



ALFRED STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

SEEK 2020

YOUTH DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

**MAR
1-31**

**“BUT IF FROM THERE YOU
SEEK THE LORD YOUR
GOD, YOU WILL FIND HIM
IF YOU SEEK HIM WITH ALL
YOUR HEART AND WITH
ALL YOUR SOUL.”**

- DEUTERONOMY 4:29

DEAR YOUTH OF ALFRED STREET BAPTIST CHURCH,

I cannot express just how excited we are that you have decided to join this 31-day journey of praying and fasting. This devotional was created specifically for you! Your fellow youth and Children and Youth Ministry volunteers have contributed to this book for your spiritual growth! We are blessed as a church to have such dedicated volunteers and willing participants to share their voices.



You may be nervous to start this journey but you can never be too young to start these two important disciplines that Jesus encourages us to practice all throughout scripture. It will take your whole mind and your whole heart and your whole strength to do this journey from beginning to end. Giving up certain foods, social media or television may seem simple at first but soon and very soon, you might start second-guessing your ability to make it to the end. When that happens, I want you to remember that the goal is not to focus on what you cannot do. The goal is to focus on what you get to do. When you are spending less time, less thought and less energy on other things, you can begin to focus your time, your thoughts and your energy on building your relationship with God. You might be thinking, “why do I have to stop eating desserts in order to build a relationship with God?” Well, here’s what you need to know: when you can say no to what you want, in order to have WHO you need, you have strengthened yourself for the best life you can have—a life where you choose God before everything!

This month, try to pray to God like God is your best friend and try to listen to what God says. This month, try to love your family and friends better. This month, try to love yourself better. This month, be open to the experience of fasting and praying. It is a practice that will bless you for the rest of your life. Why not start today? We can’t wait to hear how you experience God by Day 31! Your ASBC family loves you and supports you! You can do this!

In Christ’s Love,

Barbara Florvil

Min. Barbara Florvil
Assistant to the Pastor for Youth

FAST INSTRUCTIONS

FAST OPTIONS

Please choose at least one option from each category as your action items for the duration of the fast.

Physical

Physical Option 1
Daniel Fast

Physical Option 2
No Food 6AM-6PM

Physical Option 3
Eliminate Sweets & caffeine

Social

Social Option 1
Eliminate Social Media

Social Option 2
Eliminate Television and Movies

Social Option 3
Total of 1 Hour of
Technology a day

Financial

Financial Option 1
Eliminate daily routine
purchases (coffee, breakfast,
newspaper, etc.)

Financial Option 2
Eliminate non-essential
personal items

Financial Option 3
Eliminate fast food
purchases

PRAYER TIME GOALS

Week	Date	Prayer Time Goal (uninterrupted)
Week 1	March 1-7	Pray for 5 minutes a day
Week 2	March 8-14	Pray for 10 minutes a day
Week 3	March 15-21	Pray for 15 minutes a day
Week 4	March 22-28	Pray for 20 minutes a day
Week 5	March 29-31	Pray for 25 minutes a day

DAILY THEMES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Gifts Repurpose	2 Gratitude Reflect	3 Pride Repent MARCH GLADNESS	4 Authenticity Realign	5 Faith Restore	6 Integrity Redeen	7 Kindness Refresh
8 Teamwork Reunite	9 Excellence Reenvision	10 Trust Repair MARCH GLADNESS	11 Commitment Reestablish	12 Forgiveness Reconcile	13 Joy Rejoice	14 Support Reinvest
15 Peace Reclaim	16 Aspiration Refocus	17 Imagination Reimagine MARCH GLADNESS	18 Community Reengage	19 Strength Rejuvenate	20 Love Rekindle	21 Grace Reorient
22 Creativity Recreate	23 Resilience Reignite	24 Determination Renew MARCH GLADNESS	25 Legacy Remember	26 Recovery Recover	27 Fellowship Revive	28 Confidence Rebuild
29 Perseverance Reassure	30 Inclusion Reconsider	31 Contentment Rediscover MARCH GLADNESS				

WHAT IS FASTING?

As you prepare to embark on Seek 2020, you may be shocked to find out that scripture does not require Christians to fast. You might ask yourself, if scripture doesn't require us to fast then why should we? While scripture does not require Christians to fast, scripture does reveal the importance of fasting. In the Old Testament, fasts were frequently called forth by leaders of a congregation during critical and despairing times (Jeremiah 26:9, Joel 1:14, Daniel 1:8). In the New Testament, Jesus' earthly ministry is preceded by 40 days of prayer and fasting (Matthew 4). Likewise, in the early church, Christians would couple prayer and fasting as a means to hear from God, especially before making important decisions (Acts 13:2; 14:23). Fasting is an opportunity for Christians to practice the fruit of self-discipline, by abstaining from personal pleasure and fixing their entire attention on God. Although many people will choose to abstain from food during their fast, food is not the only means of fasting. Believers can choose to abstain from anything that can potentially serve as a distraction in their pursuit of seeking God.

HOW TO FAST?

Before embarking on a fast, participants should prepare themselves mentally, physically, and spiritually. Keep in mind that fasting is not a form of dieting, and all participants should consult their primary care physicians before making any changes to their diet. We also suggest preparing your meals in advance, in order to maximize and focus your time and energy. Remember, the objective of fasting is not only to eliminate things from your daily routine, but also to replace

them with prayer. If you usually eat breakfast at a certain time of the day, spend that time in prayer instead. If you normally watch TV when you get home from work, consider replacing that activity with reading the word of God. As you fast, it is important to be consistent. However, if you break your fast by accident or even miss a few days, don't beat yourself up or give up. Rather, get right back to your fasting objectives. Remember, the objective isn't to be perfect, the objective is to be transformed.

WHAT IS THE DANIEL FAST?

