

HUNGER

and

THIRST



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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This prayer guide has been designed to be used in conjunction with the ***Hunger and Thirst sermon series at King's Harbor Church***. Each day is meant to lead you into intentional times of prayer during our fast.

This week's guide seeks to cultivate a deep hunger for the Lord in you. There will be material for Monday through Friday. Saturday is a grace day to allow you to catch up or go back and review a day that was especially impactful for you. Each day consists of two major sections- a devotional written specifically for this series, and a closing prayer section.

Before you dive in, special thanks to Melanie Anderson and Marie Constable for their dedication to develop the devotional content for the guides related to this series.

As we begin, pray this with us, "Lord, day by day, deepen our hunger for You. May our appetites only be fully satisfied by Your Presence."

WEEK 1: CULTIVATING HUNGER

MONDAY, JANUARY 10- NOT SO FAST

Prayer is part of our everyday lives; it may not be for as long as we'd like or as often as we think would be correct, but prayer is, at the very least, familiar. We even pray together multiple times in Sunday services. But what about fasting? In his book *Why Should I Fast*, Daniel R. Hyde describes fasting as "an aid and help to prayer."¹ He explains that "fasting humbles our body and soul before God as an aid for us to draw near to Him in prayer."²

Oh, that we would delight in thinking about that deeply, especially considering the Christmas truth we've just recently sung together, that to the world is a joy because the Lord has come! The Lord has come, He has most assuredly drawn near, He has broken through this age of darkness with light, His light- His presence. He has become flesh and dwelt among us, with us. Jesus declares that he never leaves nor forsakes, that he doesn't leave behind orphans; instead, he holds them- he is in them, and they are in him as he is in the Father. It is not the Lord who needs to draw near.

So, you see, fasting is not a means of earning favor, getting God's attention, or bending His will to ours. On the contrary, brothers and sisters- fasting is a means to focus our attention, to align our hearts and our wills to His. A legitimate fast is giving up anything, being empty of it, for a period to devote ourselves more fully to God in prayer.

"Fasting humbles our body and soul before God as an aid for us to draw near to Him in prayer."

- Daniel Hyde

1 Hyde, Daniel R., *Why Should I Fast? Cultivating Biblical Godliness*. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Reformation Heritage, 2015), 1

2 Ibid, 37

CLOSING PRAYER

“Lord, You’ve drawn nearer than we could’ve ever hoped, asked, or imagined- we are still reveling in the wonder of You incarnate, You here with us, Your presence, Your love, Your closeness that we needed more than we even knew. Would You help us now to draw near to You as we fast and pray? Spirit, would You show us and lead us to lay down, to fast from, exactly what we need to in order to earnestly seek You, to feast upon Your grace, Lord. Jesus, shall we fast from a meal? From two meals? Lord, is it desserts that we usually enjoy daily? Is it social media? Would ceasing to put our best face forward on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram help us to more fully and desperately get before Your face in sincere prayer? Spirit would You reveal to each of us the best fast for us, You always know the right way, please lead us, guide us, and walk beside us as we, in return, put our attention toward being led, and guided, and walking with You.”

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11- **CRAVING vs HUNGER**

Our series, Hunger & Thirst, derives its name from a proclamation that the Lord made: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6)

Some of the most well-known words of Jesus are found in the sermon on the mount: the teaching that begins with the Beatitudes. These blessings should be familiar to us. But what do they mean? Why would Jesus declare that people who cry a lot are blessed? (Matthew 5:4) Or, what does it mean to hunger and thirst for righteousness? In his book *Hunger for God*, John Piper describes "a homesickness for God" as our true desire for righteousness in connection with fasting. Is there a deep longing, a need, like the one we have for food, that things in this world would be made right? Are we awakened to that longing that relationships between God and people, and relationships with one another are whole and right?

Jesus is declaring that in His kingdom those are the things He is doing. Therefore, those who want with such fervor that can only be described as hunger are the ones who will be satisfied and blessed. Think about this: Jesus came to make all things right, not better nor improved... right.

"If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great." -John Piper (let's allow that to sink in deeply)

CLOSING PRAYER

As we fast, prayerfully consider these points throughout the day:

- God, will You show me what I crave that distract me from the true hunger for righteousness?
- God help me to see the unrighteousness, the brokenness in me, in us, in our midst, and in this world.
- Lord, make us humble and desperate. Help us look to You, plead, follow, and be with You as You usher us into Your Kingdom where all things will be made right. In your heavenly Kingdom is where we will be truly satisfied.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12- **INNER HOPE TO OUTWARD PRAYER**

A friend recently had Christmas dinner with a wonderful older couple she loves dearly. They have been married for 50 years. Well, the sweet wife Dorothy was incredibly precious, really touched the friend's heart. After the ham was done & brought to the table, as Dorothy's inviting everyone over - she rubbed her husband's shoulder and said, "Sugar, dinner's ready; come sit at the head of the table."

