21 Days of Prayer and Fasting

For Healing and Transformation





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Introduction Pastor Lori Burchell Christian Life Church, Herrin, Illinois



The New Year is upon us! It is so hard to believe that 2025 is here! As is the tradition at CLC, we are taking some time at the beginning of this New Year to be intentional about seeking the Lord's heart and focusing our attention on Him.

This year, we believe that the Lord is directing us to have a more focused emphasis on Healing and Transformation: spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, and relationally. Basically, all areas of our lives.

But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

We believe it's time for people to walk in the Freedom that is theirs through what Christ did on the Cross!

As we start this 21 Days of Fasting and Prayer, we do so with this in mind. Perhaps you may feel as though you are not in need of healing in some area of your life. I would encourage you then to take time to recognize that you can stand in the gap for others who are believing for healing, transformation, and deliverance!

Maybe fasting is new to you and you don't understand what it is. I would like to take just a brief moment to explain a *few* things about it.

- 1. Fasting is Biblical. We see many throughout the Word of God who fasted and prayed, including Jesus. We'll talk a littlemore about this in a bit.
- 2. Fasting is not a way to manipulate God or twist His arm behind His back into doing our will. Instead, fasting draws us in closer alignment with God and His will. As I have heard someone once say,

"Fasting doesn't change God. It changes you."

- 3. Fasting is not a spiritual way to lose weight. We can laugh about that. But I have heard people say, "I need to lose weight so I'm going too fast!" And they weren't talking about intermittent fasting either.
- 4. We don't fast sin or those things that are not God-honoring. Those things need to be totally removed from our lives. We don't go back to those activities, relationships, or attitudes when the fast is over.

What does happen is:

- 1. Fasting humbles our hearts and transforms our lives. Through this time, it will allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, changing our attitudes, activities, relationships, etc.
- 2. Fasting causes us to become more aware of His presence. As we begin to long more for the presence of God, more than the food or activity, let me tell you God will respond to that. You see, as we get rid of the distractions, and our hearts and minds are focused on Him, we can't help but become more aware of His presence, His guidance, and His direction. We become amazingly sensitive to the things of God.
- 3. Fasting breaks bondages. We and the people we are praying

for can be set free. Jesus even said that there are some strong-holds, bondages, and demons that are driven out only through fasting (Mark 9:17-29).

4. Jesus fasted and prayed. Most of us know about when Jesus was led into the wilderness to fast and pray (Matthew 4:2; Luke 4:1-2). Think about this: before Jesus preached a sermon, before He healed anyone, and before He called His disciples, He spent time in fasting and prayer.

There are **many** more benefits that we could list of what happens when we fast and pray, but for the sake of time and space, I will stop there.

But you may ask what kind of fast or what should I fast. Here are some suggestions:

- A complete fast. No food. (Please get approval from your doctor.)
- A partial fast one or two meals a day. Some people may abstain from certain foods or food groups, like sugar.
- A liquid fast only.
- Fasting from sunrise to sunset.
- Fasting media, social media, television, movies, video games, certain activities, etc.

Allow the Lord to direct you in what you should fast. Instead of engaging in these activities or during the time you would normally eat, you will use that time to just focus on the Lord – through prayer, the Word, and/or worship.

Prayer: Father, I pray for my brothers and sisters who are taking time to fast and pray over the next 21 days. I pray, Lord that You, through Your Holy Spirit, will give them the strength needed to give up the things or activities so that they can focus their hearts more intently on You. I pray Father that we

will see people receive healing and transformation in every area of their lives so they can walk in FREEDOM! Amen.

Action Step: Pray today and then decide what you will fast for

the next 21 days.	
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Freedom that Brings Transformation By Ronnie Lumpkin

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32)

When Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah, He said that He had come to Earth to "proclaim freedom" (Luke 4:18). And on another occasion, He said, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Jesus was not setting us free to do whatever we wanted; He was giving us the ability to do what we ought to do. He was transforming us to walk in a relationship with God that man had rarely enjoyed since the Garden of Eden and to be the kind of people He created us to be. And this is the freedom in Christ that sin had long denied us.

Jesus shocked the Pharisees, the spiritual leaders of His day when He stated, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). Jesus was telling them that we are all under the power and control of a natural tendency to sin; we can't get away from it by ourselves. We need the power that only exists in relationship with He who gives that power. (You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you. Acts 1:8)

Sin brings a penalty that, by ourselves, we can't escape either. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). However, Jesus' sacrifice set us free from all of this.

Last month was the season of celebrating Jesus' birth and giving thanks to the ultimate gift granted to us through His life and death, the freedom that brings transformation.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are so thankful for the sacrifice that was made for us. Thankful that you have made us free from the bondage of sin and death. We are a new creature in Christ Jesus and seek to walk daily in his precious new life. Save us from things that are bringing us down in our lives, bring us to the place where we can put our enemies under our feet and truly be who you want us to be. In Jesus' Holy name. Amen.

Action Step:

- Reflect on the things that God has delivered you from and how that has impacted your life.
- Take a heart inventory of where you are now. Look at the things that need to be put on the altar and placed in the hands of a righteous Savior, who wants us to cast all our cares upon him.
- Begin to proclaim, with faith, what you are now free from because Jesus has saved you from those things. Proclaim with great joy the life that God has saved you to experience.

<u>NOTES:</u>			
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DAY 3

Every Day with Jesus By Pam Wienhold



For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." (Hebrews 13:5b)

Beloved, when it comes to spending time with Jesus, be assured the ways to do this are limitless and very personal. You are God's sons and daughters who may sit at Jesus' feet anytime!

"Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before." This chorus and another come to mind. "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the morning. Jesus in the noon time. Jesus when the sun goes down."

Remember Jesus is always with you, in you, loving you, hearing you, and speaking to you. He will never leave you or forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5) He says, "I am your Good Shepherd. Let's get close today."