The Daniel Fast is a spiritual fast based on two biblical accounts of the Prophet Daniel (Daniel 1:15-16, Daniel 10:2-3). In the first biblical account, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, underwent a 10-day "fast" in order not to defile themselves with the King's choice meats that went against their dietary restrictions. Instead, they ate vegetables and drank water. At the end of the 10 days, they looked healthier and more fit than the other men who ate from the King's choice foods. In the second biblical account, the Prophet Daniel underwent 21 days of fasting in order to receive an interpretation for a vision he received. Daniel refrained from eating meat and drinking wine. As a result, at the conclusion of his 21 days of fasting, he received a message from an angel that interested his vision. In both biblical accounts, Daniel undergoes a fast in order to hear and remain true to his God. The purpose of the Daniel Fast is not to mimic Daniel, but rather to seek and focus on God. In reality, today's food industry is much different from that of Daniel's time. However, changing our habits and leaving our comfort foods and zones, we allow ourselves to place our entire attention and dependency on God.

FOODS TO EAT ON THE DANIEL FAST

- All fruit – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- All vegetables – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- All whole grains – amaranth, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat.
- All nuts & seeds – almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk. Nut butters are also included.
- All legumes – canned or dried; black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas.
- All quality oils – avocado, coconut, grapeseed, olive, peanut, sesame, and walnut.
- Beverages – distilled water, filtered water, spring water, fresh fruit or vegetable juices.
- Other – unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk; herbs, spices, salt, pepper, unsweetened coconut flakes, seasonings, Bragg’s Liquid Aminos, soy products, and tofu.

FOODS TO AVOID ON THE DANIEL FAST

- All meat & animal products – bacon, beef, buffalo, eggs, fish, lamb, poultry, and pork.
- All dairy products – butter, cheese, cream, milk, and yogurt.
- All sweeteners – agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, brown rice syrup, cane juice, honey, molasses, raw sugar, syrups, and sugar.
- All leavened bread & yeast – baked goods and Ezekiel bread (if it contains yeast and honey).
- All refined & processed food products – artificial flavorings, chemicals, food additives, preservatives, white flour, and white rice.
- All deep-fried foods – corn chips, French fries, and potato chips.
- All solid fats – lard, margarine, and shortening.
- Beverages – alcohol, carbonated drinks, coffee, energy drinks, herbal tea, and tea.

– by Kristen Feola, “Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast”

DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

Which version of the fast are you participating in? Write out each commitment!

Physical:

Social:

Financial:

What steps will you take to assist you in meeting your goals? Complete as needed.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

What are you believing God for during Seek 2020? Complete as needed.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

SEEK 2020 DEVOTIONS

DAY 1: GIFTS

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

– 1 Corinthians 2:9

HE WILL FINISH WHAT HE STARTED!

Because things may look impossible for us, we have to trust God to do what only He can do—the impossible. Often, young people are told what they are missing, ways they can improve, areas they can grow in order to eventually do “adulting” well. But God is calling youth to walk boldly in what He has prepared for their future. Yes, right now, you may need to work on humility, read your Bible more, or practice self-control. But, know this—as you work on you, God is finishing the work HE started in you. Everyone doesn’t have to see it but you must BELIEVE it.

How should you think when you BELIEVE that God is going to do a good work in you?

- Believe: All things are possible. The Bible tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). It also tells us that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). Learn to see your life through a lens of faith. Can you see it? I can! You’re the next.
- Believe: You can get past your fears. When words of discouragement, doubt, and/or defeat enter your mind. Talk to yourself. Say, “I will be all that God said I will be!” My faith is stronger and more powerful than anything I fear.
- Believe that God will finish what He started. Believe that God is working on you now and He will continue His work in you. See yourself as the owner of a successful business, getting into your dream college, or winning that track meet.

Remember this is a marathon—and God is on your team. Y’all gon win!

Dr. Anjerrika Bean
Higher Ground Volunteer

DAY 2: GRATITUDE

“The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!” Saul finally consented. “All right, go ahead,” he said. “And may the LORD be with you!”

– 1 Samuel 17:37

“I BRAG DIFFERENTLY”

When it came to manners, my parents did not play! We were forbidden to call an adult by their first name, we had to answer the phone with “Good Afternoon,” and if you got socks for Christmas, you’d better say thank you like it’s an iPhone. It was annoying, but our parents were teaching us that gratitude applies to everything. Gratitude is recognizing God’s gifts and knowing God doesn’t have to give them in the first place.

David was the teased brother, a teenage shepherd, and do-boy whose lowly job was to bring snacks to the battlefield. You ever wish God gave you something different? A different school, family, body, life? David didn’t. David beat Goliath being grateful for who he was and what he had. When we’re grateful, we don’t have to press God for anything else because what God gave us is already enough. David wasn’t intimidated by Goliath because after you fight a lion AND a bear and you win, you brag differently. You’ll take L’s from life’s Goliaths if you don’t first learn from the lion and bear. Gratefulness is not just thanking God for the easy stuff, but it’s appreciating God for the battles you’ve won before so you can brag differently now. The LORD who rescued you from drama, bullies, tests, teachers, and everything else is the God who has your back today, so brag differently!

Jessica Anderson
Higher Ground Volunteer

DAY 3: PRIDE

‘But afterward, David was stricken to the heart because he had numbered the people. David said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, I pray you, take away the guilt of your servant; for I have done very foolishly.”‘

– 2 Samuel 24:10

PRIDEFUL SERVICE MEMBER

Over the years of serving in the military you can consequentially achieve a variety of ranks within the Enlisted and Warrant Officer grades very rapidly, such as I did. Between the chatter and external influences around you from other service members, I have learned that pride can easily set in due to your “promoted status.” Over time, you may even begin to entertain the thought that you could never be or do wrong. Pride may begin to set in without you even realizing it. An example of this is when you are asked to provide an assessment or solution for an equipment or personnel problem at work. Most people would seek a second opinion from another colleague or friend, but instead you don’t! Why? Because at this point you think you know it all. It’s not until your solution or assessment to the problem was proved to be wrong, and it adversely effects the organization, will you find yourself humbled and in need of someone else’s assistance. We should always remember that God didn’t design us to be an island and there are always people within your spiritual circle at home, church or work who can provide a different view of things; all you have to do is ask.

2 Samuel 24:10 teaches us that David’s conscience began to bother him because he was counting to see how large his power had grown. In hindsight, David was able to see how pride had blinded him into thinking he was responsible for the kingdom’s prosperity. It’s easy to fall into this way of thinking when we count our money and attribute its excess to our own accomplishments. Be careful to stop pride from growing, since excess is a result of God’s graciousness.

Linc McCoy
Higher Ground Volunteer

DAY 4: AUTHENTICITY

“And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not: for God took him.”

