

Set Apart

A Biblical
View of
Holiness



VICTORY

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Preparation for the Fast

Why Fast?

Fasting is a spiritual tool God uses to advance His kingdom, change the destiny of nations, spark revival, and bring victory in people's lives. At the start and middle of each year, we take time to pray and fast in order to humble ourselves before God, seek Him, consecrate ourselves to Him, and corporately agree for breakthroughs.

Jesus fasted.

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **MATTHEW 4:1-2**

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. **LUKE 4:14**

Jesus knew He was going to need spiritual strength to fulfill His purposes. Fasting makes us spiritually strong and prepares us to do God's work.

Fasting is an act of humility and consecration.

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. **EZRA 8:21**

As we humble ourselves through prayer and fasting, we receive God's grace and have access to His heart.

Fasting helps us become sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” **ACTS 13:2**

When we deny ourselves of natural cravings and worldly distractions, we become more sensitive to God’s voice. Then we are better able to focus on God and submit to His will.

Fasting brings revival.

“And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.” **ISAIAH 58:12**

Throughout history, God has brought revival and delivered nations from destruction in response to prayer and fasting. Fasting helps us prevail in prayer and intercession.

Fasting is healthy.

Fasting cleanses your digestive system from toxins. Doctors consider fasting a cure for certain allergies and diseases. The discipline of fasting helps break unhealthy addictions in our lives.

Planning Your Fast

Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” **JOSHUA 3:5**

Pray—Spend time reading the Bible before the fast. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in your prayers. In the succeeding pages, write down your faith goals and specific prayer requests for your family, friends, church, and nation.

Commit—Pray about the kind of fast you will undertake and commit to it ahead of time. Record your plan and ask God for grace to help you follow through with your decisions.

Act—Start eating smaller portions a few days before the fast. Avoid food high in sugar and fat. Plan to limit physical and social activities for the week of the fast. Ask someone to be your prayer partner throughout the fast and share your faith goals and answered prayers with him or her. Continually pray for each other even after the fast.

NOTE: Consult a physician, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, or taking medication. If your situation does not allow you to do a full fast, determine what will work best for you.

While Fasting

[Jesus] answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” **MATTHEW 4:4**

Focus—Set aside time to work through the devotional. Be ready to respond to God’s word and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Pray—Join at least one prayer meeting in your local church. Intercede for your family, church, pastors, nation, campuses, and missions throughout the week.

Replenish—During mealtime, read the Bible and pray. Drink plenty of water and rest as much as you can. Be ready for temporary bouts of physical weakness and mental annoyances like impatience and irritability.

Breaking the Fast

Eat—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.

Pray—Don't stop praying! Trust God's faithfulness and timing. Carry your newfound passion for God throughout the year. Be in faith for God to answer your prayers.

¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. **1 JOHN 5:14-15**

My Plan

DAY 1

Water only Liquid only One meal only Other:

Prayer meeting(s) to attend:

DAY 2

Water only Liquid only One meal only Other:

Prayer meeting(s) to attend:

DAY 3

Water only Liquid only One meal only Other:

Prayer meeting(s) to attend:

“... if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” **MATTHEW 18:19**

My Prayer Partner:

For the rest of 2024, I am seeking God and trusting Him in these areas ...

Personal Life

Spiritual Revival • Physical Healing • Prosperity and Abundance •
Rich Generosity ...

My Family

Restoration of Relationships • Household Salvation ...

My Education/Career

Excellence • Promotion ...

My Ministry

Small Group Growth • Salvation of Classmates and Colleagues ...

I am committing to pray for ...

My Church

Church Leadership • Provision • Discipleship Ministry ...

My Community

Campuses and Educational Institutions • Local Government • Outreach Opportunities ...

My Nation

Government Officials • Spiritual Revival • Economic Prosperity • Peace and Order ...





Introduction

Set Apart by God

Read

“You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.” **LEVITICUS 20:26**

Read also **DEUTERONOMY 4:5-8; PSALM 24:1; ZECHARIAH 8:23.**

Reflect

The 2024 theme for Every Nation is holiness. In January, we reflected on the call to holiness. In this devotional, we continue to reflect on what this means for us in our individual lives and families, as well as in our church, on our campuses, and in our communities. As we celebrate God’s faithfulness to us as a church this year, let us remember that this faithfulness endures through generations. In response, our only desire is to honor Him in every nation.