"Sure thing," said her husband, settling himself down.

"Honey, will you lead us in grace before we eat?" she asked him kindly.

"I'd be glad to," he answered. And he prayed.

"Now, Darling, would you like to carve the ham?" questioned Dorothy.

"Of course," he responded.

"Thank you, Sweetheart."

After a whole meal of one endearing term after another, the friend was just enamored. Her heart was swelling at witnessing all the love Dorothy lavished on her husband every time she addressed him. When it was time for dessert, Dorothy said, "Love Muffin, I'll be right back with the pie."

Now the friend snuck into the kitchen, her hope in love restored. She asked, "Dorothy, do you always talk to your husband like that?"

"Well, I'll be honest with you," Dorothy replied, "it's been five years now

that I can't for the life of me remember his name, and I am just too embarrassed to ask him!"

That's not a true story, but there's a whole lot of truth in it: Looks can be really deceiving.

Brothers and sisters, Christians aren't the only ones who look out at the world around us and see brokenness, pain, and feel that things are not at all right. And honestly, Christians don't always respond to that truth with a humble spirit or a contrite heart, as we should. Anger about injustice, unrighteousness, or oppression is not synonymous with actually hungering for righteousness. If we are aware that there is so much to lament over, but we have not known hope, then we are longing to know Jesus. If we are overcome with grief and sit in perpetual anger, having lost sight of hope, we need to regain the true sight of him, Jesus, who is our hope. What happens when we become so full of anger that we feel no hunger for righteousness?

"Cynicism is easy. It doesn't take effort to see what's wrong with everything and everyone and let it jade us. Hope, however, is difficult. Maybe because it's heavenly." - Jackie Hill Perry

CLOSING PRAYER

As we fast, prayerfully consider these points throughout the day:

- God, search me. Please guide me to honestly see the people and places to which I've grown bitter.
- Lord, forgive me for my cynicism. Forgive us all for our collective cynicism.
- Father, would You help us, as Your family, to not fall into the temptation, the trap of becoming jaded?
- Jesus, give us clean hands and pure hearts. Help us set our eyes on You, help us to see Your presence and Your Kingdom right around us where You are revealing it. Please revive us to hope for more of You, more of Your reign, in our lives and the world around us. Fill us with Your Spirit, fresh and new, to be postured toward the truth and long for it: that wrongs will fall in line with Your will and be made right.
- Lord, we're begging You, let us not be so full with anger that we feel no hunger for righteousness.
- God, You're winning... of course You are! So lead us, Your people, to believe, hope, and ask for that.
- God, help us to be desperate for Your Kingdom because You fulfill. And deliver us from the temptation of becoming destitute in hope for the same reason: You fulfill.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13- **ARE WE THERE YET?**


The Biblical story paints a picture of prayer that is, essentially, us asking God, “Are we there yet?”

Since Genesis chapter 3, humanity has been looking, waiting on God’s promises and providing the solution to the problem of their rebellion against Him and all its ramifications. For within these verses, where God declares the tragic consequences of their actions, first to the serpent and then to the humans, a promise was set into motion. While God informs the humans about how every aspect of their life will be fraught with pain and grief because of their rebellion, all leading to death, He also, in the first glimpse of unmatched grace, says that one day a Seed or a Descendant will come from the woman who’s going to deliver a lethal strike to the snake’s head- the deceiver is destined for defeat. God was already promising a Rescue Plan!

Now, the first descendants we hear about are Cain and Abel and it’s quickly apparent that they are not going to crush the serpent or bring God’s victory of restoration- they are part of a spiraling decline that sadly reflects the problem and pain of broken humanity- not the solution for it. It’s not long after this that people begin to “call on the Name of the Lord.” They are praying. In *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church*, John Onwuchekwa explains in faithful detail that “prayer is God’s prescription for life in a fallen world.”¹ The people want God to fulfill His word, they’re calling on Him to come through on His promise of a son who will reverse the curse and defeat the serpent. They are dependent on Him for it!

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Onwuchekwa, John. *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church*. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018)



“The gospel shape of prayer is evident from the opening pages of the bible, and in particular in Genesis ch 4:26 when people first begin to call on the name of YHWH, right through the end, when the Church prays, “Come Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20). In a sense then, prayer is saying, ‘Are we there yet God? Please bring about the things that You promised You would.’ Prayer in the Bible is linked to the hope of redemption and thus the gospel²”.