– Genesis 5:21-24

BE AUTHENTIC

After dressing in our “Sunday Best,” a mirror is one of the first things we seek. In doing this, are there questions we have in mind that a mirror can answer? Although appearance is somewhat important and has its place in our lives, we are judged more by our authentic selves.

God needs no mirror to show us a reflection of ourselves. God knows what we can be. He does it by simply refocusing our attention on what he wants us to see. Maybe he just wants us to see that grace and mercy along with “His Blessings” are to be shared. Maybe he wants us to be more like Him. God is authentic, because there is no other like the Lord! Therefore, the next time we look in a mirror, let us pray our heart has grown, that our faith is truly what others see!

Enoch did such an exceptional job as he walked with God, showing what it means to be a reflection of God, that he ascended to heaven without dying first. The life of the prophet Enoch shows the power of extending grace and mercy to others, along with the blessings that it brings. To me, this is truly inspiring and an encouragement to follow disciples that walk with the Lord.

Charles D. May
Tutorial Ministry President

DAY 5: FAITH

“O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.”

– Psalms 31:23

A NOUN OR A VERB?

As a little girl growing up in a Christian-filled household, I heard the word faith used a lot. I recall a sermon where the pastor talked about the importance of “having faith.” It was at that time that I began to wonder if faith was a thing or an action. I turned to the Bible to seek clarity. I learned that God is eternally faithful to us and we know this by His actions. In fact, he demonstrates it throughout the Bible and even today in countless ways. (John 3:16 KJV) He is always there to aid, guide and protect us. So, if God is faithful to us, then we should be faithful to Him. God has demonstrated being faithful to us through his actions; likewise, faith must require action in return. This describes faith as a verb.

In Hebrews 11:1 (KJV), “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” It describes faith as a noun. Daniel was thrown in the lion’s den for refusing to stop praying to God. He remained faithful and God protected him. Through his faith he hoped to be saved, and the evidence of things not seen was that the lion did not harm Daniel. (Daniel 6:23 KJV) Therefore, we must have faith in Him to see us through, even in ways we may not understand.

Now, I understand that faith can be applied to our lives as a noun and a verb.

Rhonda Heard Dickens
CrossOver Core Team Leader

DAY 6: INTEGRITY

“For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.”

– 2 Corinthians 8:21

GOT INTEGRITY?

We all are taught as children to be honest. Our parents tell us, our teachers tell us, and at church we learn from Sunday school teachers and the pastor that being honest and having integrity are important. Having integrity is more than just telling the truth when you get in trouble at home or school. It is something that should be within us all the time. Having integrity is a part of who you are as a person, and it's evident to people when they see you, and when they don't. For example, when your name comes up in conversation with others, it should be known that you carry yourself well and as a person who can be relied upon. Also, when you are talking about someone to another person, it shouldn't be in a bad light. Avoid gossiping, and if you are speaking about another person, it should be in the best possible way.

It's easy to portray yourself as an honest and upstanding person when you're in front of others, especially people in authority, like your parents or other adults at school and elsewhere, but real integrity is how you behave and think when no one is around. We have to remember that even when we are alone, the decisions we make reflect who we really are as a person, and that even though no one can see us, Jesus always can. He is always with us, so displaying integrity at all times is important. It's important to maintain our good character, whether or not other people are around to see us. That is what having true integrity is.

Sean Jackson
Higher Ground Teen

DAY 7: KINDNESS

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

– Ephesians 4:32

BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER

We live in a world where there are so many haters and thus we seem divided from each other and from doing what is right in the sight of God. This is also true in our schools and in many communities where violence is taking place on a daily basis. I believe social media is a major culprit for negativity, which plays out in how we treat others.

Sometimes it is difficult to be kind when others talk about you behind your back, do not like you, and may be jealous of you for whatever reason. I believe God wants us to be imitators of Him. We are to show love to others as Christ loved us and gave His life for our sins. When we are kind to others, we are able to let go of our hate, anger and malicious words. As Christians, we must learn how to have a change of heart—not just an external change, a change from within the heart to love everyone. When we are kind to others, we have less time to focus on self and our own problems. What about a warm smile, being courteous, and encouraging words?

It was Abu Akr who said, “If you expect the blessings of God, be kind to His people.” When we are kind to ourselves, it will be easier to be kind to others.

Zachary J. Gunn
Higher Ground Teen

DAY 8: TEAMWORK

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

– Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

TEAMWORK, TEAMWORK, TEAMWORK

There are so many trials and tribulations that we have to go through in life, in some cases they lead us in the opposite direction of the Lord. That is why teamwork is such a key component of life, because when you get knocked down or held back, you will have fellow Christians to put you back on track. By collaborating with people who share your values and desires, everyone is able to accomplish more. For some, teamwork can just involve one other person or a group of people. Everyone needs someone at some time. Put it this way: if you are ever in a situation where you are unable to accomplish a task on your own, you are going to need some type of support system to push you through it. So, when you find yourself off track with the Lord, you will have people to support you and guide you back into the right direction.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 teaches us that by having someone to fall back on, it will make not only your connection with God stronger, but will make sure you achieve salvation with the Lord. The journey of one's Christian faith will not be easy and will have its obstacles, but it is not only more bearable, but also a necessity to have someone embark on that journey with you. By having someone to fall back on, you will certainly find the journey more enjoyable and beneficial. Continued blessings to you.

Sydney Lowe
Higher Ground Teen

DAY 9: EXCELLENCE

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

– Colossians 3:17

A QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE

Growing up, I was always a great student. I usually made all As with the exception of a B here and there. I did my homework without being asked to, I sometimes traded my recess to stay inside and read a book, and I always finished my exams with time to spare. While my grades were terrific, one thing I couldn't quite get together was my “talkativeness.” Every report card would read the same, “Jummy excels, but she needs to work on her behavior, she talks too much.”

I didn't understand why my behavior mattered so much if my grades were great. But as an adult, it all began to click. My teachers wanted me to be excellent all around—both academically and behaviorally, because I was setting an example for other students. My grades mattered less, if my behavior was mediocre. In Colossians 3:17, God reminds us that He wants the same—that in everything we do and say, we do it excellently. We must excel in Christian character through our acts, our giving, and our love so that we may be the best testimony for the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, I know that you have set me as the light of the world and a city set on a hill. Please guide me as I quest for excellence during this fast. I strive to walk excellently in my words and acts, and to be the best version of myself with what I have to Your glory.

