



ALFRED STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

SEEK 2022

DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

**JAN
10-31**

**“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 COVENANT PARTNER,

Grace and peace be unto you in the name of our Lord Jesus who is our resurrected, risen, reigning, and returning redeemer. Can you believe, it is already that time of year again. Once again, we pause as a collective church family to seek the face of God, through our SEEK fast. Whether this is your first time fasting or if fasting is frequently a part of your spiritual discipline, I pray this fast would be a significant milestone in your spiritual journey. As always, we will be focusing on three areas of our lives- the physical, the social/technological and the financial. We believe that by disciplining ourselves in these areas of our lives, we will be able to truly carve out some intentional time to spend with God!



This year, our theme for SEEK 2022, is “21 Questions”. Over the course of 21 days, you will be provided 21 questions that appear in the Bible. The speakers of these questions, range from God, disciples, and even Satan. These questions have been chosen to provide you an opportunity to be introspective. I pray that at the conclusion of this fast, you will have 21 Answers! While fasting, please keep in mind that this journal is created so that you can track your progress throughout your fast. You should plan to read your devotional and then write in your devotional journal about your daily experiences.

As you know, it has been nearly two years since we met for corporate worship. It is our prayer, that SEEK 2022, will serve as the spiritual catalyst to prepare our church to return to worship! If that is the case, your participation in SEEK 2022, is not only for you, but also for our entire church community. I encourage you to embark on this challenge with that in mind.

If you are new to Alfred Street, or to SEEK, we welcome you. We have a saying here, Amazing things happen when you say YES to God. We cannot wait to hear of the many testimonies that will be birthed through SEEK 2022! Let’s Pray together!

Selah,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard-John Wesley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with some overlapping loops.

Pastor Howard-John Wesley

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, and alcoholic beverages

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	January 10-16	Pray for 10 minutes a day
Week 2	January 17-23	Pray for 20 minutes a day
Week 3	January 24-31	Pray for 30 minutes a day

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 P	3 R	4 E	5 P	6 A	7 R	8 E
9 Off Day	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Week One					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Week Two					
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Week Three					
30	31 End of Fast					

WHAT IS FASTING?

As you prepare to embark on Seek 2022, 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 during the day, replace that time by spending time in prayer. If you normally watch TV when you get home from work, consider replacing that time 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 ten 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 under goes 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, than 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"

SEEK 2022 DEVOTIONS

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 your prayer requests for SEEK 2022? Complete as needed.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

DAY 1

“Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

– Matthew 6:27

THE WORRY CHAMBER

When you invite worry into the chamber of your existence and make room for it to take up residence at your table what are you saying to God? I have made the decision to lean on my own understanding. Have you made the executive decision to not involve God by not seeking God’s counsel? Is this wise, has your humanity been hijacked by your emotions? Do you not desire the peace of God to saturate your heart and mind when worry attempts to overwhelm your character?

One cannot add a single hour to your life by worrying. What you can do is create an outcome in your mind about your circumstance which may never come to fruition. Because God is with you always even in seasons when you feel all alone, just know a remedy to your concern is in the Divine Playbook. Due to your relationship with God you have access to the Author of your story and God encourages us not to fear or worry about anything. Why, because God is your sustainer and God requests that you cast your burdens on the Lord. Therefore, you should seek the Lord when worry attempts to creep into your cognition.

Rev. Anthony J. Brownlow
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: What are you worrying about?

PRAYER GOAL: 10 minutes

DAY 2

“Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye?”

– Matthew 7:4

LOOKING AT MYSELF

“If we focus on self, we see nothing, if we focus on others we see specs in their eyes,
if we focus on Christ, we see the logs in our own eyes.”

– Burk Parsons

The Williams Brothers have a song entitled, “Sweep Around Your Own Front Door Before You Try to Sweep Around Mine”, reminding the listener there are twelve months in a year...six months to mind your business and six months to leave everyone else’s business alone.

There’s some truth to this song. I say some truth because if we find our sister or brother in a fault, we are to restore them. However, **IF** we are visually impaired, we can’t assist with the business of removing a speck from their eye because we have not managed our own spiritual business well.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us that if our view is obstructed, it is impossible to see clearly. Therefore, we must take measures to remove the “logs” of obstruction that block our spiritual vision, allowing Light to come in to make us whole.

