

IT'S TIME

**KINGDOM**

CHURCH MINISTRIES

*Life*

TO PRAY

OVERSEER DANNY SUTTON

# CONSECRATION GUIDE 2023

MARCH 19-APRIL 2

**IT'S TIME TO PRAY**

How close do you feel to God? Most of us sense that there's more to a relationship with God than what we currently are experiencing. I have observed that while the vast majority of believers start out with a lot of passion and zeal in their relationship with God, over time, that enthusiasm subsides. On a day-to-day basis, their relationship with God eventually becomes passive. There are occasional bursts of excitement, but even that excitement is short-lived. Their walk with God seems to have a few highs, some lows and a whole lot of mundane in-betweens.

Does it strike you, as it has me, that there is something terribly wrong with a passionless, passive, mundane, monotonous relationship with God? Aren't we vaguely unsettled with the idea that somehow a daily relationship with God, the God of the universe can end up with the flavor of stale bread? The Bible is clear that our passion and spiritual fervor should be constant. **(Romans 12:11)** So why have so many Christians accepted a faith experience that is so far below what God intended for them?

A passionate, thriving relationship with God should be the norm, not the exception, for every follower of Christ. Over the next **14 days**, your relationship with God can be awakened. Maintaining a fresh, exciting, passionate relationship with God is something we must literally fight to protect. Make no mistake about it—we have a very real enemy who wants nothing more than for our souls to be lulled to sleep, all while we think everything is okay.

For the next 14 days, join us in the experience of fasting, prayer, and listening to the voice of God through His Word. Maybe at one time you were excited about God and were full of His life. But now, if you're honest, you know other things have grabbed your attention, and your heart has hardened to the joy and freshness you once felt. Or maybe you are far from God and struggling with addictive behaviors or other issues. (And, by the way, is there really anyone who doesn't have issues?) The good news is that the potential for a lasting, thriving relationship with God really is there. It just has to be awakened

Overseer Danny Sutton

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## OUR FAST

There are two basic types of fasts, **Total** (water only) and **Partial** (abstaining from specific items or the Daniel Fast). We will be collectively doing a fast time together over the next **14 days**. This year you can choose 1 of 3 fast.

- 1 Total - Sun Up to Sun Down (Water Only)
- 2 Partial - Daniel Fast
- 3 7days partial & 7days total

## FOODS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR DIET DURING THE DANIEL FAST

**All fruits:** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch for added sugar). Apples / Apricots / Avocados / Bananas / Berries / Blackberries / Blueberries / Boysenberries / Breadfruit Cantaloupe / Cherries / Coconuts / Cranberries / Dates / Figs Grapefruit / Grapes Grenadine / Guava / Honeydew melons / Kiwi / Lemons / Limes / Mangoes / Melons / Mulberry / Nectarines / Oats / Olives / Oranges Papayas / Peaches / Pears / Pineapples / Plums / Prunes / Raisins Raspberries Strawberries / Tangelos / Tangerines / Watermelon

**Vegetables:** These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced or canned (watch salt content). Artichokes / Asparagus / Beets / Broccoli / Brussel sprouts Cabbage / Carrots / Cauliflower / Celery / Chili peppers Collard greens / Corn / Cucumbers Eggplant / Garlic / Ginger root Kale / Leeks / Lettuce / Mushrooms / Mustard greens Okra / Onions / Parsley / Peppers / Potatoes / Radishes / Rutabagas Scallions / Spinach Sprouts / Squashes / Sweet potatoes / Tomatoes Turnips / Watercress Yams / Zucchini

**Legumes:** Dried beans / Black beans / Cannellini / Pinto beans / Split peas / Lentils / Black eyed peas Green beans / Green peas / Kidney beans / Peanuts (includes natural peanut butter) Beans / Lentils / Lupines / White Peas Seeds: All nuts (raw, unsalted) / Sprouts / Ground flax / Cashews / Walnuts Sunflower / Sesame Almonds / Natural Almond Butter

**Whole Grains:** Whole wheat / Brown rice / Millet / Quinoa / Oats / Rolled Oats / Plain Oatmeal- not instant Barley / Grits (no butter) / Whole wheat pasta / Whole wheat tortillas / Plain Rice cakes Popcorn Liquids: Water (spring, distilled, filtered) / Unsweetened Soy Milk / Herbal (caffeine free) Tea 100% Fruit/Vegetable Juice (no added sugar) Other: Tofu / Soy products / Herbs / Small amounts of Honey / Small amounts of Sea Salt Small amounts of Ezekiel Bread / Small amounts of Olive Oil Spices (read the label to be sure there are no preservatives)

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## DAY 1 WHY PRAY?

