

A Word of Encouragement

Our theme this year is *Walking by Faith*. I believe God is calling for us to strengthen our faith in Him. God wants us to exercise our faith not just at critical times and situations in our lives, but in *every situation* of our lives. You walk by faith and not by sight; i.e., by your own feelings and the constantly changing views and philosophies of the world. Walking by faith leads to greater trust in God, growth, and spiritual maturity.

Periodically, God calls us to Him for a time of prayer and fasting. He calls with a purpose in mind. During this season of prayer and fasting, let us pray corporately that God will:

- Bring to our attention and we will confess and repent of all sin revealed in our lives
- Reveal to us how we can walk by faith in every aspect of our lives
- Cause a spirit of revival to impact our church
- Take our lives, our families, and our church to a new level of spiritual intimacy with Him
- Help us to see opportunities to share our faith with others

I'm truly excited about this year's prayer and fasting journal. It is not only a 21-day devotional that will guide us through our fast, but it is also a tool to show you how to truly walk by faith. I believe after the fast is over you will be spiritually strengthened by the Word of God each day, God will give specific insight and revelation for your life, and you will be ready live at a level of intimacy with God you've never experienced before.

I encourage you to make this 21-Day Prayer and Fasting Journal a part of your daily devotion for the next 3 weeks. Here are some tips that I believe will help you reap the greatest spiritual benefit from this prayer and fasting journal:

1. Read the *Prayer and Fasting Bible Study* to learn the principles of fasting
2. Select a time and place that is *free of distractions* that will allow you pray, read and make entries in your journal of what God is saying to you
3. Drink water and/or juice during the fast to maintain your strength and alertness, and then eat a light meal after 6:00 pm
4. If you miss a day (fasting and/or studying), don't stop! Just pick up where you left off the following day.
 - a. **Note:** *During a fast you will feel hungry, it's normal, but don't allow your hunger to be a convenient excuse to break the fast.*
5. If for health reasons you are unable to fast from food, still commit to a daily time of prayer, making entries in your journal, and fasting from something other than food (i.e., TV, social media, etc.)

Be Blessed!

+  Kevin A. Dickerson

Prayer and Fasting

Bible Study

Biblical Principles of Fasting

What is Fasting?

A clear and simple definition of fasting is abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. It is the voluntary denial of food or other things a spiritual purpose by an individual, a family, a community, a church or a nation. Fasting is a spiritual discipline. Fasting typically can be as short as denying one's self a single meal to going without food for as much forty days.

Fasting without food can take many forms. Some fasts are called *normal fasts* where the person goes without food for a period, but drinks water. Other biblical fasts are called *partial fasts*, sometimes called the *Daniel fast* because Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fasted this way (read Daniel 1:8-15), where the person goes without certain foods for a period of time and drinks water. Finally, there is the *total* or *absolute* fast where the person goes without both food and water for period of time. The limit of the human body for going without food and water is about three days. **Please note:** Moses, Elijah and Jesus were *supernaturally enabled* to fast 40 days without food or water.

Fasting can be private or public. A *private* fast is when the person decides or senses a spiritual pull to fast. The only people who may know the individual is fasting may be the person's immediate family. A *public* fast is usually called by a pastor over a congregation or a group leader. The leader calls the fast and directs the group on its form, duration and purpose.

What is the Purpose of Fasting?

The primary purpose for fasting is intimacy with God. The objective is to nurture, strengthen and deepen our relationship with God. Fasting is about drawing us closer to God. Fasting honors God. Fasting is not a spiritual *endurance test* to see how long one can go without eating, drinking, etc. Fasting is not a *diet*. Although it is possible to yield health benefits from fasting (i.e. weight loss, more energy, system cleanse, etc.), but health benefits are not the *focus* or the *purpose* of Christian fasting. Fasting does not *make* God do what you want. Fasting is not a *hunger strike*. God is not moved or affected by one's spiritual arm-twisting. God cannot be manipulated. The purpose of fasting is not to be *seen and celebrated* by people. Jesus said in Matthew 6:16-18, it is hypocritical to fast and display a sad face so that everyone will know you're fasting and consider you super spiritual. The recognition by people will be the only reward/benefit you will receive. Fasting does not make us more *spiritual* than others. The Pharisee in Luke 18:12 went to the Temple to pray and publicly announced he fasted twice a week as if it were some special accomplishment.

