



SECOND CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

2024 PRAYER & FASTING  
*Guide*

*“Discipleship: Spreading the Gospel  
Beyond the Walls in A Digital World”*

Matthew 28:19-20

1 Chronicles 12:32

*Twenty-One Days of Fasting and Prayer for Spiritual Renewal and Deep Change*  
January 8, 2024 - January 28, 2024

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## Connecting With The Second Calvary Baptist Church Prayer Line

Join us for online prayer and devotion.

Telephone: **319-527-3544**

Alternate number for T-Mobile and Metro PCS subscribers:

**Text “Call Me” to 319-527-3544 and you will be connected to the call immediately.**

**Daily - 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.**

**Weekly - SCBC Corporate Day of Fasting and Prayer**  
Thursdays, 12 Noon

**First Friday Fervent Corporate Prayer**  
7 PM – First Friday of each month

**Share Your Experience Online**  
Use hashtag #SCBCNorfolk

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## SCBC Theme for 2024

# “Discipleship: Spreading the Gospel Beyond the Walls in A Digital World”

Matthew 28:19-20 | 1 Chronicles 12:32

Dr. Geoffrey V. Guns, Senior Pastor  
Second Calvary Baptist Church

The evolution of technology has ushered in a revolutionary period of church growth, community engagement and global evangelism. As congregations continue to recover and respond to the global health crisis, a new way of thinking about and doing ministry is emerging. The use and incorporation of technology is here to stay. I think of the digital revolution as the age of the “Emerging Church.” I call it the emerging church because we have yet to see how the Holy Spirit will move in this age of digital engagement. The next seven years will be a time of rapid and continued change and the congregations that thrive will be those who adapt to the times and integrate technology more rapidly into their ministries. Over the past ten years we have been incorporating technology in many ways. The use of technology will present Second Calvary Baptist Church with a host of new opportunities for growth and community engagement.

I am amazed at the number of congregations and pastors who see social media and the use of technology as insignificant and irrelevant. I used to think that way, until I began to notice how technology was changing everything about how we connect with others, travel, conduct business, and live our daily lives. Furthermore, when I enrolled in the Digital Marketing Program at George Washington University, my entire perspective changed. I realized that social media and digital marketing combined with technology are three of the most powerful tools we have for doing evangelism. Consider this, nearly 3.9 billion people worldwide use Facebook daily. This is to say nothing of the billions of people who connect to some form of social media daily. What should we do? First, embrace technology. Second, look for ways to incorporate it into the various ministries you lead or in which you serve. Third, support what Second Calvary Baptist Church is seeking to do through the use of technology.

*Pastor Guns*

## The Power of Prayer and Fasting

January is a special month for the Second Calvary Baptist Church Family. Not only is it the beginning of the New Year, but also the start of reaching or achieving a spiritual goal. Fasting is deliberately not eating food and, in some cases, not drinking water for the purpose of reaching a spiritual goal or achieving a spiritual goal. The priority is not to be on food intake, but a God intake, thus submitting our wills to God and allowing Him to draw us into a place of heightened spiritual awareness. Sincere fasting cleanses the heart.

### Four Types of Fasts

Fasting reduces the amount of food or liquids consumed over a specified period. When one abstains from eating for medical reasons this is referred to as detoxification of the body through the limiting of food. However, fasting is one way we develop a deeper life and faith in God. During the period in which one is fasting, time is set aside for prayer, reading Scripture, and meditation. Sometimes people will engage in doing good deeds as a part of their time of consecration.

There are several types of fasts. The one you choose is between you and God. He will honor your best sacrifice for spiritual renewal and deep inner cleansing.

Type one—a **Full Fast**. Drink only liquids. This is a normal fast in which one may abstain from eating food, although one may drink liquids over a specific time.

Type two—a **Partial Fast** from 6:00 am to 12:00 pm, or from sunup to sundown. A partial fast is when one limits the amount of food or liquids for a specific time.

Type three—an **Absolute Fast** where one ceases to eat or drink for a specified time. You should consult your family physician before beginning a fast. If there are severe medical reasons that will limit your ability to fast from food or water, you should **not** attempt to do this. Rather, look for other ways that you can fast or participate, such as limiting how much time you spend watching television or surfing the Internet.

Type four—**The Daniel Fast**. Eat fruits and vegetables, and drink water and juice; **no** meats, sweets, or bread. The website <https://draxe.com/daniel-fast/> provides information about the benefits of implementing aspects, if not all, of The Daniel Fast during our time of prayer and fasting. Additional references are cited in the End Notes and the Resource section of this guide.

May you go forth with joy and be led by His peace during our time of spiritual renewal.

## The Daniel Fast

There are two references in the book of Daniel from which “The Daniel Fast” is drawn.

Chapter 1 describes how Daniel and his three friends ate only vegetables, and drank only water. At the end of a 10-day trial period, Daniel and his friends appeared healthier than their peers who ate the rich foods from the royal table.

In Chapter 10, Daniel fasts abstaining from pleasant food, meat, and wine. You too can gain a healthier body and clearer mind by following this fast in moderation.

### Tips

- Engage in lots of prayer; we need God's strength and guidance.
- Keep your diet simple. Avoid highly processed foods in favor of simply prepared or raw vegetables.
- If for any reason you eat something you should not have during the fast, it is better to ask for forgiveness and continue than to stop the fast.
- If you are experiencing weakness or headaches, drink at least eight (8) glasses of water each day. Often we do not understand just how much our body needs water, especially when fasting.
- Be careful not to drink too much water, because too much liquid can be as bad as not enough.
- Set a goal for how long you will fast. Ultimately, you may want to continue The Daniel Fast longer than first intended.
- Have a healthy stash of nuts on hand, especially at work, to avoid those co-workers who always want to feed you.
- You may want to supplement your diet with multivitamins.

## Warnings

- During the time of fasting you will face temptations; resist them in the name of Jesus Christ.
- When you have finished fasting, eat light meals and slowly build up to your normal diet.