We are thrilled to take you on a 14-day journey of prayer and fasting. Understanding the necessity of prayer is not enough. For prayer to become a part of our life, it needs to become something you look forward to. It is possible that some people do not enjoy prayer because they have never been taught how to pray. When you make prayer and fasting a priority, it declares the sovereignty of God. When you discover the beauty of daily conversation with Him, you will experience the presence of God that will change your life.

Once you learn how to pray, prayer can become a part of everyday life. And then...

**Before the day begins – pray**

**Before you go to bed – pray**

**Before you go to work or school – pray**

**Before you send that text – pray**

**Before you react – pray**

**Before bad things happen – pray**

**Before you eat, drive, or travel – pray**

**In every situation – PRAY FIRST!**

**Prayer changes everything!**

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## DAY 2 WHY FAST?

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:16 (NIV).

***“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.”***

It is time to get a new outlook on fasting. When practiced the right way, fasting is something that everyone should enjoy. That’s right...enjoy! Fasting is for every follower of Jesus. Too many people fast with a strict mindset that focuses on abstaining. The fasting I am talking about is different. Of course, it involves abstaining from food, but the mindset is completely different. It is possible to have minimal physical emptiness with maximum spiritual fullness.

Fasting is one of the most powerful spiritual weapons believers can use. Maybe you’ve never done it before. There is a serious misconception that fasting is for serious, super Christians, or only for times of crisis. Some even think fasting is only an Old Testament thing. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:16, “When you fast.” He did not say if you fast!

There is a closeness to God that you simply will not experience from prayer or personal devotions alone. You must fast. You get a revelation of God’s Word when you fast that you simply cannot get any other way. Disconnecting from the distractions of the world through fasting and connecting into the power and presence of God through prayer, brings a supernatural freshness and newness to our souls.

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## DAY 3: GOING DEEPER - ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

**Scripture: Matthew 7: 7-11**

*"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Or, what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or, if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him?"*

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## DAY 3: GOING DEEPER - ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

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## ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING

With Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:7-11, we are provoked to consider if our life is postured to truly seek after what is good. Are you ready for change? How is Jesus in your ‘asking?’

Jesus is serious about our asking just by virtue of giving us three imperatives in this passage: Ask, Seek, Knock (I’ll abbreviate it as ASK). They have an iterative texture to their orientation: Keep on asking, seeking, and knocking.

Our ASKing reveals our heart. Jesus actually cares about the formation of our asking. Do we? It is tempting to live as if God is inconsequential to our asking; as if we are not invited to ask with Him. But Jesus’ words come to us full of faith and expectant longing. He knows what is truly real and good. The question is are we ready to trust that He knows what is truly real and good for us? Do we trust that He is ‘ahead of us’ in our ASKing?

Notice, though, that Jesus does not spell-out-the-specifics of what we are to ASK. He is focused on the manner in which we ask. He does not treat us as His robots, nor is He ‘artificial intelligence’ for our ASKing.

# CONSECRATION GUIDE 2023

## DAY 4: TIME TO RESET

The constant demand on our mind, the distractions and the noise, can weigh us down and put us in a spiritual fog. Life has a way of stacking on the pressure and pain, which causes our emotions to get out of whack. As we get tired and weighed down, our conscience can become desensitized, not really bothered by things that once convicted us. God's voice is slowly muffled, and we begin to lose our passion for Him. The fire within dims, and we shift into autopilot, operating from a position of obligation or routine in our relationship with God, instead of one of affection and fervor.

Fasting hits the reset button of our soul. To receive the new things God wants to bring into our lives, we have to periodically hit the reset button. This is what I call experiencing a newness of soul. What a powerful gift we have been given through fasting.



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## DAY 4: TIME TO RESET

**Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20**

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.”

Do you think of yourself as a temple? The Bible says that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We’ve got to get “the gunk” out of God’s temple so we can hear His voice clearly and prepare ourselves for new things He wants to do, in and through us. Even if you are going to church, reading your Bible, and worshiping, there are times when you need to give your soul a good spring cleaning to make it fresh again.

As we live our lives, over time we can get all “gunked up.” While our spirit is eternally made new through Christ, our soul, which is the intersection of our mind, will and emotions, can become weighed down, heavy, negative, and sluggish.

