

AWESOME GOD

WITH US
COMFORT
GUIDE
RESTORER
LOVE

PRAYER, FASTING & CONSECRATION
JULY 6-8, 2021 _____

**AWESOME
GOD**



VICTORY

Honor God. Make Disciples.

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This family devotional is designed to be used by parents and kids ages 4 to 12 together.

FASTING 101

Connect

All of us have needs and wants. Needs are things that we cannot live without. Wants are things we would like to have. What are some of your needs? What are some of your wants? There are many things we need and want. But sometimes, we focus so much on our needs and wants that we put aside our relationship with God. Fasting lets us focus more on God by setting aside our needs and wants.

What is fasting?

Fasting is stopping an activity (usually eating) for a period of time to focus more on God. We replace eating or using our gadgets with time with God. This means praying, worshiping, and reading the Bible. These activities strengthen our relationship with God.

When our parents speak to us, we should pay attention and listen to them. Fasting helps us pay attention and listen to God. It helps us put aside distractions. We say to God, "I am going to listen to You because You are my Father. I trust You!"

Jesus gave us an example of fasting in Matthew 4. He knew that He would need strength and power for His ministry. He prepared by fasting for forty days in the desert. During this time, He was tempted by Satan. His response to that temptation is the truth we can hold on to for strength when we fast:

***"People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."* MATTHEW 4:4 (NLT)**

Fasting is usually keeping yourself from eating as you devote more time for God. But you can also fast from different media (TV, video games) and technology (gadgets, Internet) if you cannot fast from food. The important thing is to keep your focus away from the things the world offers to spend more time with God.

BEFORE FASTING

1. **Pray.** Spend time reading the Bible before the fast. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in your prayers. Write down your specific prayer requests for your family, friends, church, and nation.
2. **Commit.** Pray about the kind of fast that you will do and commit to it ahead of time. Ask God for grace to help you follow through with your decision. Also, ask your parents and maybe even your doctor if you are allowed to do a specific type of food fast.
3. **Act.** If you will be fasting from food, start eating smaller portions a few days before you fast. Avoid sugary and fatty foods. Ask someone to be your prayer partner throughout the fast.

WHILE FASTING

1. **Focus.** Set aside time to read God's word and pray. This devotional will help you as you go through your fast. Just be ready to listen to God's voice and do what the Holy Spirit is telling you.
2. **Pray.** If you can, join at least one prayer meeting in your church. Pray for your family, church, pastors, nation, campuses, and the world throughout the week.
3. **Fill Up.** During mealtimes, if you're fasting from food, read the Bible and pray instead. Drink plenty of water and rest as much as you can. Keep in mind that you may find yourself becoming physically weak, tired, impatient, or irritated. If you're doing a different type of fast, read the Bible and pray during the time you would normally do what you are fasting from (for example, browsing through social media or playing video games).

AFTER FASTING

- 1. Eat.** If you fasted from food, reintroduce solid food gradually. Your body will need time to adjust to a normal diet. Start with fruits, juices, and salad, then add more vegetables. Eat small portions throughout the day. It may be tempting, but try not to eat junk food and sweets right away. If you've finished a different type of fast, remember what God revealed to you as you spent time with Him. Take what you learned from the fast into your everyday life.
- 2. Pray.** Don't stop praying! Trust that God will keep His promises and knows what He's doing. Don't stop believing in and listening to God all year. Be in faith and expect God to answer your prayers!

OUR PLAN

Day 1

FASTING OPTIONS

Gadget fast _____

Skip one meal _____

Social media fast _____

Other _____

FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

PRAYER MEETING(S) TO ATTEND _____

Day 2

FASTING OPTIONS

Gadget fast _____

Skip one meal _____

Social media fast _____

Other _____

FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

PRAYER MEETING(S) TO ATTEND _____

Day 3

FASTING OPTIONS

Gadget fast _____

Skip one meal _____

Social media fast _____

Other _____

FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

PRAYER MEETING(S) TO ATTEND _____

WE ARE THANKFUL TO GOD FOR...

Answered Prayers

How did God answer our prayers so far in 2021?

FOR THE REST OF 2021, WE ARE SEEKING GOD AND TRUSTING HIM IN THESE AREAS . . .