## Things You Will Need

- A Bible
- A place and time(s) to pray
- A good variety of fruits and vegetables

### Scripture References for Fasting:

- Matthew 6:16-18; Matthew 9:14-15; Luke 18:9-14

### Relation to Prayer and Reading of the Word:

- 1 Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18; Nehemiah 1:4; Daniel 9:3, 20; Joel 2:12; Luke 2:37; Acts 10:30; Acts 13:2

### Corporate Fasting:

- 1 Samuel 7:5-6; Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 9:1-3; Joel 2:15-16; Jonah 3:5-10; Acts 27:33-37

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Remember, it is the attitude of a heart sincerely seeking Him to which God responds with a blessing (*Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 14:12; 1 Corinthians 8:8*).



## Times for Prayer and Fasting

Two time periods are suggested for fasting and prayer:

**First**—a partial fast of six hours (6 a.m. – 12 noon).

**Second**—a full day fast of twelve hours (6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.).

You can decide which fast works for you. Feel free to modify your fast according to your spiritual health and physical needs.

**Fasting will begin on Monday, January 08, 2024.**

**Regular meals may resume on Sunday, January 28, 2024, after 6 pm.**

### Using and Following the Prayer and Fasting Guide

Many people spend a great deal of their lives complaining and looking for reasons why other people are not what we believe they should be. Deep inner personal change is one of the most difficult things to do, yet if we are willing to embark upon the journey, our lives, families, marriages, professions, and ministries will become so much more vibrant.

During the next twenty-one days, we will embark together on a journey of spiritual renewal and growth. Here are the steps to follow to get the most out of this period:

1. Resolve to follow the plan for the full twenty-one days, even when it looks like you cannot fulfill it. **Try not to miss a single day.**
2. Read the daily readings and take notes or write down your observations from what you glean.
3. Resolve to participate in one of the daily fasts – 6 or 12 hours. If you cannot fast every day, resolve to fast every other day or every third day. Establish how you will proceed. Consider The Daniel Fast, which is a partial fast that consists of fruits, vegetables, and water only. Eliminate all meat, dairy, and sugar products from the diet. Good results are guaranteed.

## Twenty-One Days of Prayer and Fasting

### “Discipleship: Spreading the Gospel Beyond the Walls in A Digital World”

And so, it is written: “From Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chronicles 12:32). Men who understand the culture in which they lived also knew what steps were needed to face the winds of change. Should we not be as discerning as the sons of Issachar—to respond in wisdom and to move as the Holy Spirit leads us? As we focus on the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20 states, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20a] teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” We begin with prayer.

Eternal God, Our Father, thank You for the Holy Spirit, our promised Comforter, who guides believers into the seasons, times, and purposes for everything under the sun (Ecclesiastes. 3:1). Teach Holy Spirit. Disciple the believers during these twenty-one days of consecration. We seek Your face to know what we must do to observe all that You have commanded—to harness the power of the Internet—to discern the spirit of truth from the spirit of error. Forgive us when we yield to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and to the pride of life rather than to the fruit of the Spirit. May Your voice resound over the voice of the culture. Strengthen our resolve to fulfill the Great Commission beyond the walls. In the Name that is above every name, Jesus the Christ, Amen.

**Week One—Time of Rest.** Jesus often slipped away to rest in the Father’s Presence. He gently reminds us that it is “He who will refresh the weary and satisfy the soul” (Jeremiah 31:25). May The Lord restore souls this week as we slow down our social media usage. For some, incorporating a digital detox is warranted. Draw closer to Jesus. May we find ourselves in His presence—resting at His feet.

**Week Two—Effective Teaching** ponders, “What produces obedience?” We will give special attention to, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” Disciples are to teach and obey the commands Jesus instructed. Can a teacher engage in effective discipleship without passion for the subject matter? As we continue to rest at His feet, allow the Holy Spirit to illuminate our level of submission in following the Master Teacher. “Lord, how can a young man cleanse his ways? By taking heed according to Thy Word” (Psalm 119:9).

**Week Three—Influence the Culture** proves that “to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6). Sound doctrine produces a biblical perspective, poised to be oppositional to the current trends of our time. Like the sons of Issachar, we know what to do—we influence the culture by presenting a Christian perspective, discipling others to observe all that Jesus commanded, watching as well as praying, modeling obedience, and resting in His sovereignty.

*Ministry of Congregational Spirituality*

## DAY 1: Monday, JANUARY 8, 2024

**Scripture:** "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:6

**Devotional Title:** The Most Important Conversation of All by Wendy Speake

**Study:** Matthew 6:5–6

### **Meditate:**

As I prepared for my first annual social media fast, I was particularly excited to spend more time in prayer. Unfortunately, for the majority of the year, talking with God takes a back seat in my life because I'm too busy talking with everyone else. I get distracted and I forget. However, when I fast, I remember. When I take a break from the constant chatter online, I am reminded how desperate I am for the most important conversation of all.

Scottish minister Andrew Bonar once said, "Fasting is abstaining from anything that hinders prayer." If your prayer life has atrophied from underuse, you can use time you free up during a social media fast to flex your prayer muscles again. Since you're offline, you won't be tempted to do it in a way that will be seen or liked by others. Quietly, in your private place of prayer, you can humbly engage with God again, not only for your own benefit but also on behalf of others.

When our heads are bowed before the Lord and not our screens, revelation and transformation pour into our lives and into the lives of those we're interceding for.

Online chatter is loud and distracting, but a time is coming, and fast approaching, when the online world and the rest of this world will pass away. At that time, we will find ourselves standing before the Lord. The eternal chorus of our dance will be, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:12). A day is coming when all other songs will cease, and this one will echo on for eternity.

### **Pray:**

Lord, teach us to obey. Break down our resistance, soften our hearts, and allow us to experience full life in you. Fill us with your grace, we pray. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus:**

Jeremiah 29:12

"Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you."

## DAY 2: Tuesday, JANUARY 9, 2024

**Scripture:** “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

**Devotional Title:** Silence and Stillness by Wendy Speake

**Study:** Isaiah 30:15; 2 Corinthians 1:3

### **Meditate:**

There are so many things I mindlessly turn to each day—so many things I eat, read, watch, buy, and consume. But God’s invitation to His disciples was, and remains, “Come to Me. On the beach, on the waves, on the hillside, in your home—wherever you are, I Am. Come to Me.”

As I turn on my computer: Come to Me, I want to connect with you.

As I make a phone call to talk through my stress with a friend: Call on Me!

As I scroll through Facebook: Don’t follow them, follow Me.

As I open up Instagram: Come to Me, open up to Me.