Fasting is about discovering God's will regarding a matter. Your meal times are devoted to prayer, worship, Bible study, journaling, etc. The *physical* meal is replaced by a *spiritual* meal. The fast the *God honors* is the fast that *honors God*.

Who Should Fast?

Some Christians ask, "Do I have to fast? All believers *should* fast from time to time unless they have a health condition that prevents them to fast from food. Even if you can't fast from food due to health reasons, you can fast from other things (i.e., TV, social media, spending money on wants, etc.). Although fasting is mentioned and practiced in the Old Testament and the

New Testament, biblical fasting is not a commandment, but Jesus does seem to recommend it be a regular part of the Christian's life. But Jesus said in Matthew 6:16, "When you fast", suggesting there would be times of fasting in the Christian's life. Jesus' teaching on fasting is directly in the context of his teaching on giving and praying. Jesus is saying that giving, praying and fasting are all part of the Christian devotion. Fasting is not a *command*, but it is an *invitation* to nurture and deepen your relationship with God

When Should I Fast?

You should fast when you sense God is personally calling you to time of prayer and fasting. You should also fast when your church calls for a corporate or church-wide fast. The following are situations or circumstances that may call a person or church to fast:

- Sensing a need for greater closeness and intimacy with God
- Times of personal crisis
- Times of crisis around you
- The need for spiritual guidance or direction
- Prior to making a major decision
- Making a major step or change in life
- As a means of intercession for others
- Spiritual warfare

What Should I Expect from Prayer and Fasting?

You should expect God to reveal *you* to *you*. More than any other spiritual discipline, fasting *reveals* those things that influence or have a control over you. Those things that have influence or control over you cause *barriers* and *blockages* to greater intimacy with God. Those blockages and barriers can be sin, behaviors and attitudes that do not please God. Seasons of prayer fasting bring these issues to the *surface* so that you can confess them and repent of them. Fasting is a lot like having the *chicken pox*. When the bumps break the surface of your skin and cause irritation and discomfort is when you do something about it. When you fast, God brings our sins, behaviors and attitudes to the surface so that you can confess and repent of them. Sins like unforgiveness, anger, jealous, greed, respect of persons, etc. rises to the surface so that you can repent. When we repent, God forgives.

You should expect to feel hunger pangs occasionally because your body programs itself and expects to be feed at certain times. The hunger pangs are a reminder to eat a *physical* meal, but now they serve as a reminder to eat *spiritual* meal (i.e., prayer, worship, Bible study, journaling etc.). ***During a fast you will feel hungry, it's normal, but don't allow your hunger to be a convenient excuse to break the fast.*** During the fast and after, you will begin to experience a greater awareness of the presence of God, a stronger sensitivity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, answers to prayer, spiritual guidance and direction, and spiritual victories in your life.

The Power of Prayer Fasting

In Mark 9, a desperate father brings his demon-possessed son to Jesus. Jesus casts the demon out of the boy and he was set free from the torment of the devil. The disciples asked Jesus privately, "Why could not we cast him?" They wanted to know why they were so spiritually weak and unsuccessful. Jesus said, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but

prayer and fasting.” Jesus was saying the disciples’ lack of prayer and fasting made them spiritually weak.

Prayer and fasting doesn’t make us more *worthy* or *qualified* to cast out demons, but it does draw us closer to the heart of God and the power of God. Prayer and fasting is an expression of complete and total dependence on God. The disciples were disappointed in themselves because they trusted in themselves. Although the disciples had the authority to cast out demons (Mark 3:14-15), that authority is only effective when exercised by faith. Our faith is developed, cultivated and strengthened through spiritual discipline and devotion, i.e. prayer and fasting. Jesus says, “*This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*” There are some things that will only change when we pray and fast.

Benefits of Prayer and Fasting

Through prayer and fasting you discover a greater closeness with God. You’re closer to God because you’ve repented of the sins, attitudes, and behaviors that were hindering your walk with God. You’re getting to know God better.

Fasting is much more than missing a few meals. Fasting is yielding yourself to God and letting His presence and power flow through you, so that you can experience His presence in your life like never before. Don’t measure your fasting by the *number of meals* you give up, but measure it by the *fellowship* you gain with God.