We definitely are close when we read His Word. We read a few chapters, a few verses, or a whole book of the Bible and the Holy Spirit shows us Jesus. His Words are Spirit and life. (John 6:63) A verse or phrase jumps off the page and it's planted in our hearts. We think about it day and night. (Psalm 1:2) We pray in the Spirit and English. When we pause, we hear His still small voice conversing with us. We may even write down what He says. We play worship music or just sing to Him in this

quiet moment. As we lift His praise, problems fall and answers rise.

Jesus made you a priority when He came to our planet as a human to be like you. Through the Holy Spirit, He now lives in you. As you make time with Him a priority, you will grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 1:2), and your day will be filled with blessings.

Prayer: Father, show me today how much you love me. Fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit. I am hungry for more of Jesus and His Word. Enable me to set aside time with Jesus every day. In His precious Name, Amen.

Action Step: Read 1 John 4 and draw a little heart by every verse that reminds you of God's Love.

<u>NOTES:</u>				

Prayer by Tammy Trusty



Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Thessalonians says to pray continually. How do we do that when we have so much to do like work, do errands, do housework, and drive our children to school or activities?

A way to pray constantly is to surrender yourself and your day to God. Put Him first in your life. Surrender all yourself, your hopes, dreams, and life to Him daily. When you surrender to God and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you, He will.

Prayer is not just asking God prayer requests but it is communing with Him throughout the day. Praying, praising, and thanking Him, being continually aware of Him, and letting Him be a part of your day will draw you closer to God.

As you abide in Him you will be more aware of situations and people that need prayer. I was driving to a local mall when a friend came to my mind. So, I went to visit her without calling. (There were no cell phones back then.) She had just had gallbladder surgery and I had forgotten about it. I was able to visit and pray with her. I was glad that God brought her to my mind. Have you ever had someone on your mind? God may want you to pray for them or call or text them.

As you commune with God throughout the day, He will speak to you if you listen. He will guide you. As you learn to hear Him you can do as He leads. We all want God to lead and guide us. We want to know Him more. As we surrender to Him, we can hear Him better and His presence is with us! Isn't that great?!

Prayer: Father God, I love You so much. My daily prayer is to spend time with You and let you lead me. I need you every minute and every day! I want Your guidance, wisdom, and constant presence. Help me be more aware of Your presence. I want the Holy Spirit to lead me and I want to do Your will, Lord God. Show me how to constantly pray and commune with You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Action Step: Commune with God through your day. Set a timer every hour to remind yourself. Write down how you did each night. What did God say? How did He lead you today?

<u>NOTES:</u>			

Sit with Jesus. By Tim McMeen



"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." (John 10:10)

There's a kind of tired that goes beyond needing sleep. It's a deep, soul-level exhaustion that comes from carrying too much for too long. It feels like everything is pressing in all at once: work stress, family struggles, the weight of the world's chaos, and our own tangled fears. When we keep asking God to meet us here, but we still feel stuck, like we're waiting for a rescue that we can't see coming.

But as I think about John 10:10, I realize something: *freedom in Christ doesn't depend on how I feel*. It doesn't mean we won't get tired, overwhelmed, or unsure. It means that even when we're in the thick of it, Jesus is still with us, still holding us, still offering us life that the thief can't take away.

The Bible is full of stories of people who felt the weight of life pressing in. Martha comes to mind. In Luke 10:38-42, Martha was overwhelmed, rushing to prepare everything while her sister Mary simply sat at Jesus' feet. Martha cried out, frustrated, essentially asking, "Don't you care?" And Jesus responded gently but firmly, reminding her that she was distracted by many things, but only one thing was needed, Him.

I've been feeling like Martha lately. I'm distracted, rushing around, worrying, and trying to fix everything myself. And like Martha, I've cried out, "Don't you care?" (Luke 10:38-42) But Jesus' answer hasn't changed. He's still saying, "You're worried about many things, but just come and sit with Me."

Another story is Elijah. After a powerful victory over the

prophets of Baal, Elijah ran into the wilderness, afraid and burned out. He sat under a tree and told God he was done, that he couldn't take another step (1 Kings 19:4-8). But God didn't rebuke him. Instead, He sent an angel to provide food, water, and rest. Elijah didn't get an immediate solution to his problems, but he got what he needed to take the next step. We are not promised the absence of struggle, but the strength to keep moving because God meets us in the struggle.

Right now, the thief might be loud. He may be trying to steal your peace, kill your hope, and destroy your trust in God. But he doesn't get the final say. Jesus came to give us life, a life that can't be stolen by fear or exhaustion. Sometimes it looks like sitting at His feet, like Mary. Sometimes it looks like letting Him provide what we need for just one more step, like Elijah. And sometimes, it's just knowing that even when we can't feel it, He's still working.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

If you're feeling the weight too, know that you're not alone. Jesus is with you, even here, offering you freedom. not freedom from struggle, but freedom to trust that He will carry you through it. The thief is loud, but Jesus is stronger. And He's not letting go of you.

Prayer: Father God, I feel overwhelmed and weighed down by life. The thief is trying to steal my peace and joy, but I choose to trust Your promise of life. Help me to sit at Your feet when I'm distracted, to rest when I'm weary, and to trust that You are working even when I can't see it. Speak peace to my restlessness, and order to the chaos in my mind. Thank You for being my strength and my freedom. Amen.

Action Step: Take time today to reflect on what freedom in Christ means for you. Begin by reading the following Scripture references: Matthew 11:28-30 Isaiah 41:10 Psalm 34:18 2 Corinthians 12:9 Romans 8:37-39
As you read, pause after each verse and ask yourself: -What does this reveal about who God is? -How does this apply to where I am right now? -What truth is God speaking to my heart?
If a particular verse stands out, write it down or keep it with you throughout the day. Let it serve as a reminder of God's presence and strength, even in the midst of your struggles.
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Trusting God By Tammy Trusty

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Trusting God isn't always easy. For me, it's a continual learning process. Sometimes I'm better at it than other times. When my thirty-day-old grandson was thought to have meningitis, it was very concerning. It was hard not to worry and fear when he was rushed by a special ambulance from a local hospital to a children's hospital two hours away.