As I binge watch another late-night TV show: Come to Me.

As I start a text, complaining to a friend about my day: Delete that; don’t complain to her, come to Me.

As I link over to Amazon Prime for a little retail therapy: Come to Me, I’m a Wonderful Counselor.

As I run in to Starbucks for something sweet: My words are sweet as honey. Come to Me.

As I turn to comfort food: Come to Me, I’m the Great Comforter. Come to Me.

We each have much to do and many people to respond to, but I believe Jesus when He said, “But seek first [God’s] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

Lifting our eyes, lifting our heads, and lifting our hands to Him in worship and to others in service is what real life is all about. This is where the action is! Don’t stumble along; look up. When you live with your eyes up, you’ll be less likely to trip up!

**Pray:** Dear Lord, I’ve taken my apps captive; help me to take my thoughts captive too. I want to submit my whole life, including my thought life, to You. It requires silence and stillness to unpack the noise in my head. Thank You for inviting me to come to You. Teach me to quiet my mind so that I might know Your mind. In the quieting, counseling name of Jesus, Amen.

### **Prayer Focus:**

Christ is the One who is the Word, and He’s leading us now. Follow Him. Before you turn your gaze back to everyone else you’re following, stay committed to following Him!

## DAY 3: Wednesday, JANUARY 10, 2024

**Scripture:** “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”  
Matthew 11:28

**Devotional Title:** “Come to Me” by Wendy Speake

**Study:** Mark 1:17; John 21:17–19

### **Meditate:**

Jesus invited His disciples to follow Him at the beginning of their friendship, and after that He kept inviting them, over and over again. Consider Peter, who received his very first “follow me” in Matthew 4:19, then heard it again after Jesus asked three times, “Do you love me?” (John 21:17-19). Jesus does not offer a one-time invitation but a constant wooing. How gracious of the Lord to keep inviting us still!

Perhaps, in recent years, you can’t hear God as you once could. If that’s where you find yourself today, I understand. However, I have learned from experience that it’s not because the Lord has grown quiet; the world has simply gotten so loud it drowns Him out.

While Jesus clearly said, “Come, follow Me,” I wear myself out following everyone else. Perhaps you’re tired too, and ready for a rest. Jesus extended this invitation in Matthew 11:28, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” While I memorized this verse years ago, recently I’ve felt the Lord speak this invitation to me in light of all the other things I run to, turn to, or “come to” each day: *Come to Me*.

Are you weary? If you’re worn out and wiped out, exhausted from running to all the false gods this world has to offer, run to the One who invited you to bring your weariness to Him in the first place. He can carry your burdens. Amazon Prime can’t do it. Facebook can’t do it. Netflix can’t do it. And all the people you’re following online can’t do it either. It’s not their job to lighten your load or brighten your countenance. It’s God’s job. Don’t follow them, follow Me—Come to Me.

### **Pray:**

Dear Lord, Your Word isn’t a far-off record of an old and distant God. You are speaking today to my listening heart, “Come to Me.” You’re inviting me now. Holy Spirit, give me the courage to stop opening my phone and instead open my ears to Your quiet voice. I’ve been stubborn, but I’m so grateful for Your oft-repeated invitation, “Follow Me.” Nothing else has ever been able to get the job done. Only You have that power to meet my needs as I follow You. And so, I’m praying in Your name as I say yes to following You today. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

Mark 1:17

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

## DAY 4: Thursday, JANUARY 11, 2024

**Scripture:** Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Matthew 16:24

**Devotional Title:** Trading in Our Distractions by Wendy Speake

**Study:** Matthew 22:36–39; Colossians 3:1–2

**Meditate:**

My name is Wendy, and I’m exhausted. Perhaps it has something to do with late nights spent streaming movies, or maybe it’s because I don’t have any quiet moments without a screen stimulating me. I’m all tweeted out. I need to unplug for a season so that I can plug in to the One who seasons me. I want to be salty again. I want to be light-bright too, with energy to serve and smile, but I’m as drained as the battery on my phone—and I know I’m not alone.

We all seem to be looking down these days. I wonder if that’s why many of us feel down too. We perpetually bow our heads, but not in prayer. While we might believe prayer works, we don’t have the time to get on our knees because we’re on our phones. Checking in online, responding to a text, watching a YouTube video—then looking up just in time to snap a picture of the sunset. As we post it to social media, we realize our neck aches and that we forgot to switch out the laundry.

In Matthew 22:36–39, an expert in the Levitical law asked Jesus, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” This man was really asking Him, “What matters most?” “Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Nothing in my life has made loving God with all my heart, soul, and mind more difficult than my constant connection to my devices. The same is true when it comes to loving my real-life neighbors. Devices are divisive.

I know this feels countercultural, and indeed it is. But Jesus said if we’re going to follow Him, we must deny ourselves (Matthew 16:24).

**Pray:**

Dear Lord, You are good and good for me, and You desire to grow me up to be good, just like You. I need more time with You, Lord. I don’t want anything to get in the way of that sanctifying relationship. I am choosing You, the good Gift-Giver, over any good gift. In the good name of Jesus, Amen.

### Prayer Focus

Let’s look more deeply at what it means to exchange our online distractions for real-life devotion.

## DAY 5: Friday, JANUARY 12, 2024

**Scripture:** “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”  
Matthew 18:20

**Devotional Title:** In Real Life by Wendy Speake

**Study:** John 15:12; Galatians 6:2

### **Meditate:**

I sat on my couch with Chanda as we talked about what she’d learned as she fasted from social media. She confessed, “The first couple of weeks were lonely. It’s as though I had to learn all over again how to be social.”

Online, we use the acronym IRL. It stands for “in real life” and refers not to our online people but to those with whom we intimately do real life. When social media becomes our native tongue, we’re left tongue-tied and socially awkward IRL.

While the primary purpose of fasting from social media is to replace online people with the person of Jesus Christ, it’s also important to replace online people with real-life people. The goal of fasting is always to lay down what is temporary and pick up what is eternal. God created us as spiritual beings who would live forever in His presence. So, when we take the time to invest in another person, we are sowing into what is eternal.