Prayer and Fasting

Daily Journal

Day 1

Faith to Help Others

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Luke 5:18-20 (KJV) And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. [19] And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. [20] And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Reflection: Faith is more than believing, it's action. These four men went out of their way to get their sick friend to Jesus. They literally tore the roof off a house that was not theirs and lowered the man into the presence of Jesus! They put their faith in action. Jesus saw their "faith" (the effort they put forth), and the sick man's sins were forgiven. They didn't merely talk faith, they lived out their faith in practical ways. What visible acts of faith can you do to help people get to know Jesus?

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life; starting right now! Amen.

Day 2

Walking by Sight

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:7 (KJV) 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

Reflection: “Walking” speaks of how we live our lives. It speaks of our conduct, behavior, and the choices we make in life. If we are walking by sight it suggests we are living our lives based on what we naturally see. Walking by sight is living life only at a surface level, but there’s no depth to our living. We are living our lives based on the instincts of our flesh, we behave and conduct ourselves based on what is happening around us or the emotions within us. Walking by sight is trying to manage our lives without God. When we walk by sight, we make decisions just like an unbeliever would. Walking by sight we are only concerned about the present, we have no real concern or appreciation for things eternal, what matters is the here and now. It takes no skill, no effort, no prayer, and no faith in God to walk by sight. It’s easy to be tempted to walk by sight. Recall a situation where you “walked by sight”, what were the results? What are you doing to avoid walking by sight now?

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Day 3

Walking by Faith

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *2 Corinthians 5:7 (KJV) 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)*

Reflection: Faith is having confidence, trust, and reliance in God even when there is no supporting evidence or proof. Faith is having trust, and loyalty in God. Our life of faith starts when we place our trust in the word of God (Romans 10:17). What does it mean to walk by faith? Walking by faith is living all of life by the Word of God. Walking by faith is expecting God's best for our lives. Walking by faith is living to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Walking by faith is *demonstrated* by the actions you take. Walking by faith is to make faith part of *every daily activity*. Walking by faith is intentional. Walking by faith is one of the greatest and often challenging principles of the Christian life because our flesh wants to walk by sight. Recall some of the joys of walking by faith. How to do you intentionally to *walk by faith*?

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Day 4

Faith When God Changes the Plan

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *1 Chronicles 14:13-16 And the Philistines yet again spread themselves abroad in the valley. [14] Therefore David enquired again of God; and God said unto him, Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. [15] And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines. [16] David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer.*

Reflection: David had defeated the Philistines once, but now they have returned. David however did not assume God had the same battle plan. He went to God again and asked for specific instructions on how to win this battle. What do you do when the enemy you have defeated before returns (alcohol, marital discord, drugs, fear, lust, etc.)? Do you assume the *same* plan will work without God's advice, or do you seek God again for new instructions? And when you receive the new instructions, will you carry them out by faith? Do you believe God has more than one way to give you victory over the same issue? Record the areas in your life where an issue or an enemy has returned and begin to faithfully seek God's guidance for victory.

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Day 5

According to Your Faith

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:27-30 (KJV) 27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. 28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened...

Reflection: Two blind men are calling on Jesus for help and Jesus does not respond. The blind men continue calling on Jesus for help and literally follow Him home! Jesus asks the blind men a powerful question of faith, "Do you believe I can do this?" The blind men responded by saying, "Yes Lord." Jesus touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith be it unto you," or based on your persistent, unyielding faith in Me, be *it* (giving them sight) unto you. These blind men were healed because they had persistent faith, faith that would not let circumstances, delays, or even the lack of an immediate response by Jesus stop them. They knew Jesus had the power to heal, they had faith in Jesus, and they believed that Jesus' power was greater than their blindness. Their faith was strengthened, not weakened by being persistent. Have you ever prayed and believed God for something, and you eventually stopped because the answer did not come immediately? How is your faith strengthened by waiting?

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Day 6

Enduring Faith

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *2 Thessalonians 1:4 (KJV)* **4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:**

Reflection: Walking by faith is more than believing and trusting God to do great things for and through you. Walking by faith is also believing that God will give you the strength to withstand the trials, temptations, and troubles that we often face as Christians. The keys to surviving the trials of the Christian life are endurance and faithfulness. When troubles come, we can have faith that God is using our trials for our good and for His glory. Knowing God is using our troubles to strengthen our faith. Our faith endures troubles because we know that God is fair and just and will give us patience in our suffering. We know that He has not forgotten us. In God's perfect timing, he will relieve our suffering and judge those who persecute us. How have you learned to trust God's timing in trials? How has going through trials and difficulties in life strengthened your faith?