# CONSECRATION GUIDE 2023

## DAY 5: TIME TO RESET

**Scripture: Ephesians 2:10**

**“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”**

One of the reasons I think prayer and fasting are so powerful when combined, is that, together, they activate a chain reaction where we see God’s kingdom manifest on earth. This sequence is what I call agreement...alignment...assignment. When we come into agreement with God, we are aligned with God’s perfect will on earth, as it already is in heaven. When we are aligned with heaven, we find that God can use us in ways we never thought possible; then, we begin to walk in our assignment –the purpose that God created us to fulfill.

God has given you a specific and unique assignment. You are a masterpiece designed by God to make a difference in this world. There is a very specific purpose for which you were created. God is the only One who can truly inform you of that purpose, and, in order to fulfill it, you will need His power.

Here’s the deal: when it comes to pursuing our God-given assignment, if you and I are not in tune with God’s voice, we will only hear the voice of the crowd and get weighed down by the pressures of life. Like a radio station we can’t quite hear clearly, all the voices will cause static and make it difficult for us to tune into the Voice we need to hear.

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## DAY 6: BIG DECISIONS

**Scripture: Luke 4:42-44**

**“At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for Him and when they came to where He was, they tried to keep Him from leaving them. But He said, ‘I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.’ And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.”**

The hardest decisions to make are usually not between what is good and bad. Usually, the most difficult decisions are between what is good, better and best. It is so important to be able to clearly hear the voice of God when facing important decisions. Jesus regularly disconnected from the world to hear the voice of God. This awakening season is all about disconnecting from the world so that we can hear the voice of God.

All sorts of things will try to crowd God out of your life. Jesus faced pressure from the crowds, and He had to choose between doing good and doing God’s will. The crowds constantly tugged on Jesus to heal them or to do another miracle. What might have happened if Jesus had listened to the voice of the crowds? He would have settled for a very good cause, healing, but missed His primary purpose to preach the kingdom of God to lost humanity. Jesus knew that, with so much need everywhere, He had to hear the voice of His Father, or He would have mistakenly chosen what’s good instead of what’s God. That is exactly what will happen in our lives if we’re not tuned in to God and hearing His voice over the voice of the crowd.

# CONSECRATION GUIDE 2023

## DAY 6: BIG DECISIONS

The voice of the crowd cannot answer the question, “Why are you here?” When you hear the voice of God, you begin to understand His purpose for you and what you are all about. It is then that you can prioritize your life around that purpose; this is a freeing place to be, and it uncomplicates your life. Once you begin to realize God’s purpose for your life, you start to understand something foundational about yourself; you’re not here on earth simply to exist but –guess what? –you were sent. Your whole life will change when you understand that you were sent here by God.

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## DAY 7: GOING DEEPER - BEAUTIFUL FEET

**Scripture: Romans 10:15,18**

**“And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”**

**“But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course, they did: Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”**

How beautiful are the radiant faces of those who faithfully preach the Good News. Or, how beautiful are the calloused hands of those who tirelessly work for God’s kingdom proclaiming, through word and action, the message of peace. But, feet? Artists study faces and do portraits of hands, torsos—almost every part of the body, except feet. But who really considers feet beautiful? In addition to being clumsy and awkward, my homely, scaly, reddened appendages are the source of continual discomfort and pain. How can the Prophet Isaiah possibly call the lowest part of human anatomy (even under the best conditions) beautiful? The great Bible teacher, J. Vernon Mcgee, once said, *“Feet reveal our humanity. There’s probably no member of our body that tells quite how human we are as our feet.”*

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## **DAY 7: GOING DEEPER - BEAUTIFUL FEET**

There is one, however, who has beautiful, comely feet. That one is the Lord Jesus Christ. His willingness to leave heaven's splendor to sojourn among us, to take up residence in a human body, and trod this earth for our salvation, merits our highest praise and admiration.

Mary of Bethany, who longed for nothing more than to sit at Jesus' feet, understood the loveliness of Christ's feet, when she anointed and washed them with costly perfume. Her intuitive, highly controversial deed helps us understand that, sometimes, the only way to respond to extravagant beauty is to do something outrageous in return. It is also true that acts of beauty, which can appear to be a frivolous waste of time and money, are often just what is needed to demonstrate our feeble attempt at gratitude. Mary's focus on Christ's feet reflected a spirit of intensely intimate humility as she basked in the presence of her wonderful Lord.