While we can be honest and authentic, even transparent, online, true vulnerability must be saved for the safe haven of close community, where we “carry each other’s burdens, and in this way . . . fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). It’s hard to carry another’s heavy burden with a phone in our hands. When we empty our hands, we can carry furniture into moving vans, hold babies while new moms take showers, place casseroles in ovens, and grab hold of another’s hands in prayer. Today, make a call and extend an invitation for some face-to-face fellowship with a friend you’ve been too busy for. It will be a blessing to both you and the one you reach out to!

### **Pray:**

Lord, I need to put down my phone and look up into the eyes of my friends. It’s been a while, so it feels a little awkward. Give me the courage to invite people into my often-messy real life, where meals aren’t photoshopped and curated for optimal Instagram likes. Help me to value what You value, Lord: the eternal souls of people. You’re the best friend of all, so I ask this in Your name. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

Galatians 6:2

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

## DAY 6: Saturday, JANUARY 13, 2024

**Scripture:** “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:5

**Devotional Title:** Discernment in Social Media by Tim Ferrara

**Study:** Proverbs 10:19-21

### **Meditate:**

Christians are in a new age where utilizing discernment in their social media usage is an important skill to refine in their journey of growing and walking with the Lord. It is important to be aware of the dangers and guard against them.

If you compare yourself to anyone else, you will always find things that he or she has that you do not. Social media statuses and posts are simply smoke and mirrors. You see the best of people every day; you don't see the husband and wife arguing, the kids screaming, and the pets destroying the furniture. You see people with make-up on, in fancy clothes, in exotic places, living their “best lives” now. Rarely do you see the hurt, the fears, the depression, the anger, and the sadness that the same people hide behind their pictures...

Paul encouraged the Corinthian Church to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5b). If social media causes you to sin by negatively influencing your thought life, practice allowing the Holy Spirit to help control your thoughts and speak Scripture in that moment to remind you of God's faithfulness and goodness in your life. We are called to “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess. 5:18).

We do have a guideline in the Bible as Christians with our actions. “Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). We should not seek glory for ourselves. We do not need to be “right” simply for the sake of being right and winning an argument. People are not saved through a social media argument; you cannot win someone over with facts but with love.

### **Pray:**

Holy Spirit, grant wisdom so that I may discern the effective way to engage as a Christian on social media. Forgive me for not withdrawing from various media threads/content that feeds the flesh more than the inner man.

### **Prayer Focus**

Be spirit-led about our social media content and usage—as a consumer or as an influencer.



## DAY 7: Sunday, JANUARY 14, 2024

**Scripture:** “The dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.” Revelation 12:17

**Devotional Title:** No Undercover Christians by Kent Van Til

**Study:** Revelation 12:7-17

### **Meditate:**

Obedying God’s law will make you a target of Satan. Sorry to bring bad news, but it is true, and it makes sense. Satan is the lawless one. Satan—the great dragon, the serpent, the tempter—rebelled against God, who is right and just, who wrote his law into the universe.

Satan knows who all the followers of Christ are. We are “those who keep God’s commands” and hold to the testimony about Jesus. We are not wearing moral camouflage. We are recognized as followers of Christ because we aim to live by God’s law of love.

So, Satan is constantly after us. He tempts us. He mocks us. “What, you think you need to be sexually pure? How naïve.” “You think you need to give one day a week to God? You’ll never get ahead.” “You think you need to tell the truth, even when you’re online? No, online communication is different.”

There is no end to the ways Satan can tempt us. Ever since he broke the law of God, he searches for others to join his rebellion. And that happens when we leave the path of God’s truth and follow the lies of Satan.

### **Pray:**

Lord, help me to overcome temptation. I know that Satan wants me to ignore or disobey you, but you want me to love and obey you. Help me to be victorious, in Christ, I pray. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

As long as you live, Satan will tempt you to turn away from God. And we turn away if we ignore or disobey God’s law. This is the battle of our lives.

## DAY 8: Monday, JANUARY 15, 2024

**Scripture:** “Go and make disciples ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20

**Devotional Title:** Teach Them to Obey by Jerry Dykstra

**Study:** Matthew 28:16-20

### **Meditate:**

People who are devoted to the apostles' teaching are people who obey Jesus. They recognize and submit to His authority. In Matthew's account of Jesus' final words before His ascension to heaven, Jesus reminds His followers that He has been given all authority. He is Lord. As Lord, He expects that His followers will obey what He has commanded.

But we have a problem with the idea of submission. Throughout history wars have been fought to preserve freedom and to protect people from repression and tyranny. Most cultures today value individual freedom and chafe at the idea of submitting to a higher authority--and yet in our relationship with God we are called to obey Christ's commands.

But this obedience does not call for submission to a tyrannical taskmaster. It opens us to a deepening relationship with the loving Father and Creator who plans our lives and provides for our every need. Our heavenly Father knows our needs before we even ask. He knows what is best for us and will never do anything to harm us. His plan and commandments are intended to give us a way of living that's far better than anything else.

### **Pray:**

Lord, teach us to obey. Break down our resistance, soften our hearts, and allow us to experience full life in you. Fill us with your grace, we pray. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

The greatest minds throughout history have never improved on God's plan. Simply obeying everything Christ has commanded will lead to a rich, abundant life.

## DAY 9: Tuesday, JANUARY 16, 2024

**Scripture:** “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”  
John 14:21

**Devotional Title:** What Does It Take To Obey? by Ray Stedman Ministries

**Study:** John 14:21-26

### **Meditate:**

To read this, “Obey Me, and you will love Me,” produces a mechanical, dry Christianity with no warmth or joy or glory. But what Jesus says is, “If you love Me, you will obey Me.” It is easy to do, not difficult. Notice that it is not, if you love Me, you will have to keep My commandments. No, it is cause and effect: If you love Me, the result is that you will keep My commandments. That is the secret of all proper behavior in the Christian experience. The proof of our love is obedience.

If it takes love to obey, what produces love? That is the issue.

If you see a Christian disobeying Christ or you are tempted to disobey, what is it that will turn you around and make you obey? It is love. How do you produce love? What will make you love Him? This is what ties together verses 20 and 21. It is that basic secret of our identity that creates love--the Spirit in us, releasing to us the love of Jesus, awakens love from us in return.