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Day 7

Fight to the Finish

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *1 Tim. 6:12 (KJV) Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

Reflection: God never said that walking by faith would be easy and have no challenges or struggles. Apostle Paul specifically describes the Christian life as a “fight”. Paul describes the life of faith in God as the *good fight* of faith. The life of faith is a battle, a contest, and a struggle for the prize of eternal life. We are to fight the good fight of faith until we lay hold of eternal life. Eternal life is the *prize* believers are fighting for. The enemy of our souls is working overtime trying to defeat us in life and cause us to quit. The good fight of faith also means that the life of faith in God is a *worthwhile* pursuit. Gaining eternal life is worth the trials, troubles, or inconveniences we face in this life. Our earthly troubles are temporary, but eternal life is forever. Don’t quit until you possess the crown of eternal life. Give yourself wholly and completely to the cause of Christ. You are not retreating; only advancing. This is not the time to be satisfied or complacent. Keep eternity in view. How are you fighting the good fight of faith? What area of your life is the enemy fighting you the most, and how are you combatting his attacks?

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Day 8

Small Faith Still Works!

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 17:17-20 (KJV) 17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. 18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? 20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

Reflection: The disciples had been unable to cast out a demon, and they asked Jesus why. Jesus said their faith was too small. It is the power of God, *plus* our faith, that moves mountains. The mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds on earth. Jesus said that even faith as small or undeveloped as a mustard seed would have been sufficient. The real problem was the disciples tried to cast out the demon with their own ability and strength rather than God's. There is great potential in even a little faith when we trust in God's power to act. When we are feeling weak or powerless as Christians, we should examine our faith, making sure we are trusting God's power not our own ability to produce results.

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Day 9

Faith Confessions or Unwavering Faith

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Hebrews 10:23 (KJV) 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)*

Reflection: To walk by faith is to consistently and constantly believe that God can do what He promises in His Word. Not just believe it, but also hold on to your confession of faith without wavering. We believe God can do it today and then doubt whether God can do it tomorrow. Our faith can't waver just because conditions change, or reports change or rules change. Our faith is not based on the *constantly changing* issues of our day, but on the *unchanging* Word of God. God is faithful. What promises has God made to you that *have not* manifested yet, but you are exhibiting *unwavering* faith?

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Day 10
Tell that Mountain to Move!

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Mark 11:22-23 (KJV) 22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*

Reflection: Jesus tells His disciples to have faith in God. God is the *object* or focus of our faith. Jesus then tells them that faith-filled words have the power to make the mountains in our lives move! Mountains are the issues, problems and circumstances in our lives that just won't budge. It may be a problem, an ungodly habit, an attitude that God is not pleased with, or an addiction, etc. Jesus says these "mountains" don't go away on their own, but you must speak to them and tell them to move. Why speak? Speak what? Speaking is important because that's when faith is ignited. Speak the word of God in faith without doubting and you will have what you say. Jesus didn't say *study* the mountain, or *think* about the mountain, or even *complain* about the mountain. Only speaking the Word of God will make mountains move in your life. What mountain is in your way? Find a scripture that addresses your mountain and begin to tell that mountain to move. Write about how your *speaking* is impacting your faith. Also write about when your faith in God and the Word of God made your mountain move.

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Day 11

Put Your Faith to Work!

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *James 2:17-18 (KJV) 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*

Reflection: We are saved by *faith*; not by *works*. We cannot earn our salvation by serving and doing good deeds. Because we are saved, we are given to do good works. These actions show that our commitment to God is real. Deeds of loving service are not a *substitute* for, but rather a *verification* of, our faith in Christ. If your faith is real, it will show itself. How? By obeying the Word of God, looking for opportunities to serve and following the leading of the Lord even though you may not understand where it will lead. Where are you displaying your faith in God through service in your church? Where are you displaying your faith in God through service in your community?

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Day 12

Faith Worth Sharing

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Acts 5:40-42 (KJV) 40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

Reflection: Peter and John had a message worth sharing; it was the Gospel of Jesus Christ! They were not afraid to speak about Christ or even suffer for Christ. It was their joy that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus. We may never be persecuted, jailed or beaten for sharing our faith, but we do have a message worth sharing. Peter and John used the means they had available by speaking in the church and at Bible studies in private homes. We still can share Jesus with others in person. Through technology we can share our faith via text, email, social media, etc. and reach thousands more people than Peter and John ever could. In what ways are you sharing your faith right now? How can you use technology to share your faith with even more people? When are you going to start?