“The eye is the lamp of the body and if your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light.” – Matthew 6:22

Rev. Montrez Nicholson
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: What are you quick to notice about other people, that you haven't yet addressed yourself?

PRAYER GOAL: 10 minutes

DAY 3

“Who is greater, the one who is at the table, or the one who serves?
It is not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.”

– Luke 22:27

LOSE CONTROL

In the workbook on *Spiritual Disciplines*, Maxie Dunnam wrote “The way most of us serve keeps us in control. We choose whom, when, where and how we will serve.” However, Jesus is calling us to do something different. He is calling us to change our traditional mindset about power, authority and privilege and instead place measurable value, significance and honor on putting others first.

Jesus did not selfishly keep his love, power and prestige to himself. At the Last Supper, He became the perfect example of dignity, greatness, humility and service when He washed the feet of His disciples. Following this gracious act of submission, our Savior also made the supreme sacrifice when He willingly choose to lay down His life for a sinful world. He didn’t have to do it – but He did!

With spiritual humility, we should willingly choose to lose control in service to others and watch God direct our lives and leadership to bless His people. We find greatness in serving others when we allow ourselves to be available and vulnerable to God’s will. Our charge to serve this present age should therefore be to lose control of the perceptions of grandeur that power and privilege affords, ever mindful that “service to others is the rent we pay for the space we occupy.”

Rev. Dr. Roslyn Brock
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: What prideful tendencies and behaviors are preventing you from being humble?

PRAYER GOAL: 10 minutes

DAY 4

“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”

– Matthew 27:46

FEELING FORSAKEN

In a moment filled with agony and a myriad of emotions, Jesus crafts a template for traversing through it all. This template is emotionally charged and makes space for a very present pain, yet it is grounded in a confident comfort in the Divine.

His pain is palpable. Christ knows that His requests to be immediately relieved have been denied. However, He remains connected. Jesus stands in the face of a journey we all at times face. A journey where the duality of crushing pain and the predilection for comfort ebb and flow in the same experience.

His example offers us a helpful template in times of crisis. First, is cry. Christ’s cries are an expression of pain. Shedding tears and shouting inarticulate loud sounds help us work towards liberation from the weight and pressure of our pain.

Next, is call. Christ calls God by name so that His call is not mistaken or misdirected. He calls despite the denial and despite His circumstances. Calling out helps us remain connected to the only One that can make sense of the situation at hand.

Finally, is confide. Christ confides audibly with God his dis-ease about His current reality. His words have power and strength that abound beyond emotional capacity. Confiding in God reminds us that God is too faithful to fail! Like Christ, you are not forsaken. Remember Christ’s story does not end here & neither will yours! As you SEEK - Cry, Call, & Confide! Your VICTORY is soon to come!

LaTasha Morgan
Assistant to the Pastor for Counseling

JOURNAL QUESTION: What area(s) of your live do you feel as if God is absent? Why?

PRAYER GOAL: 10 minutes

DAY 5

“For what shall it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul?”

– Mark 8:36, NKJV

EXAMINE THE CONDITION OF YOUR SOUL

Let’s examine the cost of discipleship. In Mark 8:34–38, all the sayings about discipleship speak about relationship to Jesus Messiah in terms of a way of being in the world. In fact, in verse 36, Jesus speaks to his disciples and a crowd about the nature of discipleship, and He states simply for what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul. In this verse, Jesus is directing our attention to that which is eternal to make clear what our priority in life should be. He is turning our attention to the fact that all else is worthless if we have not first attended to the condition of our soul. His words cause us to examine our priorities and pursuits and what we have spent our lives on. Our very lives, our souls find their true worth only in the Lord. He must remain the center of our lives, or we lose ourselves in our pursuit of things that have no value, fade away and don’t really matter.

What is the condition of your soul?

God, grow me in You! Help me to focus my priorities and my pursuits on things that are eternally significant. Help me to seek after the things You want for me. In Jesus I pray. Amen

Reverend Sylvia Dayton-Jones
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: re there any areas in your life that you feel as if you don't need God's assistance? Have you neglected to pray for these areas?

PRAYER GOAL: 10 minutes

DAY 6

“Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?”

– Matthew 18:21, NKJV

LORD, HOW MANY TIMES?