The past few years has been extremely difficult years for most of the world's population. As if life were not already hard enough, the trials of the past year have taken a devastating toll on millions. During the past 12 months, I would venture to say that all of us have, to some extent, succumbed to suspicion, fear, and paralyzing anxiety. More than ever, Christ needs beautiful feet who are willing to leave couches of comfort and GO into the trenches with the Gospel of Peace. There are abundant opportunities, currently, for those who've found His bedrock peace, to minister and proclaim these good tidings of great joy to those who are desperate for some news of hope.

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## DAY 8: SURRENDER

**Scripture: Matthew 16:24**

***“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me.’”***

You can know God and never completely surrender your life to Him. Your sins can be forgiven, and you can be on your way to heaven, but you can still be in control. You can add God to your life, but it still can be your life. You still can be in the driver’s seat.

Prayer and fasting is about getting out of the driver’s seat and getting in the passenger seat. To truly surrender means giving God your whole life and discovering the reality, joy, peace, freedom, feelings and experiences that come with truly knowing God. We often believe this is a one-time decision, but it is a practice we must regularly engage in to keep our spiritual fervor.

God is asking you a question, “Will you let Me drive? Will you give Me complete control? If you want all of Me, then I need all of you.” Today, will you tell Jesus have His way in your life?

When we experience staleness in our relationship with God, for whatever reason, surrendering again is the first step to rekindle the fire within! We need to start each day with complete surrender. Surrender is more of an ongoing process rather than just a one-time decision. Full surrender to God means no more going back and forth, with one foot in the world, and the other foot in God’s kingdom. Following Jesus is all or nothing.

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## DAY 8: SURRENDER

The surrendered life is the best life. It's really the only way to live as a believer. But, to get there, you've got to go all out. This means total surrender. No more halfway stuff; you can't be a part-time Christian. God wants you to be a full-time follower of Jesus.

When you fully surrender to God, you are filled with His Spirit and are awakened to His presence in your life. God will energize you and give you a hunger for His Word.



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## DAY 9: GOD IS GOOD

**Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13**

*“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”*

A great way to begin each day is by focusing on who God is! Today, focus on the goodness, the greatness, and glory of God. Focusing daily on these three attributes of God gives us a complete picture, or filter, of grace. The Lord’s Prayer is a great prayer to help us think about the goodness, the greatness, and glory of God.

When we call God our Father, it reminds us that we are His children. He loves, cares for, and provides for His children. He is a great dad. But, that’s not enough, is it? You can know that you are loved, and that God is good, but you still can be going through hard times. So, we not only need to focus on God’s goodness, but we also need to set our minds on how great God is. Our great God is in heaven. When we think about our God in heaven, it reminds us that He reigns and rules and is in control. He has all the power that we need to make it through tough times. Lastly, we need to give God glory. When you “hallow” God’s name (or make it holy), it is a helpful reminder that life is not all about us.

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## DAY 10: GENEROSITY

*Scripture: Malachi 3:10*

*“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this, “says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”*”

### THE PROMISE OF ABOUNDING GENEROSITY

**We underestimate the generosity of our Lord.** If you’re like me, perhaps it’s not simply a lack of understanding of the significance of what we’ve already been given in Emmanuel. Rather, well-intentioned, and rightful warnings against “treating God like Santa Claus” or falling into the “prosperity gospel” can cause dwelling on the idea of a God who gives generously to feel consumerist, greedy, or, at the very least, uncomfortable.

Yet, while we must certainly never reduce the indescribably precious gift of prayer to a transaction of demands, nor fail to measure well the cost of the Way of the Cross, there is also a truth of which we must not lose sight: Generosity finds its source in God.

The same God who calls us to become living sacrifices is more eager to delight His children than the giddiest parent on Christmas morning. The same God who dwells in unapproachable light, God is more jovial and full of mirth than our culturally imagined St. Nick. The Holy One of Israel, the Unblemished Lamb, the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty King, the long-awaited Messiah — the very same Lord brims over with affection for you, relishes your excitement, and cherishes your moments of childlike wonder.

While we know it is better to give than to receive, it is the assurance of our access to His abundance that frees us to walk in radical generosity without fearing lack.

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## DAY 10: GENEROSITY

Not simply because we have been given every spiritual blessing, not simply because Christ has taught us what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, not simply because He intercedes for us still at the right hand of the Father; we need not fear because we cannot out-give God. We cannot surpass His generosity.

“Test Me in this,” He insists. “See if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.”

It’s easy to disguise fear of scarcity as prudence. It’s difficult to expect a harvest so rich we struggle to bind the sheaves. It’s easy to conflate reaping the fruit of living as God intended with earning God’s favor. It’s difficult to give without letting our left hand know what our right is doing. It’s easy to become self-deceived about the limits of our control. It’s difficult to daily come needy and open-handed to receive the gifts of the One who calls us Beloved.