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Day 13

When Your Faith Falters

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:30-31 (NIV) *30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"*

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Reflection: Jesus was walking on the water in the midst of a storm, and Peter asked Jesus if he could walk on the water, and Jesus said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on water and was going to Jesus. Peter took his eyes off Jesus and he began to sink. The wind and the waves caused Peter's faith to falter. He had every intention of walking on water all the way to Jesus, but the conditions surrounding Peter got the best of him. Peter called, and Jesus saved him. After rescuing Peter, Jesus asked a powerful question, "Why did you doubt?" We can be like Peter at times when the surrounding conditions cause us to focus on the wind and waves and not Jesus. Jesus will still save us from sinking when we call on Him. Faltering faith is not failing faith; we learn and our faith grows from the experience. Recall a time when your faith faltered and answer Jesus' question, "Why did you doubt"?

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Day 14

Divine Guidance

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV) 5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Reflection: Human beings are God's greatest creation. God gave us great minds to think and make decisions. God still wants us to trust, rely and depend on Him. Trusting in God is a heart issue. God knows what's best for us better than we do. We must trust God's guidance even when we don't agree or it doesn't make sense. We make decisions based on the information we have access to, which is often limited. God knows the end from the beginning. His guidance is based on information that we don't have and events that have not even happened yet! To receive God's guidance, we must seek His will. This is not *selectively* seeking God's will, but in *all thy ways* acknowledge God, and He'll direct your paths. In every situation, regardless of how small or insignificant we think it is, seek God's will about it. List at least three situations, big or small, where you need God's guidance and pray for God's wisdom and guidance.

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Day 15

The C.O.S.T. of Walking by Faith

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Hebrews 11:1 (KJV) 1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Reflection: Hebrews 11:1 starts by giving us the definition of faith. The rest of the chapter gives us the heroes of faith, and within the chapter it reveals to us the C. O. S.T. of walking by faith. To walk by faith requires something of us. It requires:

- **Courage** – God often calls us to do things that are out of our comfort zone or may even require taking a risk. Be we can never attempt great things for God without courage.
- **Obedience** – Obedience is following God’s instructions even when you don’t know how they will turn out or you have unanswered questions.
- **Sacrifice** – Obeying God will always require something of you. You may have to sacrifice money, time, your pride, etc. You are willing to make the sacrifice because you want to obey God
- **Tenacity** – Walking by faith means you will persevere and persist in following God’s instructions until His plan is realized in your life. You won’t quit or alter God’s plan.

Walking by faith is not cheap, but it’s worth it! Look at each element of the C.O.S.T. of walking by faith. Write about the areas you’re doing well in and the areas you need to improve in.

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life; starting right now! Amen.

Day 16

The Danger of Unbelief

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 13:57-58 (KJV) 57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

Reflection: Jesus' earthly ministry focus was preaching, teaching and healing. Lives were changed, souls were saved, and sick bodies were healed everywhere Jesus went except Nazareth, Jesus' hometown. They minimized Him because they were so familiar with Him and His family. As a result, Jesus didn't do many mighty works in His own hometown because of unbelief. They missed out. Unbelief hinders what Jesus can do in your life. Unbelief is placing limits on the power of God. Unbelief is a roadblock to a better life. Unbelief is sin. Is unbelief blocking what Jesus can do in your life? How does your faith measure up? Are there areas in your life that you're finding it hard to believe that Jesus can handle? 1) Write them down. 2) Ask God to forgive you for not believing in Jesus in a particular area of your life. 3) Give Jesus the area of unbelief in your life and the opportunity to do a mighty work in you!

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Day 17

The Risk of Faith

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Exodus 2:2-4 (KJV) 2 And the woman (Jochebed) conceived, and bare a son (Moses): and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. 4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.*

Reflection: Pharaoh issued a decree that all male children be killed because of his fear of the rapid growth of the Jewish people. Jochebed has a problem; she has a male child and she doesn't want him to die. She also doesn't want to publicly rebel and especially against Pharaoh. She made a boat with the materials available, placed her son in the boat on the Nile River hoping Pharaoh's daughter would find Him, and she had her daughter watching as the tiny boat floated on the River. She did all she could do, and she left the results to God. She took a risk of faith. She didn't know how things would turn out; she just trusted God. Moses lived. He was saved by Pharaoh's daughter, and he became a deliverer of God's people. What are the issues you have going on where you've done all you could, you're ready to take your hands off of it, and trust God with the results? List them here.