Remember how John puts it in his first letter, “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Remembering this awakens love. Or, as Paul puts it in Romans 5, “God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Romans 5:5). Therefore, the way to produce love is to remember who you are, to whom you belong, and who He is—His death, His resurrection, and His unity with you, His present indwelling life. You cannot remind yourself of that without experiencing a renewed sense of His love and feeling gratitude to Him for who He is and what He has done in your life. When that love begins to flow, then you are motivated to obey.

### **Pray:**

Lord, teach me to retreat to that place where I can renew my mind with the realities of my identity in Christ--that I am loved with an everlasting love, filled with Your Spirit, and able to obey by the power at work in me.

### **Prayer Focus**

If it takes love to obey, what produces love?

## DAY 10: Wednesday, JANUARY 17, 2024

**Scripture:** “If you hold to my teaching, you ... will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32

**Devotional Title:** The Liberating Truth by Sergei Sosedkin

**Study:** John 8:31-36

### **Meditate:**

As a Jehovah's Witness for almost forty years, Ilya tried his best to earn his salvation, and he thought he was pretty good at it. But one day he heard a Christian radio program about salvation in Christ. For Ilya this was a real eye-opener. He started studying the Christian Bible and even visited a local Christian church. Today Ilya is a member of an evangelical fellowship, professing Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. He loves talking about the liberating power of the gospel. He says that studying the Bible has helped him break free from all the lies he was taught for so many years.

In our verses for today Jesus teaches about freedom and slavery. For Him these are not just political but mainly spiritual conditions. Jesus' message to us is crystal-clear: things like our religious background, our ethnicity, or our cultural heritage cannot set us free from our slavery to sin. We are too weak to liberate ourselves. Only God's Son can set us free. And we find this real freedom when we hold to His teaching.

Note that "holding to" means much more than just listening to the gospel and politely nodding to it. Holding to Christ's teaching means responding to biblical truth by believing it and changing our behavior. That's how God's truth sets us free. That's how we become God's children. That's how our spiritual journey begins.

### **Pray:**

Heavenly Father, we praise You for the liberating message of the gospel! Open our hearts and minds to Your truth. Give us strength as we seek to hold to Christ's teaching. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

Galatians 5:1

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

## DAY 11: Thursday, JANUARY 18, 2024

**Scripture:** "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42

**Devotional Title:** Devoted to the Apostles' Teaching by Phil Ware

**Study:** Acts 2:42-46

### **Meditate:**

From our experience teaching university students, both my daughter and I are amazed at how many students do not see academic fraud — a.k.a., cheating — as a "big deal!" Devotion to learning, and especially devotion to applying what is learned, are highly undervalued. This situation leaves young adults exposed and ill-equipped for the rapidly changing world that demands constant learning and incorporation and adaptation of knowledge. An online search can give a lot of information but leave the searcher more bewildered by the information than enhanced by true wisdom and knowledge.

In contrast, I have found pockets of disciples all over the world who are committed to the apostles' teaching — to opening the Scriptures, reading the Bible, acquiring the truth from what they have learned, and seeking mentors to help them incorporate and apply what they have learned. This passion, fueled by the Holy Spirit and enhanced by His presence in our lives, helps form us. The apostles were inspired to give us Jesus' truth. The Spirit helps us as we seek to understand and apply that truth. The Spirit is at work among us when we are together and seek the truth. Let's use these early disciples' example to stir us to be devoted to the Scriptures and the apostles' teaching!

### **Pray:**

O Father, thank you for the teaching and examples of Your early inspired and miracle-working witnesses to Jesus. Holy Spirit, I know You are my anointing from the Father to help me know the truth about Jesus. I ask You, Lord Jesus, to make Your presence and truth clear to me as I seek You in the Scriptures. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

Let us exhort one another to engage in Christian Education. May we increase our devotion to Scripture, prayer, and fellowship.

## DAY 12: Friday, JANUARY 19, 2024

**Scripture:** “He also has put in his to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.” Exodus 35:34

**Devotional Title:** Teaching by Inspiration Ministries

**Study:** Exodus 35:34

### **Meditate:**

Bezalel was chosen by God to direct the task of building the tabernacle. Yes, he had the right skills and training. But something else was just as important. Bezalel knew the importance of teaching others.

He recognized that he could not accomplish the task by himself but that others needed to learn these skills. That he had a responsibility to share what he had learned and give others the same kinds of perspective and experience that he had received.

This **commitment to teaching** is central to the plan of God for His people. This was part of His design for the Body of Christ. Paul made this point clearly in his letters to Timothy. He told his young disciple that one of the key attributes of overseers in the church was the ability to teach— (1 Timothy 3:2). That Timothy himself was directed to teach the things he had learned (4:11, 6:2). One of Timothy’s primary responsibilities among Believers was to teach others: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

Paul also recognized that some people were particularly gifted as teachers, with specific abilities. These were teachers given “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12). Each of us, in our own way, should be looking for opportunities to teach others. To realize that everything we have is a gift from God. That we have been blessed, that we might be a blessing to others.

### **Pray:**

Father, thank You for the gifts You have given me. Help me to serve the Body of Christ with these gifts. Use me to impact others with the Gospel. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

Indeed, we have a responsibility to share and teach. To be conduits for the blessings, wisdom, and resources that God has given us.

## DAY 13: Saturday, JANUARY 20, 2024

**Scripture:** “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.”

2 Timothy 4:3-4

**Devotional Title:** Enduring Sound Doctrine by Joshua Infantado

**Study:** 2 Timothy 4:3-4

### **Meditate:**

People who abandon God’s word, His sound doctrine, and teaching, would soon find teachers who would teach them what they wanted to hear instead of what they needed to hear. This tells us that not all popular teachers teach by God’s word. Most of them simply are popular because they teach doctrines that are easy to follow and apply. These teachers are eloquent. They are charismatic. They are influential. Yet, they are just popular because they give what their listeners want. Therefore, people with itching ears would turn away from the truth.

Some people call themselves Christians and believe they can mix unbiblical teachings with God’s word. There are those who believe in the Bible and evolution at the same time. There are those who approve of homosexuality and sinful behaviors and still say, “I love Jesus.” There are those who worship God but at the same time worship money, status, power, and even themselves. You see, people with itchy ears don’t want to hear teachers correcting them. They don’t want to hear about sin, repentance, and good works. They would rather listen to feel-good sermons, sing rock-and-roll worship songs, and treat the church as a social club.