The subject of forgiveness is hard for most Christians, which is probably why Peter asked the subsequent question, “Seven times?” as if to have a finite answer. Jesus answers, 70x7, inferring an infinite answer. We find it hard not in the sense of our sins forgiven by Christ our Lord and new mercies we see every morning because we like it when forgiveness is granted to us but we do not like the other side...forgiving others. We have trouble with letting go of the offense because we want retribution, seek an apology, and/or want the offender to hurt as much as you do.

What happens if we don't receive the retribution we desire or the apology we feel owed to us? We have no choice but to let it go. Forgiveness is letting go of the bondage in which we tried to put our offender. Not only have we tethered the person to the offense, we tethered ourselves to it as well. When we bind people to the offense they caused, we become stagnant in the same state and cannot receive the blessing on the other side because our hands are “binding” the person.

I am by no means suggesting that forgiveness equals restoration especially where danger abounds. I don't believe that restoration is always possible but letting them go spiritually so we are not chained to a dead situation is not only possible but necessary. When we chain ourselves to dead things, pieces of us die but Jesus came that we might have life and that more abundantly. So, free them to free yourself and LIVE!

Rev. Marcia Norfleet
Assistant to the Pastor for Missions

JOURNAL QUESTION: Who are you struggling to forgive? What did they do to you, and how has this affected you?

PRAYER GOAL: 10 minutes

DAY 7

“If God be For Us, Who Can Be Against Us”

– Romans 8:31

HOME COURT ADVANTAGE

Basketball always excites our family. During the playoffs, teams battle for 5 or 7 games to find out who will advance to the next round for the opportunity to play in the championship. The hardest test of every sports team is the begrudging feeling when you walk into an arena as the designated “away” team; and are met with hostile fans hurling insults and cruelties designed to take you off your game. In this setting, the odds are always better for you if you are playing for the team with “home court advantage”.

Home court advantage gives a team the leverage in a battle to be surrounded with cheers from screaming fans who encourage and motivate their players. And even if they find themselves losing momentum in the game, the assurance of someone in your corner makes the task in front of you bearable. Truth be told, there will be times in life that you will walk into enemy territory on your job, in your school, at home and if I can be honest, even in the church. However, Romans 8:31 reminds us that we have an assurance that with God on our side, we have home court advantage in every situation. No matter the circumstance, no matter the obstacle and no matter the enemy, living our lives covered by our Lord means that nothing can stand against us and we will prosper. Life will bring what it may, but remember, if God be for us, who can be against us.

Rev. Shavon Airline Bradley
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: How has God shown you that he is for you?

PRAYER GOAL: 10 minutes

PRAYER CHALLENGE: It's time to put your prayer into practice. This week's challenge is to perform an act of kindness to a complete stranger!

DAY 8

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

– Mark 8:29, NIV

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

In the book of Mark Jesus performed two miracles: He fed 5000 men, women and children, and he healed a blind man's eyes. After performing these miracles, the crowd demanded more. Still, after all Jesus had done and after all they had witnessed, they were not sure of his Deity. Some of the crowd said he was like John the Baptist or Elijah, and others said that he was one of the prophets. Nevertheless, despite what others were saying, Jesus turned to Peter and asked him this compelling question, “Who do you say I am?”

This seemed to be a rhetorical question because Peter had witnessed Jesus perform the miracles and knew the rumors of the crowd. Peter responded you are the “Messiah.” But later in the Gospels when Jesus was arrested and on his way to the cross, he denied he was a follower of Christ. How did he see the daily miracles of Jesus, say he is the son of the Messiah with his mouth, then later during challenging times deny his relationship?

Over the past year God has strengthened us at our darkest times, provided all we needed, and taught us how to walk by faith and not by sight. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is asking you “Who do you say the Christ is?” Do the you know he is the Messiah or do you deny him when you meet life challenges?

Closing thought: Lord, help me that my witness will be consistent with my words.

Rev. Dr. Sedric Roberts
Director of Finance

JOURNAL QUESTION: How has your view of God, influenced your faith? Is there anything you believe God cannot do in your life?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

DAY 9

“What do you want me to do for you?”

– Matthew 20:32

WHAT DO YOU WANT GOD TO DO?

God has heard our prayer request and is asking us, “What do you want me to do for you?” Our response is, “Lord if it is Your will, I would He’s listening.

My Mother always said, “if you ask the question make sure you are prepared for the answer”. My friend in high school asked her mother a question and her Mother said “No!” my friend asked “why?” Her mother responded, “You don’t ask why when I say yes, so don’t ask why when I say NO!”