Today, we will start by understanding that God has called us to be holy or set apart. This is interesting because God has many attributes that only He has and cannot be shared with people. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and unchanging. But He never tells us, “Be all-powerful because I am all-powerful” or “Be unchanging because I am unchanging.” However, He does say, “Be holy, for I

am holy.” This means that holiness is an attribute of God that can be shared with people. This is a truth that is affirmed both in the Old and New Testaments.

Most of us associate holiness with soberness and even strangeness. We may think of holy people as weird, peculiar individuals who live somewhere in the desert, secluded from the rest of the world as “holy people.” But what does God really mean when He says, “Be holy, for I am holy”?

The basic meaning of holy is being separate or set apart. This being set apart has two senses: being set apart from and being set apart to.

In the first sense, it means being separate from those around us. Applied to God, holiness means He is set apart in quality from creation. He is not part of it and His attributes are far above what He has created. When He calls His people to be holy, this is a call to be set apart in our character, behavior, and lifestyle from others who worship false gods. This is so that we would reflect Him and be a light to those around them, leading others to worship Him.

Being separate from the ways of the world is made possible when we understand the call to be set apart to fulfill God’s purpose, which is the second sense of being holy. To be set apart unto God means that we belong to Him alone. We are called to be in a faithful relationship with Him and to live for Him alone. When we view ourselves as belonging to God (and not our own), our thoughts, words, and behaviors are transformed to reflect Him more.

Respond

In what ways are you reflecting the character of God to the people around you? What thoughts, attitudes, and actions do you need to surrender to the Lord today?

How does the idea of being God's special possession change the way you view yourself? How does it help you overcome challenges and trials in your life?

Faith Step

Reflect on God's goodness and faithfulness to us as a church. Remember what He has done and express your gratitude for His plans and purposes for us, as we continue to honor Him and make disciples.

Heavenly Father,

thank You for choosing me to be Your child, a vessel of Your goodness, and part of Your kingdom. Apart from You, I can not be holy. I am unworthy, but You have saved me and set me apart for Your purpose. May Your Spirit guide me and lead me into all truth, giving me wisdom, hope, and peace. May everything I do today and every day bring honor to You.

In Jesus' name,

amen.

Day 1

Set Apart for God's Honor

Read

¹Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ²they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) ⁵And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁷in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ⁸You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” **MARK 7:1-8**

Read also **LEVITICUS 11:44-45; ISAIAH 29:13; JOHN 4:23; COLOSSIANS 3:17.**

Reflect

To be set apart means to be different or uncommon. People usually have different reasons, motivations, and perspectives on being set apart. Some may want to stand above the rest and be recognized as the best in a certain field or career, while others may want to be considered unique.

As believers, our ultimate goal and motivation for being set apart is to honor God with our lives. To honor or to glorify means to give value and weight to something or someone. To honor God then means to give value and reverence to God in every aspect and area of our lives. Because God is holy, He wants us to be holy and consecrated to Him (Leviticus 11:44).

How are we set apart for God's honor? In Mark 7, the Pharisees ask Jesus a question in order to trap Him. From Jesus' answer, we are given an idea on what it means to truly honor God. Jesus tells them that people try to honor God with their words, yet not with their hearts. They attempt to honor God with lip service alone, but their hearts are far from Him. To truly honor God, we should wholeheartedly seek Him and His will for us. We ought to seek to have a genuine, intimate, and intentional relationship with Him.

Furthermore, Jesus tells them that people worship God in vain, only doing so with empty rituals and hollow attempts to obey the law. While these rituals and traditions matter, the Pharisees missed the importance and heart behind it all: to honor and glorify God. We honor God in our words and actions when we worship Him in spirit and truth, recognizing Him for who He truly is (John 4:23). We also worship God by following His commands. We live not for men, but for God. Everything that we do, we do to honor God and follow Him, making disciples on our campuses, in our communities, and in every nation.

Respond

Do you have a healthy relationship with God? What areas of your life need to be aligned to His word and lived out for His honor?

Take some time to check the motivations of your heart. Why do you do what you do? Would you say it is only to fulfill your selfish desires, or is it to honor God?

Faith Step

Surrender the areas in your life that do not currently honor Him. Ask Him to work in you and trust Him to work through you.

**We ask You,
Holy Spirit,**

to point out areas in our hearts that need to be surrendered to You. May we have a deeper understanding of Your word to obey and honor You in everything. We pray that our hearts would be deeply connected to You as we grow in our relationship with You. May we encounter You every day and reflect Your life and grace to everyone we meet.

In Jesus' name,

amen.