Jummy Obayanju
Higher Ground Volunteer

DAY 10: TRUST

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”

– Proverbs 3:5–6

T.R.U.S.T.

Can I trust God to help me on my math test? Yes.

Is God with me during my track meet? Yes.

Will God keep my dad safe while he is deployed overseas? Yes.

Can God help me choose the right decision to make while I’m out with friends? Yes.

Proverbs 3:5–6 is a very popular scripture that most of us have heard and probably know by heart. But what is God really saying to us when He says to “Trust in the Lord?” We can start by realizing that God did not ask us or give us a choice in the matter. He gave us a command and better yet, a plea demanding our hearts. He wants us to give over every aspect of our lives to Him and allow Him to show us the way as we journey through life.

Trusting in the Lord involves two things: Believing that God will keep God’s Word and actively placing your life in God’s protection. God is concerned about everything that goes on with us rather big or small, good or bad. We have to be mindful to always acknowledge God and ask God for guidance before we do anything. We must trust that God has a perfect plan for our life even if we don’t always understand or agree with the outcome to some situations. He will never steer us wrong, and for this we give Him thanks.

Here is a small saying using the letters in TRUST to help us remember how to trust God...

Truly giving everything over to God.

Recognizing that we may not have all of the Understanding we want but that we have a Savior who supplies all of our needs and who will reveal it all in time.

Eboni Jones
CrossOver/Teen Dance Ministry Leader

DAY 11: COMMITMENT

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up”

– Galatians 6:9

TOO LEGIT TO QUIT

In today’s society, staying busy and active has become the way of life. We sign up for workout classes, attend social events and volunteer to support with efforts in our communities. We make all these commitments, but then we may become overwhelmed and forget the reason why we started a project, joined a class or chose to volunteer to support our community. We slowly but surely end up falling off or falling out of the commitment we made. As Christians, we are called to service and most importantly, to make a commitment to God.

Galatians 6:9 reminds us that while the work we endeavor upon may be difficult, we must remain committed, because the true glory resides in the great harvest we reap in our relationship with Christ. So when you feel overwhelmed, take a step back and remind yourself of the importance of your efforts to serve and build in God’s kingdom. Stay the course, commit and be too legit to quit!

Alicia Prince
Higher Ground Core Team Leader

DAY 12: FORGIVENESS

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

– Colossians 3:13

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT!

There are many difficult things one must face in life, like rejection, stress, and sadness. The Lord throws trials our way so that we become stronger and get closer to Him, and He often does these things through those around us. It is trying enough simply to endure pain caused by those around us, so it is often daunting to imagine moving past slights against us and forgiving those who have hurt us. Our primary instinct to taking damage to our beings is to distance ourselves from that which hurt us, physically and emotionally. However, it is made clear in God’s word that he wants us to forgive our brothers and sisters; Colossians 3:13 says that we should be loving with our fellow man, “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.” I’ve always had to wonder, why is it that God asks us to just get over the wrongs done to us?

What I’ve learned from experience is that God does not ask us to forgive simply because “it is the right thing to do.” He does this because it is truly the best thing for us; forgiveness is justice. God knows that we as human beings are healthier when we resolve our emotional conflicts, and our relationships grow stronger when we give others involved the rightful opportunity to see that pain resolved as well. We cannot truly love each other as Christians if we cannot let go of betrayal, anger, and jealousy in order to forgive our brothers and sisters.

Kayla MacCannon
Higher Ground Teen

DAY 13: JOY

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

– Romans 15:13

“WHEN LACKING JOY”

The most joyous occasion in my life was the day I gave birth to my only child. After the agony of hours of labor pain, I received this awesome and incredible gift from God, a healthy and beautiful baby boy. After my beloved son Malachi was delivered, the doctor placed him on my abdomen. Experiencing the physical warmth of this tiny being, the innate connection with him, profound peace, and gratefulness, combined with the mighty presence of God brought me to uncontrollable tears of joy.

Yet, that joy does not compare to the joy I (we) have in Christ Jesus. God is joy, and as his children, we are to have joy. Our God has created us for more than moments of joy. Personally, I believe joy is a “state of mind.” I believe the blueprint for joy is inclusive of several things we must have simultaneously. This includes: a deep love of Christ; a pure heart; an intentional intimate and growing relationship with the Holy Spirit; gratefulness to God for all he has done and will do in the future; abiding confidence that all is well no matter what; and unshaken faith and hope in Christ.

When our joy falters, as it can, it is a warning sign for self-examination. I have learned that whenever I lack joy, primarily I can trace it to some form of ungratefulness often spun by “forgetfulness”—signaling it is time for an attitude adjustment. We can start by meditating on who God is, the underserved grace he continues to give us. When I acknowledge God’s hand has been in every facet of my life, both the good and the bad, how my God has protected and blessed me and my family, from being an at-risk fetus in my mother’s womb to a healthy woman after God’s heart—when I “remember” some of those things, how can I not experience His joy and praise Him? Sometimes we just need to remember. Glory be to God for He is good in all things! May you revive your joy when need be.

Deacon Steronica Mattocks
Parents Association Leader

DAY 14: SUPPORT

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

- James 2:26

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

- Psalms 46:1

LEAN BUT DON'T LAY

From planning my senior year homecoming while applying to colleges to applying for scholarships to taking college courses, senior year's responsibilities overwhelmed me and my grades began to pay the price. I knew I could not carry out all of these tasks to the best of my ability alone—I needed some support. Often, we pile too much onto our plates before we realize it is too much for just one person. Being raised in a church, I thought I knew exactly what to do when things started going downhill—put it all on God! Right? Wrong! I learned very quickly prayer without work is dead. I was trying to lay my problems on the Lord instead of leaning on the Lord for support.

In this modern reality of instantaneous satisfaction, we often get caught up in getting what we want when we want it; then we try to come to the Lord with the same mentality. God is our helper—we can lean on him for support. However, if we try to lay all of our problems on Him and walk away, we might find ourselves disappointed with the outcome.