Have you ever been at that place in life when you are wondering if you should go left, right or keep straight? You look up to heaven and ask in PRAYER for God to guide and order your footsteps. As you are standing there, God ask you, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Sometimes God tells us, “Yes, no, not now or the waiting period begins”. My prayer partner recently said, pray, and move in the direction and God will let you know which way to go. We must listen otherwise we can be like the person in the metaphor when God showed up 3 times to rescue them, their reply was, “I was waiting on God” as they stood at the gates with St. Peter.

God has heard our prayer request and is asking us, “What do you want me to do for you?” Our response is, “Lord Your will be done He’s listening.

Rev. Ceres Larkrith
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: What do you want God to do for you?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

DAY 10

“What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?”

– Romans 6:1

THE SIN TOPIC

On September 26, 2021, Alfred Street Baptist Church celebrated the 13th anniversary of pastor and people. After a year and a half of gathering for worship via YouTube, we all got to hear Pastor Wesley in person for only the second time in 18 months! Pastor preached a powerful sermon on the subject, “Questions That Need An Answer.” In that message Pastor Wesley pointed out in his signature didactic manner that, in the Bible, when God asks us a question, it’s an invitation to consider God’s sovereignty. However, when we ask God a question, it’s an opportunity for God to reveal God’s self in some amazing and miraculous ways.

Sometimes, however, questions may arise in scripture that do not require an answer, because the answer is implied in the question. When that happens, it is called a rhetorical question. Wikipedia defines a rhetorical question as, “A question asked in order to create dramatic effect or to make a make a point, rather than to get an answer.”

Such is the case with our scripture for today. The Apostle Paul poses the rhetorical question to the Church at Rome, “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” The dramatic effect created by this question is that it evokes the obvious answer indicated in the very next verse: “By no means!” The point it makes is equally obvious! God does not give us grace because we’ve been so bad. God grants us grace because God is so good!

Rev. Dr. Timothy Tee Boddie
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: Is there a sin in your life that you are having a hard time conquering?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

DAY 11

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”

– John 21:16, KJV

WHAT’S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

The ability to lead in love is part of the very nature of a pastoral care ministry.

The shepherding of the sheep is a vital part of every born-again disciple, church leader, ministers, and pastors. The sheep will need this care even more than the “lambs;” the old disciples will require, even more than the young converts, both direction and command.

It seems that Peter was being set-up by Jesus for the job of pastor and leader of the new church. The most telling answers would come from the question, “Do you love me?” To understand what love has to do with anything is to have your mate, your family, or someone close to you ask you “do you love me?” If your past actions have been the things you have purchased for them and not the times you have spent with them, then you have failed.

Jesus asks Peter, “Do you love me more than **these**?” While the Greek text is confusing as to what the “**these**” refers to. I am sure all of us can fill in the “**these**” with your job, home, car, family.

Love is a powerful motivating action. Jesus commands all to love the Lord thy God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. A committed Christian life is constrained and driven to love.

Oh God of love, grace, and mercy. Teach us how to love others as you have loved each of us. Amen.

Rev. Edward Y. Jackson
Assistant to the Pastor for Pastoral Care

JOURNAL QUESTION: What areas of your life need your full commitment?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

PRAYER CHALLENGE: It's time to put your prayer into practice. This week's prayer challenge is to express the LOVE of God to a complete stranger.

DAY 12

“For am I now seeking the approval of others or of God? Or am I trying to please people?”

– Galatians 1:10

GOD OR PEOPLE?

Today, there so many people are focused on how many people saw your IG, FB or retweets. If you don't get likes you feel unliked. If you don't get hearts, you feel unloved. The lack of emoji's, hashtags and kudos on your page can give you the blues. We've created a facade of a life just for virtual kudos and people pleasing. Where is God in all of this? It's a false state of being and once again, where is God?

We know we can't ultimately serve both God and man and God certainly knows who we really serve and whose pleasure we crave the most (1 Thessalonians 2:4). We cannot love the glory from man more than we love the glory from God.

Saints, whatever you do, do it heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. (Colossians 3:23-24, Ephesians 6:8). Every time we prefer the glory of man to the glory of God, we believe the terrifying lie that the stray crumbs of human praise will be more satisfying than the feast that awaits us.

