEGY OF SUCCESS** to you as you study the Scriptures.
- Ask God to **GRACE** you with the desire to meditate on His word day and night as you walk in its wisdom.
- Ask God's Spirit to renew your mind with the Word of God as you apply its principles to your life and the decisions you must make for a prosperous future.

Day Twenty – Grace for Communicating Vision

Divine Directive:

The Lord answered me: "**Write down the VISION; write it CLEARLY [or PLAINLY]** on clay tablets so **whoever reads it can run to TELL OTHERS." – Habakkuk 2:2 (EXB)**

Inspired Initiative:

God had a **VISION** for Israel when He gave a covenant promise to their forefather, Abraham. He communicated the same **VISION** to his legacy, Isaac and Jacob. The **VISION** became more clear when God raised up Moses to deliver them from Egypt and give them the 10 Commandments. For the next forty years he wrote down God's Law from Mount Sinai. This Law of Moses gave them a revelation of creation in Genesis until they reached the **VISION** of the Promised Land in Deuteronomy. Joshua, the apprentice of Moses, executed the **VISION**, as they stepped into the Jordan River to enter Canaan, and marched around Jericho. If this **VISION** had not been written down by Moses and the Prophets, then the next generations would lack vision for the future. We would not know of a coming Messiah, or be prepared to share the good news of His coming to the whole world. In the same way, when we don't write down the **VISION** that we are believing God for, or journal the **VISION** that He's revealing to us, we lose focus of what He has shown us or what we're believing for. We need to have reminders in our life of God's benefits and blessings every day. Writing down the **VISION** makes us accountable to what we have seen or what we have prayed for to come to pass. Writing down the **VISION** also gives us clarity of the details that need to happen for the **VISION** to be executed. More importantly, writing it down provides clear **COMMUNICATION** so that we can share it with others. Without **CLEAR COMMUNICATION** no one can partner with us in the vision that we are believing God for. So let's write down the **VISION** for this year of 2022, make sure the details are clear and plain to understand, and communicate the **VISION** to others who will partner with us to bring it to pass.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to show you His **VISION** for your life.
- Ask God to help you write down clear goals to accomplish.
- Ask God's Spirit to **GRACE** you with the right words that give **CLEAR COMMUNICATION** to your friends and family as they pray and partner with you.

Day Twenty-One – Grace for Confessing a Fruitful Future

Divine Directive:

3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and **BLESSED me. 4** "He said to me, '**I will make you FRUITFUL** and numerous; I will make many nations come from you, and I will give this land as a permanent possession **to your FUTURE descendants'…15** Then he blessed Joseph and said: The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, **the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day.**
– Genesis 48:3-4,15 (CSB)

Inspired Initiative:

When God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He also revealed His plan to prosper them and make them **FRUITFUL**. Each generation would confess this promise of **FRUITFULNESS** over themselves and their children. These positive confessions of faith were not just mere words that influenced their immediate family, but instead became a declaration for all their **FUTURE** generations. God graced Abraham with the vision to see his descendants become a nation called Israel, as well as the blessings that would bless all the nations of the world. Instead of letting negativity shape our lives and our future, we should use our prayers, confessions, and daily declarations to speak life over everyone connected to us. This paradigm shift can change the productivity of our work, the atmosphere in our homes, and the attitude we have about our personal performance and spiritual growth. Our God desires to shepherd all of our lives in every area as we put our total trust in Him. So let's finish this 21 day prayer and fasting with faith for a **FRUITFUL FUTURE**.

Prayer Perspective:

- Ask God to inspire you to become **FRUITFUL** as you study His promises of blessing found in Scripture.
- Ask God to change the way you view your **FUTURE**, as you begin to confess His Word about living a **FRUITFUL** life.
- Ask God's Spirit to empower your prayer life with His divine declarations, as you confess that He will be the God who will shepherd all of your life and make you abundantly **FRUITFUL**.