Brynna Boyd
Higher Ground Teen

DAY 15: PEACE

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”

– Philippians 4:6–7

I DON'T UNDERSTAND

On Sunday, January 26, 2020, when I got home from church, I had every intention of taking a quick nap, but plans changed. I felt like I got the breath knocked out of me when I read the headline news “Kobe Bryant Dies at 41 In Helicopter Crash.” Things only got worse when it was announced that his 13-year-old daughter was also killed in the crash along with seven other people. Like most, I couldn't understand why this was happening. The tragedy of it was just heartbreaking and it wasn't sitting well with me. As I began to pray for the families involved, I began thanking God for my family and for life. And as I petitioned my concerns to God, although I didn't understand, God granted me the peace that surpasses all understanding. We may not ever understand why devastating events happen, but we know that God loves us enough to give us peace in the middle of our storms.

Sheneka Lett
CrossOver Dance Ministry Volunteer

DAY 16: ASPIRATION

“Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.”

– 1 Chronicles 16:11

“I’M DONE”

Many of us have repeated these two words in response to life’s challenges and uncomfortable moments. You are not feeling connected to anyone or anything—family, friends, school, work, extracurricular activities, and even church. During this time, we are tempted to feed into emotions and activities that pull us in the wrong direction. Our focus becomes unaligned with God’s purpose for our lives because we can’t see “the endgame.” What am I doing here? Why is this not working? What is my purpose? This is the time for you to go within and get closer to the source—the answer is usually closer than you think. Prayer is more than just words, but a DM to the one who made you and has a purpose for your life.

1 Chronicles 16:11 teaches us to always look for the light of God, especially when hope is clouded with despair. This is the time to reflect on the teachings from the Lord. **READ YOUR BIBLE** because the word is eternal, and troubles are limited.

Anita Bryant
Higher Ground Volunteer

DAY 17: IMAGINATION

“Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

– Ephesians 3:20

That scripture alone gives us permission to imagine and dream of more than we see before us. My prayer for each of you is that you begin to activate your imagination again and trust that God will give you the desires of your heart.

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

Have any of you noticed that the older we get, the less we tend to dream? When we're kids, we have such high hopes and dreams, which are a product of an active imagination. Some might argue that it's childish to give life to our imagination as we get older because... life can be tough! It comes with hard times, misfortune, disappointment and BILLS! At some point, we start to focus more on what IS rather than what COULD BE. A few years ago, I was challenged by a mentor of mine to start dreaming again and to imagine the kind of life I wanted for myself. It was at that point that I realized I had stopped dreaming. I no longer saw my current circumstance as what would forever could be. I saw my dreams as the real possibility. Let us dream knowing that God is truly able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

Brooke Watson
Director of CAYA (Come As You Are)

DAY 18: COMMUNITY

“I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.”

– Matthew 25:36

THE ULTIMATE RESCUER

As I was driving, I noticed a tow truck in front of me. As I looked closer, I concentrated on the tool that is used to come to the rescue of its customers. The tool is in the shape of a big cross. The first thing that came to my mind was how similar Jesus is to the tow truck.

- The tow lifts us out of difficult situations; JESUS lifts our burdens.
- The tow truck gives charges to dead batteries; JESUS gives an everlasting jump-start.
- The tow truck fixes flat tires; JESUS turns tragedies into triumphs.
- Both tow trucks and JESUS can be called on time and time again.

There are distinct differences, however. The tow truck gives you a bill for service; Jesus has already paid your bill in full and continues to give service time and time again, and also gives you the tip of an everlasting life with Him. The truck and its metals will eventually be useless, needing a more up-to-date model. The model of Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Jesus removes, recharges, restores, and renews. We can be disciples of Christ by being human “tow trucks” and helping those in our community who are in need.

Lord, like a tow truck, help me to be of service to my community.

Deborah Easter
Director of Junior Gospel Inspirers

DAY 19: STRENGTH

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go”

– Joshua 1:9

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

When we find ourselves in situations of despair and calamity, we often hear people telling us to be strong. But what does that mean really to us when we are facing peril? How can someone else advise another to be strong when they may have no idea what it really feels like to be going through the bad situation we find ourselves in? It is easy to throw around cliché statements in an effort to make someone feel better, when the truth of the matter is, sometimes a cliché statement is the very last thing we want to hear. No, what we really want is for someone, something, anything, to fixate itself right in the middle of our problem and make it disappear. Yet, that isn't reality. Sometimes we have to go through the storms of life, and trust God, relying solely on Him to give us everything we need to weather the storms of life.

In Joshua 1:9, the Lord was preparing Joshua and the Israelites to take possession of the land long ago promised them. Previously, fear had prevented them from doing this very thing decades before. Fear in the face of a problem can be paralyzing, but with God, we can conquer anything. Instead of wishing problems away, pray them away and know that God has equipped you with all of the strength you need to face anything.

Tracie Jackson
Crossover Core Team Leader

SELAH WORD OF THE DAY: REJUVENATE

JOURNAL QUESTION: What areas of your life are draining your energy?

PRAYER GOAL: 15 minutes

DAY 20: LOVE

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”
In other words, pray for those who treat you bad”

– Matthew 5:44

TOUGH LOVE...

Many of us have had the bad experience of being let down by someone we thought was our friend, or known someone who has treated us badly like an enemy. It can be difficult following the “Golden Rule” of loving one another as God loves us.

Can you imagine how difficult it was for those in the Bible who heard Jesus teaching on a hillside when HE said these words recorded in Matthew 5:44:

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” In other words, pray for those who treat you bad. Say what?!

Showing love and praying for our enemies is a tough thing to do. Jesus gave us the ultimate model of tough love by praying for those who did bad things to Him as He hung on the Cross. Jesus prayed for His Father to forgive all those who had a part in His death. Jesus showed unconditional love and commands us to do the same.

Our God is strong and mighty. God is bigger than only being able to move in our lives; He has the powerful to move in everyone, including our enemies. When we love and pray for our enemies, we are letting our “little lights” shine God’s love to others all around this world.

Kris Futrell
Kid Street Volunteer

DAY 21: GRACE

“...and then [God] told me, My grace is enough; it’s all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness. Once I heard that, I was glad to let it happen. I quit focusing on the handicap and began appreciating the gift. It was a case of Christ’s strength moving in on my weakness.”