Our service and honor of others is to be an outflow of our worship to God and desire to please Him alone (Col. 3:23). There is nothing that matters more than the pleasure of God!

Min. Lisa Bailey-Harper
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: Where are you trying to fit in? Where is God calling you to stand out?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

DAY 13

“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?”

– Job 38:4

WHEN GOD ASKS A QUESTION

When God asks a question, the purpose is always much greater than a single answer. When God asks Adam and Eve, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9), or Moses, “What’s in your hand?” (Exodus 4:2); when God queries the Prophet Elijah and Job about their whereabouts (1 Kings 19:9 and Job 38:4); God is not focused on gaining new knowledge. God is using questions to enlarge the understanding of the one to whom the question is posed.

By pursuing the questions God asks, Job learns that God’s attentive care of creation, all of creation, knows no limit. Adam and Eve realize nothing can be hidden from an all wise, all knowing, God. And, Moses and Elijah recognize the power of God to take the ordinary and use it (and them) for extraordinary purposes, even to save a people.

Beloved, when God places questions before us, God is inviting us to pursue the question, not for a straightforward answer, but for the new ways we might understand God’s care for us, God’s desire for truth and God’s unending power to save. When God asks a question, by faith, our proper response is, “Yes God, what is it you wish for me to learn? Make me ready God, ready to learn.”

Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque
Assistant to the Pastor for Village

JOURNAL QUESTION: What question(s) is God asking you?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

DAY 14

“Shall not the judge of the earth do right?”

– Genesis 18:25

DO THE RIGHT THING

The story of Abraham is a story about his journey with God, learning to live into a promise he cannot see. Throughout his journey, God shows up from time to time and talks to Abram, who responds with belief, sacrifice, questions, doubt, and in this instance, a challenge. God tells Abraham about his plans to destroy Sodom which leads Abraham to ask a profound ethical question about the balance between God’s judgment and mercy, “Shall not the judge of the earth do right?”

What a powerfully complicated question. As far as Abraham is concerned, God cannot justifiably destroy an entire city for wickedness if there are even a handful of righteous there, and he negotiates until God agrees that the city will be spared for as few as ten righteous people. In the end, there were not even ten righteous people and the city was destroyed. So, what was the point of this whole exchange?

Remember that God is behind all the action. God has a plan and decides to discuss it with Abraham before he executes it. Wait, what? I wonder if God’s disclosure to Abraham is an invitation for Abraham to ask questions. I wonder if God’s response is to make sure Abram learns to always take a stand for justice.

Abraham’s question is our question. We long to see justice. We want to understand why some people suffer and others escape justice. God’s invitation to Abraham and to us is to always take a stand and to always speak up for justice. Sometimes we will see God move in our lifetime.

Who should we be praying for?

Rev. Dr. Judy Fentress-Williams
Senior Assistant to the Pastor

JOURNAL QUESTION: What are you hoping that God will make right?

PRAYER GOAL: 20 minutes

DAY 15

*“How can you believe since you accept glory from one another,
but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?”*

– John 5:44

WHO DO YOU BELIEVE?

This is Jesus’ response to the religious leaders who were questioning him after healing a man on the Sabbath, which was thought to be unlawful. The Greek word used for glory here can also be translated to judgement, excellence, and good opinion. The religious leaders overvalued themselves and depended on their own judgement and opinion, which is why they missed Jesus’s true identity and purpose. Jesus senses their distrust and acts as his own defense attorney. He reminded them that both Moses and John the Baptist testified to the coming of Jesus. Not only that, but God, himself, declared that Jesus was his son, and in him, He was well pleased. In other words, Jesus brought receipts, while the religious leaders brought opinions. This is a lesson for us in a time where society values glory and glam over substance and science. But the truth is in actions and receipts. What receipts do you have from God? You’re living through a pandemic and God woke you up this morning are good ones to start with. Trust God’s actions over people’s opinions.

Rev. Dr. Lisa Ashe
Associate Minister

JOURNAL QUESTION: What areas of your life do you feel are getting out of your control?

PRAYER GOAL: 30 minutes

DAY 16

“Do you realize what I have done for you?”

– John 13:12.

WHEN I LOOK BACK!