Many people and churches even from other towns and states were praying. It was encouraging because people rallied for him in prayer. When he got to the hospital, they were told he didn't have it but was very sick with a fever. They weren't sure what illness he had. They treated him and he was released in a few days. What we thought was going to be a long recovery turned into a different diagnosis and a short stay. Praise God!

We saw God's hand at work through prayer. When you see God do something amazing your faith gets stronger which helps you trust God more. Then the next time you experience a difficult situation you'll know you can trust God because He is faithful! When you remember what He's done in the past you can be assured He'll bring you through again.

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6)

Prayer: Father God, we are so thankful we can pray. You not only hear our prayers but You answer them. You are faithful! You love us so much and want us to be blessed and have a relationship with You. You poured out Your great love for us through Your Son, Jesus. Because we know You love us so much we can trust You. Help us trust You even more, especially during challenging situations. Increase our faith. We love and adore You. Glory and honor to Your name. I pray in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Action Step: Think back on the Lord's faithfulness in your life. Then thank and praise Him for all He has done! Expect Him to continue to be faithful to you.

<u>notes:</u>			

Power of Worship By Karla Lumpkin



So they got up early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe and trust in the LORD your God and you will be established (secure). Believe and trust in His prophets and succeed." 21 When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the LORD and those who praised Him in their holy (priestly) attire, as they went out before the army and said, "Praise and give thanks to the LORD, for His mercy and lovingkindness endure forever." 22 When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were struck down [in defeat]. 23 For the sons of Ammon and Moab [suspecting betrayal] rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, completely destroying them; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 When [the men of] Judah came to the lookout tower of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude, and behold, they were dead bodies lying on the ground, and no one had escaped. 25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found much among them, including equipment, garments, and valuable things, which they took for themselves, more than they could carry away; so much that they spent three days gathering the spoil. (2 Chronicles 20:22-24 AMP)

Wow, what an impressive account of the Power of Worship! To think that an entire battle was fought and won with worship. Not only was the battle won without them drawing a single sword, but things they needed for themselves for the future were provided for them in abundance.

Many times in our lives, when things are not going well for us, worship is not in the forefront of our minds. We start trying to figure out a solution for our situation on our own. If we are not diligent, Satan will take the opportunity to distract us from worshipping God entirely. He knows the power of worship and wants to stop us in our tracks. Scripture tells us in 2 Corinthians 10 that even though we see, feel, and experience these difficulties in the earthly realm true solutions come from the spiritual realm.

Another example of the power of worship comes from Acts 16. When Paul and Silas were imprisoned, they could have gathered legal teams to plead their case or come up with an elaborate escape plan but their freedom came when they began to sing the praises of the Lord and glorify Him. The Lord caused an earthquake that freed them and led to the salvation of the jailer and his whole household. Had they done things their way, they may or may not have been freed nor the jailer and his household saved.

Our praise and worship to the Father holds the power.

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." (James 8:2 KJV)

There are many more accounts that are miraculous in the Bible that demonstrate the power of worship.

When we truly worship God, we focus wholly on Him. This starts internally, in the deepest parts of our hearts. We recognize God for the Savior that he is and all that he has done for humankind. We bow down spiritually to honor, praise, and glorify Him, recognizing that it is only through Him that we live

a victorious life. This takes our mind off ourselves and how we can fix our problems and it allows Him to work. Oftentimes we pray, "God, we want your will, not mine", but we continue to try micromanaging the creator and telling Him how to do His job. In true worship, we remove ourselves from the equation and focus on Him. We allow Him to fight the battle for us and in us. We may not see the immediate solution to our problems but we will feel empowered by and guided by His Spirit. It is not always just about us. Sometimes our problems are a way to help others find their way to a relationship with the Lord.

Allow Him to change our hearts and lead our lives. If you don't know where to start pray Psalm 8 with me.

Prayer: O Lord, our Lord, how majestic and glorious and excellent is Your name in all the earth! You have displayed Your splendor above the heavens. Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babes, You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, That You might silence the enemy and make the revengeful cease. When I see and consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have established, what is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of [earthborn] man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field. The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas O Lord, our Lord, How majestic and glorious and excellent is Your name in all the earth! Amen. (Psalm 8)

Action Step: Let us make praise and worship more than just a genre on our playlists this year. Let's take this time to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

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The Words of Our Mouth By Amy Dollins

So may the words of my mouth, my meditation-thoughts, and every movement of my heart be always pure and pleasing, acceptable before your eyes, Yahweh, my only redeemer, my Protector. (Psalm 19:14 TPT)

And so the tongue is a small part of the body yet it arrives great power! Just think of how a small flame can set a huge forest ablaze. (James 3:5 TPT)

Even though our tongue is a small part of our body, it contains great power and influence over us. So, what are we talking about? I have a family member who had treated me badly, and I said I had forgiven her. But when I received a text telling me of something else she had said about me, I began to complain about all she had done to me before. I realized that I had still been spending time rehearsing in my mind all the wrong she had done, and that's what began to come out of my mouth.

Matthew 12:34-35 tells us out of the abundance of the heart our mouth speaks. So, we are saying whatever we have been thinking about, because what we are thinking about gets down on the inside of us in our heart. We need to be meditating (thinking) on the Word of God every day until what we believe in our hearts is exactly what God is saying. Then, we speak

those words. We need to declare over our lives what God says about our lives.

- We are redeemed. Ephesians 1:7
- We are the healed of the Lord. 1 Peter 2:24

• We are loved. John 3:16
We will not fear for He is with us. Isaiah 41:10

We cannot pray and declare God's words over ourselves one minute, and then speak negative things over ourselves the next. We need to determine to do what Jesus did. In John 12:49-50, Jesus said, "I say what the Father tells me to say." How do we know what the Father is saying? We can find out in His Word. We can never go wrong when we speak the Word of God over ourselves, our family, and any situation we face.