– 2 Corinthians 12:9

TURNING WEAKNESS INTO STRENGTH

My favorite athlete is Stephen Curry from the Golden State Warriors because he has a very interesting story. He was viewed as less competitive because of his small size, he was denied a direct spot on Virginia Tech’s team (his father’s school), and had several early NBA career injuries. However, despite those perceived weaknesses, he is now a six-time NBA All-Star, a three-time NBA Champion, and a two-time MVP. Steph’s success story embodies Paul’s words in this scripture. For both Steph and Paul, the odds were stacked against them due to their past. However, with God they overcame these obstacles and now their stories are great examples of God’s grace or unmerited favor.

The beautiful thing is that God is consistent. Whether it’s Paul, Steph, or ourselves, God has given us each the same gift of grace. We don’t have to work to earn it – God gives it to us freely! For this reason, as children of God we should spend time reflecting on examples of God’s grace in our own lives. Paul reflects in his scripture writings, while Steph reflects outwardly by patting his chest and pointing up to the sky towards God during games. It’s through this continued acknowledgment of God’s grace that we can truly be appreciative of the gift of strength God provides in our weakness.

Michelle N. Udeli
Higher Ground Volunteer

DAY 22: CREATIVITY

“God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would do good works. God had planned in advance those good works for us. He had planned for us to live our lives doing them.”

– Ephesians 2:10

FLEXIN’ HOW GOD MADE YOU

When Kheris Rogers was in the first grade, she asked to stay in the bathtub longer because she thought it would make her chocolate brown skin lighter. Other kids would bully Kheris because of her skin by not playing with her and refusing to be her friend. I’m sure that made Kheris sad at times, maybe even angry. But, what’s so amazing about Kheris is she used a very bad situation and created something beautiful. At 11 years old, Kheris made New York Fashion Week history by becoming the youngest fashion designer to debut a clothing line called “Flexin’ In My Complexion” in 2017. In an interview, Kheris credits her painful past as her motivation by stating “Going through this inspired me to begin Flexin’ In My Complexion, because black comes in so many shades and they all are beautiful.” Celebrities Lupita Nyong’o and Alicia Keys agree with her, as they’ve been seen in Kheris’ fashions.

God made Kheris and you perfectly and without apology. Everything you may think is wrong about you is actually a sign of God flexing His creativity. There is something that God placed inside of you that the world is in need of. While you discover what that is, remember to love who you are now, and flex it for everyone to see! You never know, you just might encourage someone to do the same.

Brandi Howard
Higher Ground Volunteer

DAY 23: RESILIENCE

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you are involved in various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But you must let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.”

— James 1:2–4

BEING RESILIENT

In this passage of scripture, James gives us a lot to consider. Imagine you’ve just endured or perhaps are still experiencing one of the most difficult times of your life and someone has the audacity to tell you to “consider it pure joy.” How could pain from hardship actually have a purpose? As believers, we don’t rejoice because we have tough times, but we can choose to rejoice when we accept God’s perspective. His plan does not leave us hopeless and we know that there is nothing too hard for God... not even a comeback! You were not built to break. We must remember not to be so distracted by our pain that we forget to ask God to help us understand His purpose in the pain. When bad things happen to us, our resilience is tested, but God can use hardships to help us grow, mature and be made complete in ways we could never imagine! We have the ability and the capacity to recover with a sense of purpose, determination, and a renewed faith in Him. As difficult as it may seem, we have to find the “pure joy” that resides beyond the pain. As I often reflect on some of my most challenging life events, I stand on this side of those experiences knowing that God faithfully brought me through each one of them. I did not break and neither will you!

Gerald Holden
Worship Service Coordinator

SELAH WORD OF THE DAY: REIGNITE

JOURNAL QUESTION: What are you proud to have persevered through?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

DAY 24: DETERMINATION

“She said, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.’ Then Jesus answered her, ‘Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.’ And her daughter was healed instantly.”

– Matthew 15:27–28

BE DETERMINED

What had this unnamed woman tried BEFORE she encountered Jesus? Surely everything. To find a way to make her daughter whole, she must have consulted with family members, friends, spiritual leaders, doctors—anyone she could think of before she sought out Jesus. She was out of options and desperate. That had to be the only way to explain why she left home to consult with someone she knew only indirectly through rumor. The situation was so bad that she elected to risk her safety and debase herself by begging for help from someone who likened her to a dog. She was determined to reach Jesus.

Why does Jesus find such desperation attractive? After He insults her, He gives her the highest praise. Her persistence He found laudable.

What will it take for me to give up and completely seek you out? What will it take for me to turn my life over to you completely, without reservation, without dignity, without caring about anything else? Is desperation the only way to total devotion? I feel like I have tried most everything else, and somehow you find my devotion to you to be wanting. Is the total destruction of my self the only way to submit so that you will tell me, well done?

Deacon Jim Bender
Kids Street Volunteer

DAY 25: LEGACY

*“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—
put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*

– Philippians 4:9

PASS THE BATON

Leaving a legacy takes work and time, and most of all it means leaving no one behind. During Jesus’ ministry on earth, He did many things for the benefit of the people. He knew HE wouldn’t be on earth forever, so He ensured that the people understood his teaching, parables, examples and actions. Jesus created a legacy, and based on our learning we are to create a legacy for others also.

Why is it important to leave a legacy? As a youth trying to get through elementary, middle and high school, why should I be thinking of a legacy? It probably seems like something to do way in the future. It’s simple: Jesus did it so it is a super idea, and you are your brother’s keeper. For different reasons a lot of you look at your parents, entertainers, sports figures, teachers and others as people who have left an imprint on your life or people you wish to pattern after, so it’s time for you to start the same trend to pass the baton. Your life should be remembered for what you have contributed to a friend, stranger, person on the school bus or next to you in your classroom. Your legacy may not change the world but it is important and someone will remember! Take examples from Jesus and leave a lasting footprint that will be remembered by those whose lives you touched!!

Diane Alvin
Higher Ground Volunteer

DAY 26: RECOVERY

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

–Romans 8:1

RECOVER IN CHRIST JESUS

When you choose Jesus Christ, know there is no condemnation. Plainly speaking, there is no room for guilt or blame in your life. When you feel you have failed God, yourself, or others, your place before God does not change. When God looks at you, He doesn't see the sins you've committed, the hurt you've projected on others, or the things you haven't done. When you are in Christ, you are clothed in the clean, and He only sees His holy, blameless child.