I grew up in a house where discipline was a part of our daily lives. My mother had to be a strong and beautiful woman because my dad was sick and suffered from mental illness. In a harsh and unfair world towards Black and Brown children, my mom sometimes had to be even tougher on us. As an average kid struggling academically, where my fun was perceived as mischief, and my existence is a threat to the world, I was confused on how a God could love me unconditionally. The feeling of God truly having my back and wanting a relationship with me provided me with this rare comfort. God loves me in my wrongdoing! Wow! More importantly, the same patient, love, and peace God gave to me, God also wanted me to share with others in my same situation. When I think of all the good God has done towards me as a child and the blessings of life, health, and happiness I have received as an adult, my soul shouts out hallelujah. How can I ever forget God’s goodness? For what God had done to me, I am even more committed to demonstrating the same love, compassion, and patience with my sisters, brothers, and all of God’s people throughout the world. Let us be the light of the world, walk humbly with our God and let love and justice be our guide forever.

Rev. Archange Antoine
2021 Ministerial Intern

JOURNAL QUESTION: What has God done for you?

PRAYER GOAL: 30 minutes

DAY 17

“How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.”

– Psalm 119:9

MAY THE YOUTH REMAIN PURE

Dear Lord, our Creator, and our Sustainer, how can the young remain pure? In a world full of wickedness, hurt, harm and abuse, a world filled with temptations for us to live outside of your will, how can the young remain pure? We know the answers are many but thankfully you oh' wise and gracious God, gives us an answer that cuts directly to the point, and that answer is by living according to your Word. Through the instructions you have given us in your Holy Word the young can remain pure in heart and in mind. By remaining close to you dear Lord we have no choice but for our souls to be refined, for our spirit to continually be replenished by the goodness that radiates from your Spirit. We have no other option but to thank you for your purifying, Word, for the incredible devotion and incomprehensible love that you show to our fallen world and being.

We ask that you continue to draw us nearer to the well that sustains our lives and purifies our flesh, so that we not stumble or fall. Keep us close to you so that temptation suffocates and your righteousness reigns. Push us to be the best version of ourselves so that we may be used to help create a better world for our neighbor. We thank you because we are designed and crafted by you, the Almighty, who cares for us and sticks closer to us than a brother. The one and only true God that insists that we have life and have it more abundantly. We are your beloved and through our lives we desire to glorify you by living according to your Word and loving one another according to your example and instruction. May the young forever walk in the righteousness of your grace and mercy, may the young continue to be refined by the Refiner.

Min. Gilbert L. Barney
2021 Ministerial Intern

JOURNAL QUESTION: Where are you being tempted the most?

PRAYER GOAL: 30 minutes

DAY 18

“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

– Genesis 18:14, NIV

AN AWESOME WONDER

Have you ever been faced with an impossible situation? Did you calculate the odds and conclude there is no way things will turn in your favor? Maybe you're mourning the death of a loved one and grief has you paralyzed and withdrawn from a posture of peace. Have you experienced heartbreak or betrayal from someone you granted too much access. Are you in a season that no matter how hard you try you can't shake the feelings of pain, hurt and inadequacy? If yes, was your answer then maybe you like Sarah, have a laugh in your spirit. Sarah was in a state of disbelief so much so she laughed at the thought of bearing a son at her old age. The Lord hears her laughter and asks her a crucial question, "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?" The Hebrew verb in this verse is used throughout scripture to signify the great wonders and works of God. In other words, God wants to know if Sarah believes in the wondrous power of the Lord. We experience the wondrous works of God through our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. When Jesus performs miracles throughout the gospels he shows up in impossible circumstances. As disciples of Christ, we are not called to the possible but our faith ought to push us to pursue the impossible. Seek Jesus in the impossible. Believe in his power and see the manifestation of God's wonders. In this season where there is a laugh in your spirit, God is asking "Do you believe I have the power to do this for you?" An Awesome Wonder requires believers with wondrous faith.

Rev. Tamesha Mills
2021 Ministerial Intern

JOURNAL QUESTION: What is at the top of your prayer list?

PRAYER GOAL: 30 minutes

DAY 19

“Am I my brother’s keeper?”

– Genesis 4:9

LAVA GAMES

Growing up, I remember when my brothers and I would play a game called “The Floor is Lava”. The dark red carpet that lined our living room floor made for a great prop in our game. In an effort to win, we would claim our mother’s couches as landing spots for ourselves from the fiery lava we created in our toddler imaginations. When my brother would lose his tooth because I did everything possible to win, the game was no longer fun. There were consequences when we prioritized the chance to win over the safety of our siblings.