What are our prayer requests this second part of the year?

Family (e.g., good health for parents and siblings)

School (e.g., good study habits, to remember lessons well during exams)

Friends (e.g., for friends to know Jesus)

Others (e.g., for more people to know Christ, for the pandemic to end)

“Again, here is what I tell you. Suppose two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for. My Father in heaven will do it for you.”

MATTHEW 18:19

Pray in Pairs

Each family member will pray with a relative or friend. Write down the prayer partner's name after each family member's name.

Family Member

Prayer Partner

Family Member	Prayer Partner

PREPARING FOR THE FAST | JULY 5

GOD IS WITH US



CONNECT

Make a list of about five to ten superheroes that you know. Beside their names, write their superpowers. Then, depending on what their power is and what you know about them, rank them according to who you think is the greatest (#1 being the greatest).

READ THE WORD

¹Before the world began, there was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³All things were made through him. Nothing was made without him. . . . ¹⁴The Word became a man and lived among us. We saw his glory—the glory that belongs to the only Son of the Father. The Word was full of grace and truth. JOHN 1:1-3, 14 (ICB)

Most of us are familiar with the phrase “God is with us.” But do you actually believe this? Do you actually know this to be true? God is not a God who is somewhere out there on the fringes of the universe, not involved in our lives. In fact, He has been and still is very much with us, here and now. God has been there since the beginning of everything. The Bible tells us He created all things and you will not see anything that has not been created by God. From the huge planets in the solar system down to the tiniest species—bacteria, amoeba, or any organism unseen to our naked eyes, and even to species that have yet to be discovered by man—all were created by God!



When He created us, He did not leave us to just be. In the Bible, we see His presence in the Old Testament, working through the lives of different men and women. But the best evidence of His presence with us is when He came to earth as a man, Jesus Christ. Can you imagine that? God, the most powerful of all, came to earth as a baby, who couldn't do anything except depend on other humans to care for Him and feed Him. He did all of this so He could be with us and save us, because He loves us. (We will learn more about His love later this week.)

Huddle

Parents to Kids

4-6 years old

- Is God in heaven or here with us on earth?
- Can He be in heaven and here with us at the same time?

7-12 years old

- Do you believe God is truly with you even if you don't see Him? Why?
- How does knowing that God is with you help you get through tough times?

Kids to Parents

- Have you ever seen or felt God's presence? How do you know He is with us?
- Why is it important to know and believe God is with us?

Even if we have not seen God, we know that He is here with us. We see evidence of it all around us—the sun rises every morning, the moon comes up every night, seasons change, and trees and plants grow. There is much more evidence, but the most enduring one is Jesus Christ, who lived a human life on earth and went through every human emotion. He knows how it is to be human. Today, even if we do not physically see Him, God is with us through the Holy Spirit, who guides and comforts us and leads us to know God more. Truly He is with us!

As we pray and fast this season, may we know God more in different ways.

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to come live here on earth many, many years ago. Thank You that He is still with us now. Help us to understand this truth and to believe in it. Help us to see Your presence in our lives and to know and love You more. In Jesus' name, amen.

DISCOVER

Did you know that about 700 years before His birth, God already told the prophet Isaiah about Jesus? In Isaiah 7:14 (NIV), it says:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

It has always been part of God's plan to be with us by sending Jesus to come! Isn't that amazing? Let us always carry this truth with us!

DAY 1 | JULY 6

GOD IS OUR COMFORT



CONNECT

Get the largest bedsheet in the house. Then on the bed or sofa, spread the sheet and have every member of the family snuggle inside one by one. How does it feel? Does it feel awkward? Does it feel good?

When we feel sad or there are things that are out of our control, we look for comfort. We look for something that will make us feel good—it may be hugs, food, a movie, a book, social media, or something else. But above all these material things that give us instant comfort, there is someone we can go to for the best comfort we can get—God!

Let's read what the Bible says.