How can this be possible? It's possible because Christ died in your place. Your sins were placed on Christ's shoulders and buried with him. Acknowledge that Christ's work on the cross cleansed and purified you. God promises that when you acknowledge Him in all your ways, He will make your paths straight. Your sins are no match for Christ's sacrifice; therefore, they have been washed completely away. You can come into the presence of God with great joy. Worship Him on your journey throughout your challenges and let go of your guilt and regret...and Recover! Live in peace, knowing that no one and nothing can destroy your relationship with God. What a beautiful thing to know that no matter what happens in this life, you have unspeakable joy as a blameless and loved child!

Dr. Nicole Hayes
Parents Association President

DAY 27: FELLOWSHIP

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

– Acts 2:42

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”

– 1 John 1:3

#FOODFUNANDFELLOWSHIP

I have often heard youth ministry programs advertise events with the tagline “Food, Fun and Fellowship!” I’m quite sure good ol’ church food and a chance to hang out with friends persuaded my kids to attend many church events. But what exactly is fellowship? Is it just a social activity or event?

The idea of Christian fellowship is found in the Greek word *koinonia*. The first appearance of the word in the New Testament appears in Acts 2:42, where Luke tells us that early Christians devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer. Fellowship or *koinonia* was one of the primary reasons for getting together. The essential element of *koinonia* is the relationship believers have with God through the new life gained by accepting Jesus Christ, His Son, and in turn, the relationship believers can have with each other because of our common bond in Christ (1 John 1:3). Therefore, fellowship is first and foremost a relationship, rather than an activity.

The early church demonstrated the importance of fellowship by their devotion to it. When you gather for food, fun and fellowship you are cultivating your relationship with God and your Christian community. These activities and togetherness are opportunities to grow in God’s Word; pray, love and encourage one another; and remind us of our shared unity and purpose. Fellowship helps to build stronger disciples for Christ. So, the next youth lock-in, harvest festival, retreat, or skate-night, as you enjoy the food and fun, know that you are making valuable connections to Christ and friendships that will support you on your Christian journey.

Deacon Angela Moore
CrossOver Volunteer

DAY 28: CONFIDENCE

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

– Psalms 139:13–14

FROM COURAGE TO CONFIDENCE

The world in which we live today is filled to the brim with distractions and temptations to pull us away from ourselves. Toxic relationships, fake friends, and even social media alter the confidence that God so graciously gave to us. When we were little, nothing could ruin the confidence that erupted into our worlds. As we grew up, the pressures of the world shattered the confidence that ran so freely. People took our courage and ripped it into what is now socially acceptable confidence. The first step to regaining confidence is being courageous enough to remove toxic people from your life who don’t unconditionally love you. The second step is to connect with people who encourage you to grow in your miracle. The third step to rebuilding your confidence is thinking back to when you were younger. Write the childish, positive, and inspirational things that you would have thought on Post-it notes. Reading positive messages from you who was fearless and confident will tell you that you are perfectly imperfect and wonderfully made in courage and confidence.

Psalms 139:13-14 teaches us that having the courage to believe in God and the way He created us is the key to growing in spiritual confidence. Knowing that God created you in his image and the likeness of himself positions us to be stronger in faith and confidence; to remain beautiful in the way God created us. So, I encourage you to take this journey with God, talk with Him and be courageous in removing the negativity in your life. Putting your courage to work in your favor will position you for greater confidence and a greater blessing in your faith. Continued blessings to you.

Talia Penn
Higher Ground Teen

DAY 29: PERSEVERANCE

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”

– Romans 12:12

YOU CAN MAKE IT!

In October 2014, my father passed away at the age of 64 after battling a yearlong illness. I was completely and utterly devastated. I felt like I lost a part of me that day in the hospital. On top of my heartbreak, I was let go from my job merely two days later due to the time I had taken off to help provide care for my father. I had three young children to provide for; however, I did the only thing I knew how to do: I prayed.

My unemployment lasted close to five months. I cried daily and did not eat; but soon, I began rejoicing that my father was no longer suffering. I was overcome by peace. I had stopped stressing out on unpaid bills and realized that my unemployment was part of God’s plan to propel me to where I needed to be. I learned to fully rely on God and to be the one thing that I was not—patient.

Romans 12:12 tells us to be patient when we are going through hard or bad times. We are to continue to trust in the Lord and pray continuously. God never promised us that our lives would be without struggle; yet, HE did promise that HE would not only be there for us but also provide what we needed.

In one of my favorite Disney movies, “Meet the Robinsons,” the family kept repeating, “keep pushing forward.” My prayer for you is to keep pushing forward by believing and trusting in the Lord, no matter your situation.

Dr. LaToya M. Haynes
Higher Ground Volunteer

SELAH WORD OF THE DAY: REASSURE

JOURNAL QUESTION: What is requiring your perseverance in this season?

PRAYER GOAL: 25 minutes

Handwriting lines for journaling.

DAY 30: INCLUSION

“Then Jesus said to his host, ‘When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’”

– Luke 14:12–14

DINING WITH A DISABILITY

One of Jesus’ best-known parables is the parable of the great banquet. However, it is also a perplexing parable about dining with Jesus. Besides that, Jesus told the parable at a Sabbath dinner, which tells us something more about eating with Jesus.

In the society and culture of Jesus’ time, it would be an almost unthinkable offense to reject an invitation to a banquet. Hospitality was everyone’s solemn obligation. The only people not included under this social system were the moral and social outcasts, and these included the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. Upstanding people assumed that the troubles of these outcasts proved they were being punished by God for their sins or for the sins of their forebears.