In the book of Genesis, Cain asks the infamous question, “am I my brother’s keeper?” after killing his brother for having a more favorable offering for God. Before he murders his brother, God asked Cain, “why are you angry? If you do right, won’t you be accepted? But if you do not do right, sin is crouching at your door. Its desire is for you but you must master it.” It seems that God was giving Cain a hint that would have saved his brother’s life. Perhaps, doing right and winning is not about producing the “right” product but about mastering what seeks to master you. When we can master envy, pride, anger, greed, and the multitude of sins that try to keep us away from God and our family of faith, that is when we truly win. But when we let sin master us, the whole world is lava where your brothers’ and sisters’ blood cries out from it. No one wins. Take the time today to think about how you may have chosen what seemed like “winning” over the love and protection of those with whom God has entrusted you. What can you do to reorder your priorities and answer Cain’s question correctly? “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Yes, we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers. Let us pray to learn how to best “keep” them in our lives and master the sins that try to keep us from them and God.

Rev. Barbara Florvil Lavarin
Assistant to the Pastor for Children and Youth

JOURNAL QUESTION: How can you support the needs of someone else?

PRAYER GOAL: 30 minutes

DAY 20

“Did God really say?”

– Genesis 3:1

THE VERY FIRST QUESTION

Somehow, right when things are clear in life, the dust and grime of confusion makes its way to us. In Genesis chapters 1 and 2, we learn of a world that God creates by His Hand and Voice. There is no confusion about the creation of earth because it was as clear and as bright as the day. It was as God declared “good.” On the day that God created man and woman, God made it abundantly clear that now “it was very good.” As we were created, humans helped to make God’s view of creation “very good”.

It is no wonder that the first question in all of history was a question about what God said. The serpent comes to pose a question- “Did God really say, you must not eat from any tree of the garden?” He seems to be asking a logistical, technical question about which trees are for what and why they would not have access to a particular tree. However, the serpent is really asking a question about what God said on the very last day of creation - “Did God really say... that you were already very good?” In other words, the serpent is asking- “are you really enough as you are? Are you not in need of something more than what God has given you? Are you really as good as God says you are?” No fruit, no opportunity and no person should ever be so tempting as to confuse what you know God thinks about you. Whenever you feel confusion or doubt about who you are, assure yourself that God really did say that you are enough. Assure yourself today that God created you on purpose just as you are. Assure yourself that you are already very good and that nothing can be added to you to make you better than what the Creator has already created. Today, challenge yourself to consider the moments you have felt muddiness of doubt cloud your memory of what God has already shared about how loved and complete you are in God.

Rev. Marc Lavarin
Assistant to the Pastor for Online Ministry

JOURNAL QUESTION: Why are you second guessing yourself?

PRAYER GOAL: 30 minutes

DAY 21

“In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!” Have faith in God, Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, Go throw yourself into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

– Mark 11: 20-25, NIV

Life is full of challenges that test one’s faith. Subsequently, life’s challenges ask a most important question...where is your faith? To answer, one is called to seek and/or discover where their faith lies. Is their faith in friends, family, miracles, and technology, to name a few? Along the journey of seeking the origin and focus of faith, we like the disciples in this story are told by Jesus , “Have faith in God.”

The disciples in this story have witnessed the withering of a fig tree that had been cursed by Jesus. As the disciples call Jesus’ attention to the withered fig tree, Jesus does not acknowledge the fig tree but calls their attention to the foundation that produces signs and wonders...faith in God. Jesus calls all, even today, to believe in and place faith in God and not merely the manifestations of God’s power.

Like the disciples in the story, we are called to place our faith in God without doubt. When faith in God is present in our challenges, we are in the right position for mighty acts to take place. In the words of an old gospel song, “If you trust and never doubt, He will surely bring you out, take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.”

Rev. Marla C. Hawkins
Assistant to the Pastor for Children

JOURNAL QUESTION: What has God allowed to wither away during this fast?

PRAYER GOAL: 30 minutes

FINAL DAY OF REFLECTION

JOURNAL QUESTION: How has this fast changed you?

PRAYER GOAL: 30 minutes

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN SEEK 2022!

CONGRATULATIONS

YOU'VE COMPLETED SEEK 2022. TODAY IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO
WRITE HOW THIS EXPERIENCE HAS CHANGED YOU!

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
- ½ 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”



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