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Day 18

Seeing God

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Isaiah 43:18-19 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. [19] Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.*

Reflection: The children of Israel had seen God do incredible things. God opened the Red Sea, turned bitter water sweet, gave them manna from heaven, protected them day and night, and on and on. As awesome as it was God wanted to do more for them. God had blessed them so much they were allowing the past blessings to cloud what He wanted to do through them now. Many times we limit God by seeing only what He has done before, but there is so much more God wants to reveal to us if we will allow Him to do a new thing not only for us, but in us. God told Israel He was doing a new thing that would happen quickly, but He was concerned if they would see it. God is everywhere doing new things, but they are often ignored or overlooked by the very people God is doing the new things for. Look over situations in your life, family, community, church, career, etc. Where do you see God doing new and great things that you previously had overlooked? Write them here.

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Day 19

Walk it Out

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Hebrews 11:30 (NLT) 30 It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho for seven days, and the walls came crashing down.*

Reflection: Walking by faith is believing God's plan, obeying God's plan, and executing God's plan until you see results God promised. God instructed Joshua and Israel to walk around the walls of Jericho once a day for seven days and seven times on the seventh day. Their instructions were to only blow the trumpets and do not shout until instructed to do so, and the walls of Jericho would fall down flat. God gave them the victory because they faithfully followed God's plan. Joshua and the Israelites followed God's plan faithfully even though it was an unusual plan. Sometimes God gives us instructions that don't seem to make sense, and because we can't determine the outcome we dismiss God's plan. God's plans work not because we can understand them, but they work because we have faith in the One who said it. What command, instructions or plan has God given you that you're having a hard time walking out? List them and pray over them. Then commit to have faith in what God has said by walking it out day by day.

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Day 20

Trusting God with the Details

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Hebrews 11:8 (NRSV) 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going.*

Reflection: Most people are detail-oriented. No decision is made without knowing all the facts. No major purchase is made without understanding and reading the fine print. No travel plans are made without understanding how to get there. That's not how faith works. God doesn't always give us all the details, dot every "i" and cross every "t". He wants us to follow not by details, but follow by faith. That's what Abraham did. He was going without knowing all the details and just sincere, genuine faith in God. He trusted God step by step. He trusted to take Step 1 and *then* God gave him Step 2. As a result, God did great things for him and through him. His faith was counted as righteousness. What about you? What has God said for you to do and you don't have all the details? Have you taken Step 1? If not, why not? Why are the details so important to your obeying God?

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Day 21

Faith Alive

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *Psalm 119:125 (KJV) 125 I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.*

Reflection: Our faith is awakened, stirred up and comes alive when we apply the word of God to our daily duties and issues. We need discernment so we can understand, and we need the desire to apply Scripture where we need help. The Bible is like medicine: It goes to work only when we apply it to the affected areas. The Bible is like a GPS system: It gives us turn-by-turn directions as we apply God's Word to navigate through life. The Bible is like a seasoned counselor: It gives us sage advice that will help us and encourage us through the tough times. The Bible is like a mirror: It reflects and reveals the real you and shows you where you need to make needed changes to be more like Jesus. The Bible is like a gold mine: It requires some digging to uncover the unlimited treasures of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding God freely makes available to us to help us grow spiritually. Read Hebrews 11 and be alert for and write lessons to be learned, commands, words of encouragement, etc. that *came alive* to you and you can put into practice.

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life; starting right now! Amen.

How You Can Receive Jesus Christ As Your Savior And Lord

If you would like to welcome Jesus Christ into your life, you can do so at any time, anywhere. Consider these important facts:

God loves you and seeks a personal relationship with you!

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. Revelation 3:20

The problem is: Everyone has been born into this world spiritually dead because of sin.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

Jesus will forgive us of all sin, assuring us of eternity in Heaven!

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

To receive Jesus, pray in this manner:

Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner. Please come into my life and forgive me of all sin. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. Now, fill me with Your Holy Spirit and guide me from this day forward. Thank You, Lord, for loving me!

Amen.