Day 2

Set Apart to Make Disciples on Our Campuses

Read

⁷“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

DEUTERONOMY 6:7-9

And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. **JUDGES 2:10**

Reflect

As God’s chosen people—a royal priesthood and a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9)—we are set apart for Him. This declaration of faith is not just for the present but something we aspire for God’s people to embrace for generations to come. Passing on this truth faithfully and diligently to the next generation demands significant commitment from the present generation.

Even in the time of Moses, people were encouraged to teach their children about God, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:7-9. This includes the primary Shema prayer (Deuteronomy 6:4-6), which is recognized as a daily declaration of faith by Jews in both morning and evening rituals. This activity within families and communities is purposeful, since this is how continuous and intentional discipleship is emphasized from one generation to another. However, through the years, there are those who have failed to pass down the knowledge of God's character and deeds.

The tribes of Israel committed a great sin when they compromised and did not fully obey the Lord. This failure gave rise to a new generation, as mentioned in Judges 2:10, that abandoned the Lord and worshiped the gods of the people around them (Judges 2:12). In this shift, they lost sight of God and their own identity, potentially leading them into compromising situations.

While we may not be immune to similar failures, we have the grace to prevent them in our families, lives, and within our church. We can pass on the knowledge of who God is and what He has done in, for, and through us to the next generation.

As a church, we bear a multigenerational responsibility to pass on the baton—the message of the gospel. We are to make disciples in our homes, campuses, and wherever the young people are. Parents have the next generation in their homes, teachers have them in classrooms, and we all have relatives and young friends we can minister to. Reaching them at a young age through relational discipleship and multigenerational relationships are some of the reasons that the youth choose to remain in church.¹

We take seriously the call to steward the next generation and teach them to face their battles. As a church, we deliberately make efforts to

¹ "5 Reasons Millennials Stay Connected to Church," Barna, September 2013, <https://www.barna.com/research/5-reasons-millennials-stay-connected-to-church>.

reach the campuses because that is where a lot of young people and future leaders are. Let us diligently teach the Scriptures, provide clear instruction, fervently impart wisdom, and consistently reflect God's love and truth to the next generation. As we remind them of God's steadfast love and unwavering faithfulness, may His kingdom continue to advance in and through us in the next forty years and beyond, from generation to generation.

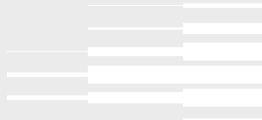
Respond

This year, how has God been good and faithful to you? How has He been faithful to your family? How has He been faithful to your local church and to the greater body of Christ?

Starting with your family and those you interact with, how can you pass on the message of the gospel to the younger or next generation?

Faith Step

Think of a campus that is dear to your heart. Make a plan to regularly pray for the students, faculty, and staff on this campus.



Lord,

we come before You with a grateful heart. We remember Your greatness and the countless ways You have shown us Your steadfast love. May we continue to impart to the next generation a love for You and Your word, that they may intimately know and follow You. Help us to make disciples of young people with sincere compassion and grace. May they have growing relationships with You and Your people, and may they draw many more to You ...

In Jesus' name,

amen.

Day 3

Set Apart to Make Disciples in Our Communities

Read

⁸Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” . . . ¹⁵but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect . . . **1 PETER 3:8-12, 15**

Read also **MARK 12:30-31; LUKE 6:27-28; JOHN 13:34-35;**
1 PETER 3:13-22; 1 PETER 4:4-11.

Reflect

In his letter, the apostle Peter addresses the issue of how churches in Asia Minor should respond to the rising persecution against Christian believers. The early church was most likely reluctant to reach those who were persecuting them and tell unbelievers about God's goodness and holiness. But they—and us—are not to back down in loving people and telling them about the good news of the gospel.

Just as “tart words make no friend; a spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a gallon of vinegar,”² Christians can reach others with love more than strife, joy more than debates, and grace more than religion. With kindness, graciousness, patience, and respect, there is a greater possibility that people will be willing to listen to the gospel of Christ. The love of God is to be reflected in how we approach and treat others. More so, our way of life reflects our relationship with Jesus.