Prayer: Father, thank you that you have left us a whole book filled with your Words. It is a supernatural book that produces supernatural transformation in our life. We choose to read, meditate, and speak your Word and we expect our lives and our circumstances to begin to change and to line up with what You are saying about us. We are so grateful for Your Word. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Action Step: Find a Scripture today that applies to your specific situation. Think about it and begin to speak it. Don't allow the enemy to talk you out of what God's Word says about you. No matter what, keep speaking the truth of God's Word.

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Physical Healing-a Gift by Pam Weinhold



Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. (James 1:17)

At holidays and birthdays, we delight in giving and receiving gifts. Most assuredly, the gift of Jesus who was born to be our Savior is what we celebrate most.

In this verse, we see that every good and perfect gift has come from our Father. In Ephesians 2:8 our salvation is a gift of God not of works. With that in mind, imagine a gift bag under your tree with your name on it. It says it is from God to you personally. You eagerly accept it and reach in to pull out the forgiveness of ALL your sins! Wow! The gift in the bag is your Salvation.

You look in the bag and there is another part of your gift still in the bag. Slowly, you pull it out. "This gift is not for you," says the voice in your head. "You aren't worthy." "But it is from the Father and it is good," says the voice in your heart. "No-God is holding it back because He has a lesson for you to learn first," says the voice in your head. Then the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart, "Open it-believe it-receive it. Jesus bought it just for you. It is part of the gift you opened first. It is part of your salvation package."

So, you open it. There it is: Physical healing! Your sins are forgiven so get up and be healed by Jesus' stripes and in Jesus' name. The gift is yours. Know that when you were forgiven you were healed as well. Salvation includes forgiveness and healing. Read these verses 3 John 2, Psalms 103:2-3,1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:4-5. They all speak this truth-you may freely receive Now!

Prayer: Dear Father, thank you for every good and perfect gift comes from you. I receive the physical healing that my body needs today. By Your stripes, Jesus, I am healed. Thank you for removing sickness, pain, and infirmity from me. I am a believer and receiver in Jesus' Name, AMEN

Action Step: Memorize 1 Peter 2:24. Say it throughout the day. Pray it for a loved one who needs healing.

<u>NOTES:</u>	<u>.</u>		

Jesus, the Healer, Part 1 By Amy Dollins

Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. 24 news about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed-he healed them all. (Matthew 4:23-24)

Everyone tried to touch him, because healing power went out from him, and he healed everyone. (Luke 6:19)

Everywhere Jesus went, He preached the Word and He healed. If you read through the four Gospels, this was the largest part of his ministry. Word spread that if you could get to Jesus, you would be healed. So, of course, people came from near and far. And they were never disappointed. I always thought it would have been fascinating to have a first-hand view of Jesus' healing ministry. But we actually do!

The same Jesus who healed in the Bible is the same Jesus who heals us today. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8) He never changes. And just like those we read about in the Bible who were healed and transformed, He will never disappoint us. He is our healer.

Prayer: Father, thank you for sending Jesus to save us and to transform us in every way, including physical healing. Jesus, thank you for being our healer. We accept healing from you. We are so grateful and so thankful. In Jesus' name. Amen.



them to stir up faith in your heart: faith that Jesus is your healer! **NOTES:**

Action Step: Read 1 Peter 2:24 and 3 John 2 today and allow

It is never too late for healing! Physical Healing & Freedom, Part 2 By Amy Dollins

One Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, he saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for 18 years and was unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Dear woman, you are healed of your sickness!" Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised God! (Luke 13:10-17)

The woman in this passage of Scripture had dealt with significant health issues for years and years. She had not led a "normal life" for so long. But one moment with Jesus changed her life forever.

I had been dealing with a health issue that had been nagging me for quite some time. I had been meditating on the Word and trusting that healing would come. It seemed to be taking a long time, but one day, I realized I was no longer having the issue. In fact, I was not even sure when all of the symptoms had left!

It does not matter how long you have been facing a health challenge, illness or disease. Jesus has already made a way for you to be healed. Never say, "I have been sick too long to be free of this." It does not matter if you have been sick for moments, days or years, you are healed by the stripes of Jesus.

Prayer: Father, we know that no matter how long we have been dealing with a challenge in our health, Jesus has provided healing and health for us. We are thankful for the blessing that

came through Jesus. We are so grateful for His great sacrifice because of His love for us. We praise you and pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Action step: Begin to declare over your body today that you are healed and made whole by the stripes of Jesus (I Peter 2:24) and that sickness has no place in your body. Be consistent and do not give in just because you do not feel any difference. Trust Jesus as your healer.

<u>NOTES:</u>		

Emotional Healing, Part 1 by Darla Harms



Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (Colossians 3:13)

Forgiveness is one of the hardest commands God gives us. It's easy to justify holding on to anger and resentment when we've been deeply wronged. For years, I carried the heavy burden of unforgiveness toward a family member who used shame to control me. They criticized my weight, my appearance, my parenting, and even how I studied the Bible. Their words and actions left deep emotional and spiritual wounds. I thought holding onto my grudge would somehow make them pay, but in reality, I was the one suffering.

The turning point came during a Bible study called *Freedom 1.0* at my church in Georgia. There I realized my unforgiveness wasn't punishing them—it was poisoning me. I was like someone drinking poison, hoping the other person would die. The bitterness I harbored was stealing my peace and hindering my relationship with God.

Colossians 3:13 reminded me that forgiveness wasn't optional—it was a command. If Christ forgave me for all my sins, how could I withhold forgiveness from someone else?

Forgiveness wasn't easy, but here's what I learned along the way:

1. Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. I didn't wait until I felt like forgiving them. I chose to forgive because God asked me to, trusting that my feelings would catch up later.

- 2. Pray for those who hurt you. I began praying for this family member regularly, asking God to bless them and work in their life. In doing so, I released my desire for revenge and gave the situation to Him.
- 3. Forgiveness doesn't mean reconciliation. Forgiving someone doesn't require letting them back into your life if the relationship is harmful. Forgiveness is about setting *yourself* free; reconciliation requires mutual trust and effort.