As true followers of the Messiah, we must and should stay faithful to God’s sound doctrine. Let’s not trade God’s truth with false teachers and fables that only please the senses temporarily but lead to destruction.

### **Pray:**

Lord God, tell us what we need to hear. And may we heed all that you say, in Jesus’ name. Amen. by Norman F. Brown, Studying What God Inspired—Today Daily Devotional (todaydevotional.com)

### **Prayer Focus**

2 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”

## DAY 14: Sunday, JANUARY 21, 2024

**Scripture:** “I will teach transgressors Your ways and sinners will be converted to You.”  
Psalm 51:13

**Devotional Title:** I Will Teach Transgressors Your Ways by George Runyan

**Study:** Psalm 51:10-13

### **Meditate:**

A result of our salvation should be to “teach transgressors God’s ways.” Once we deal with our own issue of iniquity (lawlessness) and our sin nature by receiving God’s work to save us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we should turn our attention to others. Evidence of true conversion is a concern for others that are as lost as we once were.

David had asked for a “willing spirit.” Peter tells us that “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). When David recognized his depravity and confessed his sin, he desired to be an instrument to help others that were in the same condition. A “willing spirit” is one that aligns itself with the will of God. The Holy Spirit has come to “reveal the Father’s will.” From that revelation, we are to align ourselves with God’s will and pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us to do the will of God. It is clear, God’s will was to heal David and re-establish Him in God’s Divine Purpose. David, in turn, began to focus on other broken lives around him.

Is our relationship with God all about our need being met or do we also have that component of “a willing spirit” to do God’s will? Another way of expressing this concept would be to ask God to “give us a willingness to do His bidding.” God has called us to be His representative to others. First by wholeness in our own life, and then to declare God’s desire to save and restore others to God’s salvation.

### **Pray:**

Lord, please help me to be willing to do Your will by sharing with others how You forgave my sins and clothed me with Your great salvation so rich and so free. Give me grace to lead others to Your wonderful love and presence.

### **Prayer Focus**

Psalm 51:12-13

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.  
Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.



## DAY 15: Monday, JANUARY 22, 2024

**Scripture:** “[The Spirit] will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:” John 16:8

**Devotional Title:** The Convicting Spirit by Dean Deppe

**Study:** John 16:7-11

### **Meditate:**

The Holy Spirit speaks to the human conscience and convicts us of sin, wrong life decisions, and potential dangers.

I am a collector of tournament golf balls and varieties of Hosta plants. Recently I’ve been convicted that these hobbies can take away from more important pursuits like caring for people and practicing social justice. Even though our Hosta collection reminds me of the Garden of Eden, and even if golf is a great game filled with aesthetic beauty, these things can become distractions. And anything that distracts us from serving God faithfully can become an idol.

The Holy Spirit can also work through us to convict the world of righteousness and judgment. In fact, this should happen through the church. The way we live should be so pure, reflecting the righteousness of Christ, and our truth telling should be so pointed that the culture around us will be called to account.

Lies, cheating, and corruption will be exposed by the pursuit of truth and integrity. Systemic racism will be exposed by the teaching that all people are created in God’s image and equally valued by God. Our culture’s flippancy about the value of life and the unborn will be judged. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and cooperation will convict people of the false values of competing against each other for superiority and getting ahead rather than serving others in Jesus’ name.

### **Pray:**

(Holy) Spirit, convict us of the changes needed in our lives, and guide us to live with Christ’s righteousness, that the evils in the world will be exposed. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

2 Corinthians 2:15-17

Rejoice! For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

## DAY 16: Tuesday, JANUARY 23, 2024

**Scripture:** “Do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience?”  
Romans 2:4

**Devotional Title:** Tolerance by George Young

**Study:** Romans 2:1-8

### **Meditate:**

Most cultures in the world today are appalled by the Bible’s statement that Jesus Christ is the only name “by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). To a lot of people this is a scandal, a stumbling block, a narrow-minded way of thinking.

Glenn Tinder, a Christian professor in Boston, Massachusetts, explains that there is a world of difference separating the Christian’s idea of tolerance from that of the non-Christian. For the Christian, tolerance is an aspect of love. The Christian says, “I am worried about your beliefs because they have eternal consequences. But I will treat you respectfully, as I hope you will treat me. The law of love teaches me that.” This helps to begin respectful communication.

The non-Christian’s idea of tolerance is more an expression of aloofness and unconcern: “I don’t really care what you believe. I won’t bother you if you don’t bother me. There’s no such thing as truth anyhow, so why get upset about it?” This approach cuts off communication about beliefs, faith, and religion.

When Christians express faith in the truth of Christ, it comes across as fanaticism to people who ask, like Pilate, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). But evangelism is an expression of love, of the kindness, tolerance, and patience of God, meant to lead us to repentance.

### **Pray:**

Lord, teach us how to talk about Christ and how to listen. Holy Spirit, work in us so that we can grow to lead others to repentance and eternal life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

Romans 2: 4

Remember when . . . the goodness of God led you to repentance?

## DAY 17: Wednesday, JANUARY 24, 2024

**Scripture:** “Do not conform ... to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:2

**Devotional Title:** Discipled by Algorithms: Where Is ‘Big Tech’ Leading You?  
*by Jason Thacker*

**Study:** Romans 12:1-3

### **Meditate:**

Whether we realize it or not, algorithms are discipling each of us in very particular ways—by curating the news we see, the things we purchase, the entertainment we enjoy, at times functioning in ways that seem almost human—all feeding the sense that this world is ultimately all about you. While AI may seem innocuous at first, it can also have devastating effects on our relationship with God, our spouse, roommates, those in our local church, and our broader communities as we opt for efficiency over wisdom and the virtual over the embodied.

**Algorithms Do Not Rule.** Being trained in wisdom may mean limiting screens, turning off recommendation algorithms and notifications, taking regular sabbaths from social media apps, or even removing some digital distractions from your life—for a season or entirely. Wisdom may mean different practices for different people, but in an age like ours, it will always mean focus and restraint.

While it’s true that algorithmic technologies have the power to not only respond to our behavior but to modify it, conditioning us to act in troubling ways to greater and greater degrees, we are not powerless pawns, and our behavior online is not a foregone conclusion, no matter how subtle and powerful the algorithms may become.