In the second century AD, Tertullian, an early church father, said that the Roman government was suspicious of the Christian churches and how they were growing. They even sent spies into the church to see what was happening. One spy reported back: “These Christians are very strange. They meet together in an empty room to worship. They do not have an image. They speak of one by the name of Jesus, who is absent, but whom they seem to be expecting at any time. And my, how they love Him and how they love one another.”³

In our communities, followers of Jesus are set apart to reflect God, declare the gospel, and demonstrate His love. Jesus commands us to love our neighbors and enemies. He said that people will know that we are His disciples if we love one another. God's love is for us and

2 “Poor Richard, 1744,” Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-02-02-0100>. [Original source: *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 2, January 1, 1735, through December 31, 1744, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 393-400.]

3 Kirk Lewis, “By Our Love,” Dr. Kirk Lewis (blog), February 2022, <https://wordpress.drkirklewis.com/by-our-love>.

our relatives, neighbors, classmates, officemates, friends, and even our enemies and those far from God. Our job is to trust and obey Him, faithfully walking with Him and proclaiming Him.

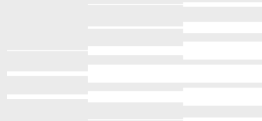
Respond

Reflect on your own life. Do you think your words and actions are more like a gallon of vinegar or a spoonful of honey? What do you think God is doing in your life in order for more people to turn to Him?

Identify your circles of influence. How do you think you can advance God's kingdom in your community?

Faith Step

Ask God and some friends in church how you can reflect God's love and be a blessing to your community.



Jesus,

no words can express my gratitude toward You for accepting and loving a sinner like me. Help me to reflect Your goodness and faithfulness to the people around me. Reveal to me what needs to change in me, and what needs to be kept in my approach, so that others may hear and respond to the good news of the gospel. Keep me in step with Your Spirit and give me the courage to respond righteously as You open doors in my community to preach the gospel and make disciples. May Your love abound in me so that it may overflow toward others.

Amen.

Conclusion

Set Apart to Make Disciples in Every Nation

Read

⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” ⁸And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.” **ISAIAH 6:6-8**

Read also **JEREMIAH 1:4-10**; **MATTHEW 28:16-20**; **2 TIMOTHY 2:20-21**.

Reflect

The Bible is filled with stories of people who have been set apart for God’s purpose. Isaiah 6 gives an account of how Isaiah encountered God’s holiness. After he had recognized his own sinfulness before God, an angel flew to Isaiah and touched his mouth with the burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. This is what made Isaiah clean. His guilt was taken away and his sin was atoned for.

This account was aligned with Jewish culture and clear prohibitions of uncleanness as it relates to food, life, and worship. In Isaiah's encounter, the burning coal taken from the altar symbolizes God's purifying work. He is holy, separate, and independent from His creation, and He sanctifies us. Isaiah experienced spiritual cleansing, prompting him to respond with complete trust in God's character and humble readiness to be part of His mission.

A similar pattern unfolded in the life of Jeremiah. He was in his youth when God revealed to him that he had been consecrated. In fact, even before he was born, God had chosen him to be a prophet to the nations. Though Jeremiah was afraid to receive this divine calling at such a young age, God affirmed him by saying He would be with him. God commissioned Jeremiah by extending His hand and touching Jeremiah's mouth. In this divine act, God declared that He had placed His words in Jeremiah's mouth, granting him the authority to speak God's message over nations and kingdoms.

Isaiah and Jeremiah's encounters with God's holiness resonates with us today. Second Timothy 2:20-21 says that we are set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, and ready for every good work. We can live this out not out of our own ability, but because of God's presence with us. When Jesus commissioned the apostles to make disciples of all nations, He began by affirming His authority and concluded with the assurance that He would be with them. His presence is with His people, and this includes our church. This year marks the fortieth anniversary of God's faithfulness and grace to our church. As we express our gratitude to Him and look forward to what He will still do, we remain committed to fulfilling His Great Commission.

Today, whether we are on campus, in the workplace, doing business, taking care of the home, or already retired, we can all take part in advancing the kingdom of God in our nation and in every nation.

Respond

Have you encountered the holiness of God? What has been the effect of this in your life? If there is an area in your life that you need to consecrate to Him, take some time to do this today.

Why do you think we are called to go reach our nation and every nation? What do you think your role is in this?

Faith Step

Ask God for His kingdom to advance in every nation. Pray for opportunities to be a blessing to a specific nation by praying, giving, and even going.



Jesus,

grant us a heart that beats for the nations.
May we have Your compassion for others,
and may Your name be glorified in every
corner of the earth. We ask for courage and
boldness to step out of our comfort zone,
trusting that You go before us and You are
with us. Here we are, willing vessels for
Your work among the nations, for Your
glory and honor ...

In Jesus' name,

amen.