Stop dwelling on the past. Romans 12:14 says, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." By choosing not to speak negatively about this person, I began to let go of the pain they caused. Dwelling on and talking about their offenses only kept the wounds fresh and the bitterness alive.

Walking through this journey, I experienced God's healing. My heart grew lighter, my thoughts clearer, and my faith deeper. Forgiveness didn't excuse their actions, but it released me from the chains of resentment, allowing me to walk in freedom.

Prayer: Father, thank You for the forgiveness You've extended to me through Christ. Today, I ask You to help me forgive as You have forgiven. I release (insert name) into Your hands. I forgive them for (be specific) and choose not to hold bitterness or resentment against them. I declare in Jesus' name that I am free from the bondage of unforgiveness. Please soften my heart and help me bless them instead of curse. Draw them closer to You and transform their heart. Thank You for the peace that comes from letting go and trusting You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Action Step:

Spend time in prayer today, asking God to reveal anyone you need to forgive. Write down their name(s) and what you are forgiving them for. Declare your forgiveness out loud, trusting God to heal your heart and bring freedom to your life.

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Emotional Healing, Part 2 by Darla Harms



For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity but of power, love, and a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

When I was a little girl, I was often afraid of the dark. One night, I swore I heard a "monster" in the ceiling above my room. Terrified, I woke up my parents. My dad, trying to reassure me, told me there was nothing to fear. But then, he paused—he heard the noise, too. Something was moving around in the attic.

My dad grabbed a flashlight and went into the garage to investigate. After some time, he returned to my room and explained what he had found. A stray cat had somehow gotten into the attic and made noise as it tried to find its way out. I was so relieved! What I thought was a monster was just a frightened animal.

That night taught me an important lesson. So much of our fear is irrational, born from our imagination and not reality. Just as my dad shone a light into the attic to reveal the truth, our Heavenly Father shines the light of His Word to expose the irrational fears that grip our hearts.

As I've grown in faith, 2 Timothy 1:7 has been a cornerstone for finding freedom from fear. God has given us three incredible gifts to conquer fear:

- 1. Power: The same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in us! This resurrection power enables us to face fear boldly, knowing we have victory in Christ.
- 2. Love: Perfect love casts out fear. God's perfect love,

demonstrated through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, conquered sin and death. If He has overcome the ultimate fear, we can trust Him with our daily worries.

A Sound Mind: A sound mind allows us to think clearly, focusing on truth rather than lies. When we meditate on God's Word, we gain the clarity to recognize irrational fears and replace them with His promises.

Fear is a natural response, but it doesn't have to control us. When we focus on God's power, love, and truth, then fear loses its grip. The enemy wants us to live in timidity, but God calls us to live boldly, walking in the freedom He provides.

Prayer: Father, thank You for being the light who exposes the lies of fear. I declare in Jesus' name that fear has no hold on me. You are a God of power, love, and a sound mind, and You have given me those same gifts. I bind the spirit of fear and rebuke the enemy's plans to keep me in bondage. Instead, I walk in Your truth, confident in Your love and power. Strengthen me to meditate on Your Word and stand firm against fear. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Action Step:

Identify a fear you are facing. Write it down and pray over it, asking God to reveal whether it's irrational or based on truth. Meditate on *2 Timothy 1:7* this week, replacing fearful thoughts with God's promise of power, love, and a sound mind.

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Walking Together in Alignment By Darla Harms



Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. (2 Corinthians 6:14)

The image of a yoke is a powerful one. In farming, a yoke is used to harness two animals together to plow a field. For the work to be effective, the animals must be of similar strength and size "equally yoked." If a strong ox is yoked to a smaller or weaker animal, they will pull unevenly, creating frustration, inefficiency, and eventually damage to both the field and the animals. The harvest will never reach its full potential.

Paul uses this metaphor in 2 Corinthians 6:14 to remind believers of the importance of aligning their closest relationships—whether in marriage, business, or other significant partnerships—with others who share their faith and values. While we are called to love and engage with unbelievers, we must be cautious about forming "yoked" relationships that require deep unity and shared purpose.

A few years ago, I experienced the reality of this principle. I started a personal development company called *Small Town Girls Play Big* with someone I initially thought was the perfect partner. At first, everything seemed to click. But over time, I realized we were "unequally yoked." While she was talented and had a good heart, our beliefs and values were vastly different. These differences began to create tension and misalignment in the direction of the business.

Eventually, we parted ways as friends, but the experience taught me a valuable lesson. Unequally yoked relationships—whether in marriage, dating, business, or even friendships—can lead to pain, conflict, and missed opportunities for spiritu-

al and personal growth. God's Word isn't a set of restrictive rules; it's a loving guide to protect us from unnecessary heartache and ensure that our efforts produce a harvest that glorifies Him.

Being "equally yoked" doesn't mean perfection, but it does mean alignment in key areas such as faith, values, purpose, and direction. When you're yoked to someone who shares your commitment to Christ, you can move forward in unity, pulling together in strength and producing a bountiful harvest.

Prayer: Father, thank You for Your wisdom and guidance in all relationships. Help me to walk in discernment when forming partnerships, ensuring I am equally yoked with those who share my faith and values. Forgive me for the times I've ignored Your direction and aligned myself with relationships that led to conflict and pain. I release any lingering hurt or resentment from those experiences and choose to trust Your plan. Teach me to set boundaries that honor You and protect the work You've called me to do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Action Step:

Reflect on any current or past relationships where you may have been unequally yoked. Forgive any hurt caused and ask God for wisdom to move forward. Define what being "equally yoked" looks like according to Scripture, and set clear boundaries to ensure future partnerships align with God's purpose for your life.