READ THE WORD

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. **2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-5 (ESV)**

We encounter stress and challenges daily. We see it affecting our family, our friends, social media, and everything that surrounds us. We sometimes can't help but feel lost, confused, and even like we want to give up. Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthians, reminds the believers that God is the *God of all comfort*. This means that God knows what we are going through—our afflictions, our problems, and our stress. They may not go away immediately, but we can come to God because He is the one who will ultimately comfort us. God does not magically take away or erase our problems, but as we come to Him, we will find comfort and peace. That way, we can also comfort others and share the peace that we find only in God.

HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

4-6 years old

- Can you think of something that made you really sad? What is it? Did your sadness ever go away? What did you do?
- Do you have Jesus in your heart?

7-12 years old

- What do you do when you are experiencing difficulty (e.g., schoolwork, difficult classmates, crisis at home)?
- Is there someone you go to that will help you sort it out?

Kids to Parents

- Who do you ask for help when you are under stress? What do you do to overcome it? Do you go to Jesus? Why?

Whatever difficulty you may be going through, believe that Jesus knows what you are going through and how you are feeling. Our feelings and emotions are not foreign to Him and we can trust that He will give us peace.

PRAY

Dear God, we raise to You all the things that make us feel stressed, and our daily challenges in life. Thank You, Lord, for Your word that reminds us to come to You when we face difficulties. We are not alone. Thank You that You are always there to comfort us. May the peace and the comfort that we receive overflow, that we may share it with others who are also in need. In Jesus' name, amen.

DISCOVER

The term “comfort food” was coined in the 1960s to mean the food that often brings us back to the times when we were growing up. They usually include the ones our parents give us to cheer us up. These can be ice cream, sweets, your mom’s best pasta dish, or that favorite fast food meal you always crave.

This food gives us temporary comfort when we are stressed, but it does not give us the complete comfort and peace that God provides. God’s comfort is always available for us. All we have to do is pray.

DAY 2 | JULY 7

GOD IS OUR GUIDE

CONNECT

Without using your smartphone, can you tell which direction is north? south? east? west?

You probably will never be without your smartphone, so you may think you don't need this. But this is how the people in ancient times told directions:

Go outside in the morning. Locate the sun, but don't look directly at it.

Point your **right** hand toward the sun. That is **east**, because the sun always rises in the east.

Now, point your **left** hand in the opposite direction. That is **west**.

Hold that position. The direction you are facing is **north** and behind you is **south**.

You can also do this in the afternoon, but reversed, because the sun sets in the afternoon and it always sets in the west.

Point your **left** hand toward the setting sun. That is the **west**.

Point your **right** hand in the opposite direction and that is the **east**.

You are now facing **north** and **south** is behind you.

Reminder: Again, never look directly at the sun.



Hopefully, you will never find yourself in the middle of a desert with your smartphone out of range. But if you do, this method may help you find your way back to civilization.

In our lives, our foolproof guide is God Himself. Let's read about how He guided the Israelites out of a no-way-out situation.

READ THE WORD

Read Exodus 14-15.

There was no way out for the Israelites. The Egyptians were coming up fast behind them. In front of them was the Red Sea. They didn't know what to do or where to go. But God, in His mighty power, led them to walk through the waters of the Red Sea, a feat no one would ever have thought of. And the Israelites praised Him.



“You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.”

EXODUS 15:13 (ESV)

God gave the Israelites a way out by opening up the Red Sea. And every step of their way in the desert, God continued not just to guide them, but He was right beside them all the way.

God will do the same for us. He will not only guide us, but He will walk with us through any difficulty. Sometimes He may lead us to unfamiliar places, but as His children, we can lean on Him and trust in His ways. Just as a parent guides a child in which way to walk, God will also guide us through the Holy Spirit.

HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

4-6 years old

- Whose voice do you normally follow and obey? Why?

7-12 years old

- Who do you go to when you need advice or are unsure about something? Do you trust them? Why?
- Is there an area in your life right now where you need God's guidance? What do you think He is telling you to do? Do you trust Him enough to obey?

Kids to Parents

- How has God guided you in the past? Share a story about a time you were unsure how to proceed and relied on guidance from God.
- How can you know when you are being directed by God?

You know, God does not want to just be on the sidelines in our life. He wants to be part of it. How much He can guide and lead us depends on how much we let Him. The more we seek Him, the more we will be open to obey Him. We can have peace knowing that it is our Father who is directing us.