As we fast and pray today let us be in awe that we can ask God, “are we there yet?” not only because we see and feel a need for things to be set right, but truly because God has given us a picture, a hope, a promise, a faith so specific that we ask, “are we there yet?”. He’s revealed and described how He’s the faithful one to set all things right, giving us His vision for righteousness. Savor that. Prayer is not us asking, “are You taking us somewhere?” or “where are we going?”. It is asking, simply, “are we there yet?”.

2 Ibid

CLOSING PRAYER

“Lord, when every member of humanity is seen through right eyes, as Your image, with inherent worth and beauty, recognized as vital, and needed, every one of us, interwoven, working together with not only equality but also in unity: having **Racial Harmony** -are we there yet Lord? We long for it!

When age, like race, should bear no definition of worth, but humanity, Your image, is seen as inherently valuable, when the most vulnerable in society are loved and protected, when hurting them becomes unthinkable and unimaginable: recognizing the **Sanctity of Life**- are we there yet Lord? We long for it!

When Your family spans every continent, every land, every tribe, tongue, and nation. When every ear is hearing of Your love because Your disciples take the gospel to the world, the very ends of the earth: reaching **The Nations**- are we there yet Lord? We long for it!”

As we fast, prayerfully consider these points throughout the day:

- God, You are faithful and true. You’ve been gracious from the start. You rescue. Forgiveness was Your idea.
- God, we’re longing for Your kingdom, Your righteousness; we’re both hopeful and desperate for it, hope-filled because You said You would and desperate because only You can. We depend on You.
- Father, will You teach us how to pray over these next weeks?
- Lord, fill us with so much faith, so much adoration for and assurance in You that we can’t help but pour out request after request of “are we there yet?”.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14- **HUNGER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS HUNGER FOR JUSTICE**

What if I told you that the storyline of the bible from cover to cover is a story about God's justice? About God's mission to ultimately get directly to the source of the brokenness in our world and deal with it, to do justice, setting all things right? The words for justice (mishpat) and righteousness (sedekah) are almost always found together in God's word, as though they are so interconnected they cannot be separated. Righteousness is a relational word; it describes the way one relates to others-what we might call "doing right by them". Justice is an action word: the actions which prove or display how one relates to others rightly. Justice is righteousness on display. It's how we see righteousness.

Righteousness is not only defined by things like idolatry or injustices, like oppression and exploitation, but also, and just as much or perhaps more, defined by the things that one does like obeying God and seeking justice, lifting others, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked (Ezekiel 18:5-9). Those are examples of the just actions a righteous one does, and they're generally at a cost to the one doing them. God loves and exercises justice and righteousness (Jeremiah 9:23-24), in fact when we think about these definitions we can see a clear picture of God. He is righteous and therefore He is just. He does right by others, it is His standard! And not in a way of isolating to preserve His rightness- on the contrary, it is His righteousness that launches His mission of justice. He has no needs and yet He thinks of and moves toward the hurting, the broken, the vulnerable- He sees and cares for them. He moves toward hard things to make them right and at a cost. It's displayed in His rescue plan to set all things right... including us. Yes, he addresses the pain and injustice we've experienced, but also the pain and injustice we've inflicted. The sin of the world, humanity's broken relationship with our Creator, and our broken relationship with each other, our unrighteousness.

Jesus, at the cross, takes into himself all the injustice of the world, and its judgment- he absorbs it all and allows it all to be judged in his flesh instead of ours. Jesus dies for us, in our place- but he also dies with us, in the places we've suffered. He is simultaneously atoning for sin, unrighteousness, and injustice while doing justice, lifting us up in new life, satisfying our hungry hearts, and clothing us in righteousness. This is justice and righteousness. When we hunger for righteousness, we hunger for justice, too.

CLOSING PRAYER

As we fast, prayerfully consider these points throughout the day:

- God, You are righteous, You are just. You are merciful, loving, and kind.
- Jesus, thank You for seeing, thinking of, caring for, moving toward us in our weakness, pain, and suffering, but also for forgiving and cleansing us from the ways we've inflicted pain, suffering, and injustice on others.
- Lord would You pierce our hearts, help us see how starved this world is of righteousness and justice, would You humble us to feel starved for it too
- Lord, when our needs are met it's so easy for us to become apathetic, to not see or care rightly for others.
- Forgive us, Jesus. Give us your eyes, your hands, and your feet that we would live as you lived. We long for you to fill us so full of your Spirit that when we see someone in need we feel like we're outrunning the wind to get to them. Lord would You do that in us individually, would You do that in our families, Lord in our community groups, and in us as a church.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15- GRACE DAY

Today is meant to allow you to catch up or review a previous day. Please be sure to go to kingsharbor.org/hunger-and-thirst to download Week 2 of this prayer guide.