<u>NOTES:</u>			

Healing in Relationships and the Wounds We Hide by Darla Harms

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

Life has a way of leaving scars—some visible, some hidden deep within. For years, I carried wounds that no one could see. In high school, I endured an assault that left me feeling broken and ashamed. I faced relentless body and academic shaming, and other moments of trauma cut deep into my spirit. I tried to cover those wounds, to pretend they weren't there, but the pain never went away.

I've learned that healing is impossible if we don't first bring our wounds to the light. Imagine being shot and refusing to go to the doctor. No matter how beautiful the bandage you place over the injury, the wound will fester, becoming infected and worse over time. Healing requires treatment, and treatment requires exposing the wound.

The same is true of our emotional and spiritual wounds. Psalm 147:3 reminds us that Christ is the healer of the brokenhearted, the One who binds up our wounds. But here's the key: He can't heal what we won't bring to Him. For years, I avoided the pain. I pushed it down, covered it with distractions, and told myself I was fine. But I wasn't fine. The infection of bitterness, fear, and self-doubt had taken root.

It wasn't until I surrendered my pain to Christ that I began to heal. I had to admit that I couldn't fix it myself. In prayer and through counseling, I began to bring my wounds into the light of God's truth. He gently cleaned the pain, reminded me of my worth, and restored my heart in ways I couldn't have imagined.

Jesus didn't come to give us a temporary fix or a pretty cover for our brokenness. He came to heal, to restore, to make us whole. But it takes courage to bring our pain to Him. It takes faith to trust Him with the parts of us that feel too messy, too painful, or too shameful to face.

Prayer: Father, thank You for being the Healer of my heart and the One who binds up my wounds. I surrender my pain and trauma to You today, trusting that You are faithful to heal. Cleanse the areas of my life I've been afraid to face and bring Your restoration and peace into my heart. Teach me to see myself through Your eyes—as loved, whole, and valuable. Strengthen me to walk in healing and to trust Your process, even when it feels difficult. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Action Step:

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Reflect on any wounds you've been avoiding. Write them down and bring them to God in prayer. Consider seeking counsel from a trusted pastor or therapist to walk with you through the healing process. Take time daily to meditate on *Psalm 147:3*, reminding yourself that God is the Healer of the brokenhearted and the One who binds up every wound.

<u>NOTES:</u>			

Money. It's a Matter of the Heart By Steve McKeown, Pastor Emeritus, Christian Life Church

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. – Jesus (Mathew 6:21)

Whether or not we admit it, we like rules. We want to know what is right and what is wrong. To be sure, we frequently don't obey the rules. A majority of drivers exceed the speed limit and most don't stop completely at every stop sign, but we still want traffic laws. We liked striped parking lots, "enter/exit" doors, and operating hours. Rules bring order.

The Old Testament is full of rules, starting with the most famous of all, the Ten Commandments; a nice, neat, quantifiable set of dos and don'ts. Beyond that, the Old Testament gives hundreds of additional rules on everything from dietary mandates to farming practices, to clothing fabrics, to what constitutes sexual immorality.

The problem with rules is that individuals can go right up to the edge of a boundary and feel good about themselves because they have "followed the rules."

When Jesus came, the religious elite criticized him for not following rules. He violated the sabbath by "working." He interacted with women speaking to women which was unlawful. He and his followers didn't engage in the ceremonial hand washing; some scholars maintain they literally didn't wash their hands before eating (apologies to the germaphobes reading this).

And therein lies the paradox: How could Jesus break rules and yet live a sinless life? The answer is amazingly simple: Godliness is not about rule following, it's a matter of the heart. Je-

sus threw a proverbial wrench in the works when he not only said someone could break rules and be holy but also said one could actually follow rules and still be in sin: "You have heard it said... 'You shall not murder' ... But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment."

Along with all of the other rules of the Old Testament were rules regarding money. The Old Testament rule of "bringing the whole tithe into the storehouse" out of Malachi is often cited. Like the commandments, it's a nice, neat, quantifiable rule: ten percent; not eight, not nine, not nine and a half ... ten percent belongs to God. Those inclined to be rule followers may be tempted to think they can pay the appropriate amount for items, not cheat anyone, return 10% of their income to the church, and sleep well at night.

Not so fast.

Remember what Jesus taught us through example: Godliness is not about rule following, it's a matter of the heart. And it is with money as well.

There are two primary revelations that will revolutionize the way we approach the subject of finances. They involve: 1) stewardship; 2) motive.

Stewardship: The error of allowing the Old Testament model of tithing to be our only guide is that we believe it's the 10% that "belongs to God." In actuality, 100% of everything we own is God's. We are merely temporary trustees. Everyone should start with returning the tithe (it was re-affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 23), but that is just the beginning. The way we become good stewards is not just returning the 10%, but examining how we manage the other 90%. Before we spend money on that next meal out, on the next item of clothing, or on our hobby ... we should pause just a minute to get the mind

of Christ. We should allow God-honoring principles to be our guide in our finances.

Motive: Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The BEST indicator of what an individual truly loves is how and where they spend their money. One needs only to see the checkbook, credit card statement, PayPal, Venmo accounts, etc. to know what a person truly values in life. Money is the great revealer.

A person can be fiscally wise in their expenditures and give 10% of their income to the church and still be in financial bondage. Freedom doesn't come from rule following; it comes from realizing God owns it all and that we are temporary trustees. Freedom comes from devoting our hearts and lives to God and then realizing our spending habits are among the best metrics to demonstrate that devotion. Ultimate freedom comes from surrendering everything to Christ ... including finances.

There is nothing wrong with having money; there is everything wrong with money having us. Money is neither a blessing nor a curse in and of itself. It is our understanding of Godly stewardship and motive that makes the difference.

Money is a matter of the heart.

Prayer: Father, you own everything and you have been gracious enough to entrust me with finances and possessions. By your Holy Spirit, please guide and direct me to be diligent about returning a tithe to you and being a good steward of the other 90%. Let me love you fully and not love the things of the world. Help me to honor you with all I am and all I have. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Action Step: Over the next 24 hours, pause before every ex-

penditure. Ask yourself if God is honored by that purchase. After the 24 is up, be more mindful about how and why you spend the money God has entrusted to you.