Make it a habit to seek Him every day.

PRAY

Dear God, this past year has been challenging, but nothing matters more than You. Thank You, Lord, that You have guided us through these difficult trials and challenges. Thank You for always giving us wisdom to make decisions. Thank You that through the Holy Spirit we can rely and hold on to Your promises to guide us. Help us hear Your voice and obey it. We love You. We praise You. In Jesus' name, amen.

DISCOVER

Before GPS and smartphones, how did people navigate through new places?

Our activity earlier about using the sun to tell the direction is one of the earliest ways people found their way. They knew the direction the sun travels and by the location of the sun, they could generally tell which direction they needed to go.

Another method of navigation is the compass. The earth is a huge magnet with magnetic poles that lines of magnetic force connect to. Metals will line themselves up along these lines. A compass uses a metal needle and will always line up with the earth's lines of magnetic force, which point northward. Sailors usually use compasses to help them navigate their way through the seas.

Still another method is the map. A map is a diagram of a certain area. They were widely used in different ways and at times were even instrumental in winning wars. Today, there are different types of maps—road maps, navigational maps, elevation maps, and more. The maps on our smartphones today are extremely detailed and quite accurate. They provide specific information like travel time and are a must-have for any traveller.

Despite technological advancement, there is only one foolproof directional guide that we need—God! The Holy Spirit is here with us to lead us in the way God wants us to go. We can follow Him without any fear or doubt. The most common way to hear from God is through His word, the Bible.

SOURCES

1. Caitlin Dempsey, "Understanding Direction Based on the Sun," Geography Realm, published July 7, 2018, <https://www.geographyrealm.com/understanding-direction-based-sun/>.
2. Britannica Kids, s.v. "compass," accessed May 14, 2021, <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/compass/390676>.

DAY 3 | JULY 8

GOD IS OUR RESTORER



CONNECT

Parents, look for something in your home that needs to be repaired or revived. It may be your child's toy, an appliance, a plant that is about to die, a car, anything.

Together with your children, try to recall the state of the object when it was in good condition—what it looked like, what use you had for it, how much you appreciated it. Contrast it now with its present condition—its appearance, its uselessness.

Note that you didn't throw it away. You kept it because you want to repair it and bring it back to its original condition, where you can fully appreciate it and use it again. This is called restoration. This is a good process because, to a certain degree, it brings things back to their original form.

How about people? People become broken because of sin. What happens then? Can we be restored? Who restores us?

READ THE WORD

¹⁰This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile." **JEREMIAH 29:10-14 (NIV)**

How reassuring it is to hear these words! They were given at a time when the Jews were forced to live away from home, in exile in Babylon. Even in exile, God did not abandon them. In the midst of their suffering, God revealed a plan to restore them physically back to their land.

Today, most of us have experienced loss of some kind—loss of a job, financial security, health, or even a loved one. As God's children, we can rest in the assurance that He will not abandon us through our losses. We can trust that He has a plan and that His plans are good. We must let this truth rest in our minds and in our hearts.

HUDDLE

Parents to Kids

4-6 years old

- Have you ever lost a toy you loved? Were you able to find it? Tell us what happened.

7-12 years old

- What do you think has been your biggest loss this pandemic? (Loss does not necessarily mean a physical loss. It may be loss of time with friends, loss of things you used to be able to do, and things like that.)
- Do you expect things to go back to how they were before the pandemic? How can this happen? What can we depend on for this to take place?

Kids to Parents

- What was the biggest loss you experienced? How is God restoring this loss?

No matter what we have lost, we can always have hope. This is because our hope is in Christ, not in the things we have lost. God can restore what was lost, but more than these, He wants to restore people back to Himself. Jesus Christ's work on the cross made this possible. Because of what He did, we can receive salvation. You see, God restored us back to Him even when we were sinful. As His new creation, our physical losses become instruments for us to know Him more and even provide opportunities to tell others about Him.

PRAY

Dear God, thank You for Your wonderful plans for us and that you have never abandoned us. But most of all, thank You for restoring our hearts back to You. Please help us to see Your hand in our situation so that we may share Your hope with others. In Jesus' name, amen.