But, take heart. He will supply the grace you need to dare to believe, to dare to respond. He who fed thousands with just a few fish and loaves can multiply your offering. And He who knows intimately the longings of your heart, knows also how to give good gifts.

May we live in light of the generosity of our Lord – and so come to know it all the more.

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## DAY 11: CREATING SPACE

**Scripture: Malachi 3:10**

*“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

Prayer and fasting is about creating space for God, clearing a runway in our lives for God to land. When you want something new and exciting to happen in your life, then you have to create some space. An expectant mom goes to great lengths to create the perfect nursery space for her new little one.

Think about that new thing that you want God to do in your life. Think about that problem that is blocking your path that you need God to remove. As much as God wants to do something amazing in your life, He is a filler, not a forcer.

Too often we spend so much time and energy trying to figure out and anticipate every scenario. We want God to do this; we want God to do that. But all the while God is saying, “Just create a little space for Me, and I’ll come in and fill it.” By seeking God, and by following Him fully, you are creating space for God to move. As you fast, and as you pray, you are making room for God to do what only He can do. He is a filler, not a forcer.

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## DAY 12: EFFECTIVE PRAYER

Scripture: James 5: 16

*“Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*

I have a very important question for you, “Do you know what God’s Word says about your situation?” Effective prayer is based on the Word of God.

Effective prayer is not based on our authority, but on the authority of God’s Word! We need to know the Word well enough to pray Word-based prayers. Prayer is not so much about getting what we want but aligning ourselves with what God wants. Matthew 6:33 clearly tells us what He wants. He wants us to seek Him first! Are you pleading for financial breakthrough? Then, you need to be aligned with what God says about resources. Are you tithing? We have a part to play in the effectiveness of our prayers, and it has to do with alignment with God’s Word.

Can you see how prayer is less about getting from God as it is about aligning ourselves with what God already wants to do. Many times, though, we can get so focused on our own comfort, or our own preferences, that we don’t even take the time to examine ourselves to see what God’s Word has to say about our situation. We have to align our prayers with the Word, and we may also need to align some aspects of our lives with His Word.

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## DAY 13: (GOING DEEPER) DEVELOP A GENEROUS SPIRIT

*Scripture: Hebrews 13: 15, 16*

*“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”*

The verses for reflection today all focus on the responsibility to share, to give, to sacrifice, to not turn away those in need, even at cost to ourselves. But, anyone who has ever made a New Year’s resolution knows not all good habits are easily enacted. Developing one’s propensity for any skill requires, at a minimum, an awareness of the need to improve, and a dedication to continued practice. Regardless of the starting point, we are all capable of improving our spirit of generosity, but it must be cultivated with diligence until it becomes habitual.

And yet, the giving and receiving of material items is such a culturally accepted norm during the holiday season that it borders on obligation. However, a gift is given willingly, as an act of choice. It is a form of favor, as there is no requirement of the giver to bestow it. And, favor by its definition is not fair; it is an act of kindness beyond what is considered expected or standard. Why is it that the act of giving to those who are suffering, which is a year-round affair, receives far less fanfare?

I am forced to ask myself, “How often have I withheld kindness from someone, because I was judgmental? Have I held back assistance because I questioned if the giving of my resources would be utilized properly? Did I not give because it somehow inconvenienced me?” Or, perhaps more simply, “Was I too busy to see You when You were in front of me?”

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## DAY 14: KEEP GOING!

**Scripture: Romans 12:11-13**

*“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”*

We are at the end of our 14 days of prayer and fasting. How are you feeling? Are you feeling closer, more connected to God? Has there been an awakening in your spiritual life?

Do you feel like obeying God? Let me put it to you this way, “If you don’t feel like obeying God, then something is wrong with your feelings. So much of our Christian teaching focuses on obeying God regardless of how you feel, but the Bible is clear that for the majority of the time we should feel like obeying God. This is where awakening comes in. This is where fasting comes in. When you have an awakening with God, you begin to have a desire to obey Him and walk the path of righteousness.

We are back where we started on day one with Romans 12:11. I hope as a result of the last 14 days you are fueled and aflame. It is so important for your obedience to flow from “want to” and not “have to.” Though we are not led by our feelings, they are important. We are created in the image of God, and God created us with emotions and feelings. God wants your heart, your passion, and your love to increase and overflow in obedience. Remember passionate Christianity or Kingdom living is the norm, not the exception.