To the contrary, Jesus remained intentional about being inclusive of persons with disabilities when HE tells his host to invite “the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.” Jesus had compassion for the poor and persons with disabilities. In fact, HE gives them special attention and promises them the hope of the resurrection and the transformation of their bodies. We too should follow his example. No matter how we understand the parable of the great banquet, Jesus’ words are crystal clear, and they are for us, when HE says, “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they may not be able to repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Dr. Antonio Ellis
Special Needs Ministry Leader

DAY 31: CONTENTMENT

“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

– Philippians 4:11-13

THE ANSWER TO EVERY TEST

I used to say the verse “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” before every, I mean EVERY, difficult test in high school. I would say “I CAN” with all of my sixteen-year-old strength before completing Mr. Mitchell’s physics labs. I would practically scream the phrase “ALL THINGS” before walking into Mrs. Brown’s algebra exams. And forget about organic chemistry, I would basically write out the whole scripture as legitimate answers to my organic chemistry quizzes. I made it out of high school off of the strength of my belief that Christ strengthened me.

As I got older, it became clear to me that the author of this passage did not mean for us to take this one verse just to get through hard tests. Paul wanted us to know that even when the results of the test are bad, that Christ still strengthens us to live another day. Paul wanted us to learn that when the test results are good that we are not to be defined by the success but humbled by God’s grace to succeed. This passage encourages us to be content and satisfied with life because Christ is with us through it all. No matter what happens in your life, remember that this is the answer to every test: YOU CAN do and live through ALL THINGS through Christ who strengthens you.

Minister Barbara Florvil
Assistant to the Pastor for Youth

DANIEL FAST RECIPES

BAKED OATMEAL

- 1½ cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1½ cups unsweetened almond milk
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- ¼ cup chopped dried apricots
- ¼ cup chopped dates or raisins
- ¼ cup chopped pecans or walnuts
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put all ingredients in a large bowl and stir well. Transfer to an 8 by 8-inch baking dish that has been lightly rubbed with olive oil. Pour oatmeal mixture into dish and bake 45-50 minutes or until slightly browned and crispy on top.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 2 squares)

by Kristen Feola, "Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast"

BLUEBERRY MANGO SMOOTHIE

- 1 cup water or unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk
- 1 cup fresh or frozen mango chunks
- 1 fresh or frozen banana, peeled, sliced
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1 tablespoon flaxseed meal, optional
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened coconut flakes

Mix all ingredients in a blender until smooth.

by Kristen Feola, "Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast"

APPLE-CINNAMON HOT CEREAL

- 1 (14.5-ounce) can coconut milk
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 apple, chopped, unpeeled (about 1½ cups)
- 1 banana, mashed (about 1 cup)
- 1 cup roughly chopped dates
- 1½ teaspoons cinnamon
- Pinch nutmeg
- ½ cup toasted pecans or walnuts

Add coconut milk, brown rice, apple, banana,

dates, cinnamon, and nutmeg to a medium saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat about 10 minutes or until heated through. Stir frequently to prevent burning on bottom of pan. Sprinkle 1-tablespoon pecans or walnuts over each serving.

Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 1/2 cup)

by Kristen Feola, "Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast"

STIR-FRY VEGETABLES WITH BROWN RICE

- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 3 green onions (finely chopped)
- 3 tablespoons fresh ginger (minced)
- 4 cups fresh broccoli (chopped)
- ½ pound fresh green beans (chopped)
- 2 carrots (peeled and sliced on diagonal)
- 1 bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 4 cups greens (chopped kale, bok choy, spinach, collards, etc)
- 1 can sliced water chestnuts (drained)
- 3 cups cooked brown rice
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 ½ cups peas (if frozen run under water to thaw)
- ½ cup toasted sliced almonds

Heat a deep skillet or wok over medium heat for about 1 minute. Add oil and heat for 1 minute. Add green onions and ginger. Sauté for 5 minutes. Add broccoli, green beans, carrots, bell pepper, and garlic. Stir fry for 8-10 minutes. Add greens and toss for about 2 minutes or until greens are wilted. Stir in water chestnuts, brown rice, soy sauce, peas, and almonds. Serve as a complete meal

by Susan Gregory "The Daniel Fast"

CHIPOTLE BLACK BEAN BURGERS

- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup mashed cooked sweet potatoes (about 1 large sweet potato, peeled)
- ¼ cup oat flour (see Recipe Notes) or brown rice flour
- ½ tablespoon dried parsley

- ¼ teaspoon chipotle chile pepper seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Preheat oven to broil setting. With a potato masher or fork, mash black beans in a large bowl, leaving about 1/4 of the beans whole. Mix in sweet potatoes, oat flour, parsley, chipotle chile pepper seasoning, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Scoop out 1/3 cup of bean mixture, and place on an 11 x 17-inch baking sheet that has been rubbed with olive oil. Flatten and shape into a circle with spatula. Repeat with the remaining bean mixture to make 6 burgers.

Broil 4 inches from heat about 7-8 minutes or until golden brown. Flip burgers carefully with spatula. Broil 2-3 more minutes, and serve.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1 burger)

by Kristen Feola, "Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast"

GREEK-STYLE STUFFED PEPPERS

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup diced zucchini
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 3 chopped canned artichokes, drained
- ½ cup chopped black olives
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano flakes or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 medium bell peppers (green, orange, red, and/or yellow)
- 2 cups cooked quinoa
- ½ tablespoons pine nuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place artichokes in a food processor, and pulse until artichokes are chopped well. Set aside. Heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and zucchini. Cook 3-5 minutes or until vegetables are softened. Lower heat, and add garlic. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly so garlic doesn't burn. Add tomato sauce, artichokes, olives, oregano, parsley, and salt. Cook 15 minutes, or until sauce is thickened. While sauce is cooking, prepare peppers. Cut in half lengthwise, and remove stems and seeds. Place peppers in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain in colander, and place in a large baking dish. When sauce is finished, mix in the quinoa and pine nuts. Stir well. Spoon mixture evenly into pepper halves. Add hot water to dish to a depth of 1/2 inch. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes.

by Kristen Feola, "Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast"

CAJUN RED BEANS AND RICE

- ½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup chopped green pepper
- ½ cup chopped red onion
- ½ cup sliced celery
- ¼ cup water
- 2 teaspoons Creole Seasoning
- 1 (15.5-ounce) can red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups cooked brown rice

Heat olive oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add green peppers, onions, and celery. Cook until vegetables are softened, about 3-5 minutes. Add water and Creole Seasoning. Stir well. Mix in kidney beans and rice. Lower heat and cook another 5 minutes or until heated through.

Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1/2 cup)

by Kristen Feola, "Ultimate Guide to the Daniel Fast"



**THANK YOU
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