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Financial Healing Part 2 By Mike Dollins



May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10)

Amy and I were married 33 years ago. While that first year was vivid, admittedly I would like to forget parts of it. We were budgeted to the very penny. It rolled around on a Saturday and I realized the car had no gas. We had no money and payday was not until early the next week. On top of that, church was the next day and it was a 20 mile drive. I remember saying "Lord, I believe you want us in church tomorrow, but we're broke and cannot go, so you are going to have to figure something out." Later in the day, it came to me that just a few weeks earlier, my grandmother told me to take all those glass refillable Pepsi bottles, because she was not going to redeem them. Remember those? The ones where you get 10 cents back for each bottle. So I went to the closet and grabbed them, all still in the cardboard carrying case, and walked to the local IGA store to redeem them. I think it might have taken me a couple of trips. It was a long walk carrying them all. I redeemed them, walked back home, and filled the car with enough gas to get us to church. We have rarely shared that story. Some find it inspiring, us, not so much at the time. (smile)

In the Lord's prayer, part of Jesus' prayer was "on earth as it is in Heaven" – Mattew 6:10. That prayer is not a prayer of hope someday, but for now. Jesus is basically saying we should be praying for the resources in heaven to invade our realm and reality NOW. What are the resources of heaven? I believe volumes could be written about that phrase alone. For now, I am addressing poverty and lack. I have watched poverty daily in

my primary area of influence in the public. I have observed it and the effects it has on people. I have watched it destroy homes, bring sickness, and break families apart. It is demonic to its core. Even worse, that same spirit has invaded the church so much that poverty and barely getting by seem to be a sign of humility. Sometimes it is also veiled in the saying, "God will meet your needs, not your wants."

We are redeemed and God's children. God is looking for people not just to be blessed in their own lives, but to be a channel or pipeline of heaven's resources to fallen humanity. He is looking to fill His people with giftings to invade their homes, businesses, schools, and places of work.

Fast forward from 33 years to now. I have found myself behind people in the checkout line at the grocery store and then it happens, the person in front does not have enough money so they begin putting things back. I am given the opportunity to tell the cashier and the person to just add their items to my bill. I have had strangers turn around and give me a big hug in the store while others ran out to the car to tell their husband some guy in there paid for our food. Sometimes I will tell them what God could do in their life, while at other times, I just smile. I believe God wants us as a channel to make the world a little bit better. I find great joy in knowing we will never cross paths again and no one else knows about this encounter other than us and God. Wherever I go in public, I remind myself that I carry the Kingdom of God and all of heaven's resources with me wherever I go. I intend to be a channel for causing earth to be as it is in heaven.

Prayer: Father, today we pray together the same prayers I pray every morning. Here am I Lord, send me. (Is 6:8), on earth as it is in heaven wherever I go (Matt 6:10), and You will bless whatever I touch today (Deut. 28:8) in Jesus' name, Amen.

used as a blessing to others around you. **NOTES:**-

Action step: I would challenge you to let God do a work in you where you not only receive abundance for yourself but to be

Abide in Me By Tammy Trusty



Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. (John 15:4)

So you must remain in life-union with me, for I remain in life-union with you. For as a branch severed from the vine will not bear fruit, so your life will be fruitless unless you live your life intimately joined to mine. 6 As you live in union with me as your source, fruitfulness will stream from within you—but when you live separated from me you are powerless. (John 15:4, 6 TPT)

Jesus said, "Remain in me." Are we remaining and abiding in Him? Or do we abide in Him only when we need Him? To walk in freedom, we have to remain in constant connection with God. If we go back to our old ways, we will not be free! To remain free, we need to abide in God. Abide means to remain, to tarry, not to depart, to continue to be present, and to be held or kept continually. (Strong's Concordance) If Jesus said to abide in me, then we should continually depend on and trust Him. We should cling to Him at all times. As we are aware of His presence, His grace will help us maintain freedom! He is our victory!

The Passion Translation says we should live in union with Jesus as our source. As we dwell in Him, we are empowered and strengthened. As we remain in Him, He promises to remain in us! We must remain in Christ not separated nor apart but with Him always! He is always with us!

During treatments for breast cancer, I found myself clinging to

Jesus like never before. I listened to worship music each time I went to the doctor, when I had surgery, and when I had treatments. It calmed me and brought me peace. Each day I had radiation, I wrote down a different scripture on a notecard. I read it, meditated on it, and prayed as my husband drove me there and even during the treatments. I kept the notecard in my back pocket so the Word was near me. It produced peace and encouraged me. I felt God's presence with me! I was trusting Him and abiding in Him during a challenging time but we should abide in Him every day!

Trust God, abide, dwell, lean on Him, and cling to Him. Our hope is in Jesus! Our victory is in Jesus! Why would you cling to anyone else or anything else? Walk free by abiding in our power source which is Jesus! He is our victory.

Prayer: Father God, I love You and want to abide in You always. Increase my faith. I need You so I can walk in freedom. Help me to remain in You. May I be filled with the Holy Spirit which empowers me. I need Your strength, Your power, and Your grace each day. I want to cling to You and dwell with You always. I love You, Lord. I pray in Jesus' Mighty name. The name above every name. The Lord of Lords and King of Kings! Amen.

Action Step: Pray you will abide, dwell, lean on, remain, and cling to Christ daily. Pursue Him more passionately. Ask God to help you.

<u>NOTES:</u>			

Beware of the Enemy by Tammy Trusty



The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. (John 10:10)

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

Believers in Christ have an enemy. He can't be seen but he sets traps and he schemes against us. He sends fiery darts against us. (Eph. 6:16) Don't be deceived by complacency, deception, lethargy, rebellion, materialism, busyness, pride, etc. Be aware of the enemy. Don't let him deceive you but false teachings or things not of God. When you sin or turn away from God it gives the devil an opening so he will come against you. Shut every door by turning from sin and asking God for discernment to see the ploys of the enemy.