DISCOVER

Do you ever wonder how art masterpieces, whether a painting, sculpture, building, or other form of art, are preserved over many years?



Most have undergone a process called “art restoration.”

Art restoration is done on a piece of art that has lost its original state through different causes like humidity, molds, exposure to light, vandalism, or human contact. It entails a tedious, sometimes years-long process of analysis, involving much technology and delicate cleaning, all of which will help ensure that the original piece is preserved.

Some famous works that have been undergoing restoration include the following:

- The Taj Mahal, a building in India
- The Mona Lisa, a painting in Paris
- Pieta, a sculpture in Italy

While some restorations are impressive and bring the art piece as close to the original work as possible, none can compete with the restorative work God does in each one of us. From our messy beginnings, He restores us to His original design, which is far better than where we started. Only God can change and restore the human heart!

SOURCE

“The Science Behind the Restoration of a Painting,” Invaluable, accessed May 14, 2021, <https://www.invaluable.com/blog/the-science-behind-art-restoration/>.

BREAKING THE FAST | JULY 9

GOD IS LOVE

CONNECT

Let's play a game! Listed below are a few of the strongest or hardest things we can find on earth. These are things that do not break, rot, or change easily. Fill in the blanks to see if you can guess them all!

D _ A M _ N D

M O _ N T _ _ N

S _ E E L

R _ _ K

Did you guess all four? Here are the answers!



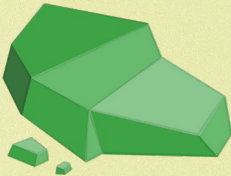
DIAMOND



MOUNTAIN



STEEL



ROCK

These are really hard and strong things, right? Do you think these can last forever? They can't. You can cut a diamond with another diamond. Strong rains cause landslides so even a mighty mountain can break. Heavy equipment can cut through steel and rocks.

READ THE WORD

So if even mountains can be washed away, and diamonds can be cut or destroyed, is there anything that can last forever? The Bible says there is, and it is good.

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. ²Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. ³Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; ⁴to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever . . . PSALM 136:1-4 (ESV)

In these four verses, the writer says these words four times: “His steadfast love endures forever.” Not a few years, not hundreds of years, but forever. How can this be? The Bible also tells us that God **is** love. God doesn’t love us because we’re good. He doesn’t love us because we’re cute or kind. God loves us because God Himself is love. It is who He is. No matter what we do, God will continue to love us and we can depend on that love.

1 John 4:16 (NIV) says:

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

It is important for us to remember that God’s love for us will never change. Whenever we have problems and things are hard, we can rely on God’s love for us. He is full of mercy and kindness and He wants to extend that love to us in every situation. Let us trust in His love no matter what, because His love is stronger than the mountains, and endures forever.

Huddle

Parents to Kids

4-6 years old

- Do you believe that God loves you?
- What if you did something that was not nice? Do you think God will still love you?

7-12 years old

- How much do you think God loves you?
- Do you doubt His love when bad things happen to you?

Kids to Parents

- With all the bad things we see happening around us, how do we know for sure that God still loves us?
- What can we do to share God's love with others?

God truly loves us. He loved us already even before we had done any good thing. And He will continue to love us even if we mess up. The way He showed His love was when His Son, Jesus, died on the cross for us. Even before we were born, God already made a way to save us. Isn't that fantastic? Who can ever top that kind of love?

Because He loves us, He continually comforts, guides, and restores us. And because we have received His love, let's share this love with others so they may know Him and worship Him too.

Pray

Dear God, thank You very much for loving us even though we don't obey sometimes. Thank You that You loved us first and You sent Jesus to show us the way. Help us remember Your love even when times are difficult. Teach us to trust in Your unfailing love. In Jesus' name, amen.

DISCOVER

Did you know that hugging has a lot of benefits aside from showing people that you love them? According to research, it helps reduce stress, keeps you healthier and happier, and even helps reduce fear!

If you know someone who needs a hug, go and give them one, even a virtual hug for now. You can give them real ones later when the pandemic is over!

SOURCE

Erica Cirino, "What Are the Benefits of Hugging?"
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<https://www.healthline.com/health/hugging-benefits>.



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