### **Pray:**

May my time on the Internet and social media cause me to have a deeper communion with the Holy Spirit and a deeper love for the written word and the Word made flesh. In Jesus’ name, Amen. Retrieved from: [A Prayer for Christians on Social Media | Anchored in Christ \(kevinhalloran.net\)](https://www.kevinhalloran.net/2018/05/14/a-prayer-for-christians-on-social-media/) - paragraph 12.

### **Prayer Focus**

In this algorithmic age — given what we know of the nature of our sin and our vulnerability to temptation — is not if these tools are shaping us, but rather if these technologies are transforming us to be more like Christ, or if we are being discipled into conformity to this world.

## DAY 18: Thursday, JANUARY 25, 2024

**Scripture:** “You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean ... creatures that may be eaten.” Leviticus 11:47

**Devotional Title:** The Diet of Distinction by Arie C. Leder

**Study:** Acts 14:1-7

### **Meditate:**

People's diets vary from one culture to another. Rice and beans for breakfast, anyone? A chocolate sauce over chicken? Whale blubber? We often identify our cultures by the foods we eat.

When God separated Israel from the other nations, He gave the people instructions for clean living and working in His presence. At the same time, God designated some of the world's animals as clean. These were for Israel's sacrifices and daily food. God's people were not to eat the meat of unclean animals. Their daily food reminded them of who they were--God's special people.

It's not clear why certain animals were unclean. Health concerns were probably not the issue, because pork and other meats, which were unclean since Moses' day, became acceptable after Pentecost (Acts 10). Israel's diet marked them as different from other nations. Living by such instructions kept Israel distinguished and clean in God's presence. **You could tell God's people by their lifestyle**, especially by their daily food.

Jesus teaches that it is not what enters the body but what comes out of the heart that makes us unclean (Mark 7:14-23). And if you think this is easier than keeping away from forbidden foods, just look at Jesus' list: evil thoughts, sexual immorality, greed, malice, deceit, envy, arrogance, and so on.

### **Pray:**

Guard my heart in worship today, O Lord, that I may be clean. May my words and deeds let others know I serve You first in all I do each day. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

## DAY 19: Friday, JANUARY 26, 2024

**Scripture:** “And the children of Issachar, who were men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.” 1 Chronicles 12:32

**Devotional Title:** Understanding by Dr. Dan Hayden

**Study:** 1 Chronicles 12:32

### **Meditate:**

The sons of Issachar had analyzed their times and had perceived correctly what those times were all about. They knew what to do because they understood what was happening. It was obvious to them that Saul had not been a good king and there was no established dynasty to keep the kingship in the tribe of Benjamin. David had emerged as a real leader by virtue of his character and ability. He was the type of king Israel needed during those turbulent times. Furthermore, hadn't God said that the scepter would come out of the tribe of Judah? David was from that tribe and was indeed fully qualified to be the king. The sons of Issachar knew exactly what to do.

The ability to correctly analyze contemporary situations is what leadership is all about. Every generation needs leaders who can understand the times and know what to do in light of them. So that needs to be our prayer in our own generation— “Lord, help us to understand the times, and to know what to do.”

This is not a matter of simply understanding the Bible, as crucial as that is. Rather, it is knowing how to apply the truths of God's Word to the issues of our day. Where is the culture going? Why do people think the way they do? What are the real needs of people, as contrasted to their merely felt needs? How can we be effective with the Gospel by correctly perceiving the uniqueness of our times? How can we apply the truth of Scripture in a meaningful way to our generation?

The Word of God has always been the answer to every culture and to each generation. But understanding the current wars against the truth and discerning the best contemporary means of presenting the truth has always been the important challenge for every age. The need for understanding and discernment is no different in our day.

### **Pray:**

“Lord, help us to understand the times, and to know what to do.” Amen

### **Prayer Focus**

Oh, that we might be like the sons of Issachar, understanding the move of God's timing, season, and purpose of the digital age.

## DAY 20: Saturday, JANUARY 27, 2024

**Scripture:** “[Jesus] is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.” Colossians 1:28-29

**Devotional Title:** Dancing with the Spirit by Heartlight.org

**Study:** Colossians 1:28-29

### **Meditate:**

Paul's ministry was powered by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was the energy that so forcefully worked in Paul. And this Spirit-energy propelled Paul to work for people to achieve the goal that the Holy Spirit has for all of us who follow Jesus — for us to become fully mature in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Can anything be clearer?

God's will for us is to be conformed, transformed, and matured into the current-day presence of Jesus Christ in our world. That is the mission of the Holy Spirit in us, and that is our mission in the lives of others. While there are many mysteries about how the Holy Spirit works and what all the Spirit does, there is one thing for certain: The Spirit is at work within us to accomplish this goal. Let's commit to being a part of this divine partnership, both in our own lives and in the lives of others!

### **Pray:**

Almighty God, thank You for the Holy Spirit's presence within me. I openly submit my heart to have it formed and shaped to reflect the heart of Jesus. I want the character and compassion of my Lord to come to life in me. I want my life to be used as Your influence on others, empowered by the Holy Spirit to help them come to maturity in Jesus. I choose, dear Father, to dance with the Spirit and let the Spirit lead me in this mission to see Jesus formed in me and in those You have chosen for my life to influence. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

### **Prayer Focus**

John 14:26

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

## DAY 21: Sunday, JANUARY 28, 2024

**Scripture:** “Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”  
Matthew 28:19-20

**Devotional Title:** All Authority by Kristopher Walhof

**Study:** Matthew 28:16-20

### **Meditate:**

Jesus came to live among us as the promised Messiah of God’s people. Many of the people thought the Messiah would be a political king who would free them from the grip of the Roman Empire. But Jesus’ mission was not political. He came to free sinners from the tyranny of sin and to give them new life with God forever.

In His teaching ministry Jesus clashed with the religious authorities. He challenged them because they were more concerned with power and position than with leading people to live God’s way—by loving God and loving their neighbor. The religious leaders felt threatened by Jesus, so they plotted to kill Him. And they managed to get Him executed by the Roman government. So, Jesus laid down His life for us by dying on a cross, and He was buried. But then He rose to life again, victorious over sin and death for our sake!

Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus told His disciples (and us!) that against all appearances, in a world of tyrants and power politics, all authority had been given to Him. Then He said that as we are moving about in the world, we are to make disciples. How? By baptizing them into the family of God, and by teaching them to be obedient to His teachings. And if we ever grow afraid of this task (for we will meet opposition), He promised that He will always be with us through His Holy Spirit.

### **Pray:**

Lord Jesus, You have all authority. Help us to serve You faithfully in making disciples.  
Amen

### **Prayer Focus**

Matthew 28:20

Teach me to obey everything You have commanded me.

I want to be a follower of Christ. I want to be one of His disciples.

I want to live in the newness of life, just let me be a follower of Christ.

## CONCLUSION

### What Jesus Did! 'One Last Word' by Heartlight.org

That last hug, that last kiss, that last look, or that last wave--each of them is very important when you are leaving someone you love, especially if it could be the last time, you see them for a while. But the last word, that one last message, is precious. You try to make it pleasant, you try to make it memorable, you try to make it affectionate, but most of all, you want your one last word to count!

The Great Commission is Jesus' last earthly message to His disciples in the Gospel of Matthew. While Jesus still leads and guides, this is the message He wants His disciples to remember as His parting command. This is His final message. He stresses emphatically that it is based on His authority over everyone and everything and everywhere. What is that message? GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES!

Notice Jesus doesn't just want us going everywhere telling about Him. Notice He doesn't just want us baptizing everyone we see. Notice He doesn't just want us to teach others to follow Him. He wants us to do all three! He says go, baptize, and teach to obey so they too will be His disciples! When we heed these marching orders, when we get out of the shadow of our church buildings and culture, He will go with us! That's it. That's Jesus' one last word. It's also our first word!

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

– Matthew 28:18-20

#### **Prayer:**

Almighty God, I know You sent Jesus so the world could be saved. I know that means more than them just hearing about Jesus. I know You want people to be true followers, to be disciples. So, forgive us, Father, for the times we have procrastinated because we worried the job was too big, too hard, too expensive, or too demanding personally. We will try, I will try, to be more excited and generous with sharing the Good News with others in this coming year. I know as I do, Jesus will go with me. So may this next year be to Your glory and to Jesus' honor and praise! In the mighty name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.





## Devotional Outline and Website References

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**Day 15 – The Convicting Spirit** by Dean Deppe  
[The Convicting Spirit — Today Daily Devotional \(todaydevotional.com\)](#)

**Day 16 – Tolerance** by George Young  
[Tolerance — Today Daily Devotional \(todaydevotional.com\)](#)

**Day 17 – Disciplined by Algorithms: Where Is ‘Big Tech’ Leading You?**  
(Excerpt) by Jason Thacker  
[Disciplined by Algorithms: Where Is ‘Big Tech’ Leading You? | Desiring God  
A Prayer for Christians on Social Media | Anchored in Christ \(kevinhalloran.net\)](#)

**Day 18 – The Diet of Distinction** by Arie C. Leder  
[The Diet of Distinction — Today Daily Devotional \(todaydevotional.com\)](#)

**Day 19 – Understanding** by Dan Hayden  
[Understanding – 1 Chronicles 12:32 | A Word from the Word - Dan Hayden](#)

**Day 20 – God's Holy Fire: Dancing with the Spirit** by Heartlight.org  
['Dancing with the Spirit' — Colossians 1:28-29 NIV \(God's Holy Fire\) \(heartlight.org\)](#)

**Day 21 – All Authority** by Kristopher Walhof  
[All Authority — Today Daily Devotional \(todaydevotional.com\)](#)

**Conclusion—One Last Word** by Heartlight.org  
["One Last Word" — Matthew 28:18-20 \(What Jesus Did!\) \(heartlight.org\)](#)

## Endnotes and Additional Resources

For additional study material about The Daniel Fast cited in this guide, please refer to the following websites and resources:

1. <http://draxe.com/daniel-fast>
2. **Honoring God Through the Daniel Fast** by Terrance Day, published in 2009  
<http://www.danielfast.net>
3. **Daniel Fast 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting**, New Life Worship Center  
[www.newlifealtoona.org](http://www.newlifealtoona.org)

### **Tips for Family Resources Fasting: How do I include my young children and teens?**

1. <http://www.crosswalk.com/family/parenting/fasting-as-a-family.html>
2. [fasting for teens | The Daniel Fast \(wordpress.com\)](#)
3. <https://danielplan.com/faith/>

### **Website Resources**

[A Prayer for Christians on Social Media | Anchored in Christ \(kevinhalloran.net\)](#)

[Disciplined by Algorithms: Where Is 'Big Tech' Leading You? | Desiring God](#)

[Observing All Things - Andrew Wommack Ministries \(awmi.net\)](#)

[Understand the Times and Seasons of Your Life - Global Mission Awareness](#)

## Closing Prayer

### A Prayer for Christians on Social Media (Excerpt) from Kevin Halloran

Most Gracious Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the good gift of the Internet and social media through which we can create, communicate, learn, and glorify You. I thank You for the ways You have blessed our world and made lives easier because of the Internet. I praise You for giving the good gifts of creativity and work, and that we can reflect Your image online.

I pray that the Gospel message would speed ahead through the Internet and social media, proclaiming the glories of Christ and reaching many in this generation with the saving message of Christ.

I confess that my sinful heart can twist the neutral tools of technology and use them for sin and idolatry. I confess a greedy and lustful heart that is at times too easily pleased with something other than Your good, pleasing, and perfect will for my life.

I pray that You would help me to avoid technology's unintended consequences like idolizing gadgets, using gadgets to feed other idols in my life, or to keep me from relating to others You have called me to love.

I humbly ask for You to grant me the right desires not to build my own kingdom on the social media, but to build Yours, not to be a slave to sin, but to be a slave to righteousness, not to have a lustful heart, but to flee from lust and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace from a pure heart.

Help me to live a fruitful and productive life for Christ and that the Internet would only aid me in my work and Christian calling.

Help me to discern with all wisdom my thoughts, words, and actions as well as the words and actions of others.

May my relationships through technology communicate the deep care of the Savior, showing His love through my words and deeds.

May my heart's cry be to glorify You and proclaim Jesus Christ through every message, tweet, and blog post.

In all things, may Christ become greater and may I become less.  
In Jesus' name, AMEN.