Walking in the Spirit, having your armor on, praying, quoting scripture, worshiping, praising, praying in the Spirit, and reading the Word are valuable tools to combat the enemy. When you resist the devil, he will flee.

For me, the enemy tries to bring fear and worry. When I hear about something like one of the grandkids is hurt, I have to trust God in that situation and not succumb to the trap of fear and worry. If I give in to it, then I'll toss and turn all night. Worry and fear bring stress but God brings us His peace. His peace passes all understanding. As soon as fear or worry tries to come against me, I stop it. I say stop and I rebuke it. I declare I will not fear or worry. God has not given me a spirit of fear but a spirit of love, spirit of power, and a sound mind. (2 Timothy

1:7). I remember to do this by saying the <u>second</u> the enemy tries his tactics, "I quote <u>2</u> Timothy 1:7!"

Prayer: Father God, help me stay aware of the tricks, schemes, and traps of the enemy. I want to be alert at all times. No weapon formed against me will prosper. (Isaiah 54:17) I dwell in the secret place of the Most High under the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91:1) Jesus is my victory. Give me directions to know what to do and what not to do. Help me know what to say and when to be quiet. Help me turn from every trap like fear, unbelief, worry, stress, anger, unforgiveness, etc. I declare Jesus is my victory! He defeated the enemy! Praise You, Lord. I pray in Jesus' victorious name. Amen.

Action Step: Read, meditate on, and pray about 2 Timothy 1:7 in the Amplified Classic edition.

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (of cowardice, of craven and cringing and fawning fear), but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control."

Fear can produce stress, worry, anxiety, and unbelief. Ask God to help you in any area that affects you so you can remain free from the schemes of the enemy.

<u>NOTES:</u>		
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Abundant Life/Full of the Holy Spirit! By Tammy Trusty

But I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect—life in its fullness until you overflow! (John 10:10 TPT)

When we enter into a relationship with God by accepting Jesus as our Savior, we give up a lot. We give up having our way, our selfishness, pride, self-reliance, rebellion, worldliness, and sin. All these negative things aren't part of the fruit of the Spirit.

The rewards are great when we live for God. It includes salvation, amazing grace, unconditional love, mercy, purpose, and His strength and power. Salvation is not just a ticket to Heaven. God wants us to open all the presents He's given us through salvation. We receive wholeness, healing, and a relationship with God. He tells us to walk in the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22-23) Plus, we have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He gives us so much more like our talents. He wants us to use them for His glory.

When I became filled with the Holy Spirit, I got a hunger for the Word and the things of God like never before. I had read the Bible many times but it had never spoken to me. I couldn't remember it. I didn't know about God. I barely prayed. After being filled God spoke to me through His Word all the time. I learned so much and desired to read and study the Bible because it always ministered to me. I learned about God and His Word. I learned and grew in faith because I studied the Bible, went to Bible study, went to church, and prayed with other ladies. The Word guided me, gave me wisdom, helped me make the right choices in life, and taught me how much God loves me! Now that is abundant life! To have a relationship with God our Father is our ultimate gift but to be filled with

the Holy Spirit empowers us to walk with God and do His will!

When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we put Him first place in our lives and hearts. Then He gives us abundant life! We are blessed! If you need power, strength, or a hunger for the Word, ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit. It is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead! (Romans 8:11).

Prayer: Father God, fill us with your Spirit so we can hunger and thirst for more of You. We want to receive all You have for us. We want to walk in freedom. We want abundant life here on Earth. Help us to have the fruit of the Spirit and abundant life receiving all You have for us. We want to know You more. Help us, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Action Step: Read these scriptures then ask God to fill you with His Spirit even if you've asked before, ask again.

"But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you." (John 14:26)

"I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Matthew 3:11)

"So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." (Luke 11:13)

"And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven." (Luke 24:49)

Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. (John 20:21-22)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Act 1:8)

Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:17)

Then I thought of the Lord's words when he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' (Acts 11:16)

As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:5-6)

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A Time for Everything By Miquelie Davis



For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.

A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

We've all heard the old saying, "This too shall pass."

When I was younger, I used to tell my brother and sister something along the lines of that saying all the time, "It's just a phase." They would hate that! They would roll their eyes and repeatedly say that skateboarding, "wasn't a phase". Dyed black hair hanging in their eyes, "wasn't a phase". This or that boyfriend/girlfriend, "wasn't a phase".

Then guess what? It inevitably ended up being just that.

However, just because it's a short phase in life doesn't discredit what we go through.

I've gone through phases in my life that were good, bad, and morally neutral, but I *needed* to go through them to get to where I am now. And God was God through it all! Freedom for

me is knowing that God is still God, in good times and bad.

Freedom is knowing that I can come to Jesus when it's a time to grieve AND a time to dance. Freedom is knowing the Holy Spirit is with me when it's time to be quiet AND a time to speak. Jeremiah 29:11 tells me that God has good plans for His children and I will hold tight to that promise even when life gets tough.

The Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes is one of those books that I never understood until I was older. One day in my early 20s, I began thinking about how Christian communities in third -world countries could still be so joyful and so spirit-filled with so much hardship in their lives. It was then that the Holy Spirit guided me back to the book of Ecclesiastes which basically says that everything in this world is meaningless.

Meaningless?! What? That didn't make any sense to me. But what the author, (Solomon) was trying to say is "no God = no meaning" because God is everything. The beginning and the end. Life and death. The whole purpose for existing is to love God and love His people. And there is SUCH freedom in that. You don't need to go chasing after things that are just temporary phases because as Matthew 6:26-27 tells us, "Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?"

Prayer: I pray that you enjoy the freedom of knowing that God will always look after you. The freedom of knowing that Jesus died for you knowing the very number of hairs on your head. The freedom of knowing the Holy Spirit is always with us to comfort us at any time or phase. Amen.

Action Step: I encourage you to examine this phase of your life and pray for God to point out anything that is not God-serving.

NOTES:	