

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

April-June 2019

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers” (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2). I pray that you are filled with the God of peace.

You are Invited: We are having non-denominational Bible studies on Saturday evenings in Kansas, Oklahoma. We meet at 5:30pm for a light supper followed by music and a Bible study. All of our friends and neighbors are invited to join us. We hope to see you here! Call 304-633-5411 for more information.

Prayer and Fasting

by Lynnford Beachy

Prayer is the lifeline of our souls and we should make use of it far more than we do. The Bible says, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Jesus, who enjoyed a closer relationship with His Father than anyone has ever had, sometimes spent all night in prayer (Luke 6:12; Matthew 14:23-25). He said, “I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:28, 29). I pray that this study will cause

your prayer life to grow in depth, frequency, and duration; and that all of your relationships will be enriched with God’s presence every moment (1 Corinthians 1:4, 5; Colossians 4:6).

Fasting is a very useful tool that can be combined with our prayers to focus our minds on what is really important and push down fleshly inclinations. What is fasting? Fasting is mentioned several times in the Bible, and refers to abstinence from food, sometimes only certain types of foods (Daniel 10:2, 3). Fasting can also refer to giving of our time and resources to help others (Isaiah 58:6, 7). In some cases people have fasted



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from both food and water (Exodus 34:28; Acts 9:9; Jonah 3:7; Esther 4:16). I tried this once for one day, and I would not recommend it, for it takes supernatural power for your life to be preserved very long without water.

In this study we will be focusing more on fasting than on prayer, yet when you fast it really must be combined with prayer to be effective. (For a thorough study on prayer, request the study, "The Power of Prayer.")

Warning!

Jesus gave us an important warning on prayer and fasting when He said, "...when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matthew 6:5). This statement comes right after His warning against giving gifts for the purpose of

Anytime we do something for the purpose of getting praise from others, then we have already received our reward and will get nothing from the Lord for our efforts.

being seen by men (verses 1-4). If that is our goal when doing these things they will not be of any benefit to anyone. He later said, "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in

secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:16-18).

Anytime we do something for the purpose of getting praise from others, then we have already received our reward and will get nothing from the Lord for our efforts (verse 1). Jesus said, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:10-12).

This Pharisee was praying with himself, patting himself on the back for all his good deeds. He counted his fasting and other good works as something that gave him special favor with God, as if they would bring him salvation.

Friends, your status with God does not, at all, depend upon how

many good things you have done (Titus 3:5, 6). Finding our identity in Christ instead of in our own efforts is extremely important (Colossians 2:10; Ephesians 1:6). We need to believe what the Bible says about us (Ephesians 2:4-10). When we see ourselves in the light of His Word, our outward life will reflect it (Luke 11:34-36). If we view ourselves as continual failures, then we will continue to fail. If we see ourselves as "more than conquerors through him

that loved us” (Romans 8:37), then we will be victorious. Belief of victory comes before the victory is realized. Peter believed he could walk on water before he stepped out of the boat (Matthew 14:28, 29). (For a deeper study on this important topic, request the tract, *Finding Your Identity*.)

The Bible says, “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:11, 12). What matters is whether you have Christ in you or not (Colossians 1:27). When Christ resides in your heart as the Master of your life, everything changes (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is the heart change that matters and the outward change is the side effect; the overflow of that heart transformation. We really need to get this right, because so many people think their outward behavior is all that matters. But Jesus said, “Ye must be born again,” and, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:7, 3). The inward change is what counts, and when that is a reality the outward life will reflect it (Matthew 23:25, 26; John 14:15, 23; James 2:15-20).

Jesus said, “...those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which

defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man” (Matthew 15:18-20). He also said, “...every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:17, 18). So many people have this wrong and think all they have to do is clean up their outward lives, and then they will be accepted. The result of this impossible attempt is a life of frustration and doubt regarding eternal life (1 John 5:11-13).

Eternal life comes first, cleansing comes afterward. Notice carefully what God said through

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Ezekiel: “And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live” (Ezekiel 16:6). Notice: (eternal) life was given when you were polluted! “Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil” (Ezekiel 16:6-9). You are accepted as a child of God first, and then God proceeds to cleanse you. When I was born again, you couldn’t tell except for the

huge smile on my face, and how I would have related to you.

When God changed my heart, my outward life followed, and I have never been the same. I am so thankful for this new life in Christ.

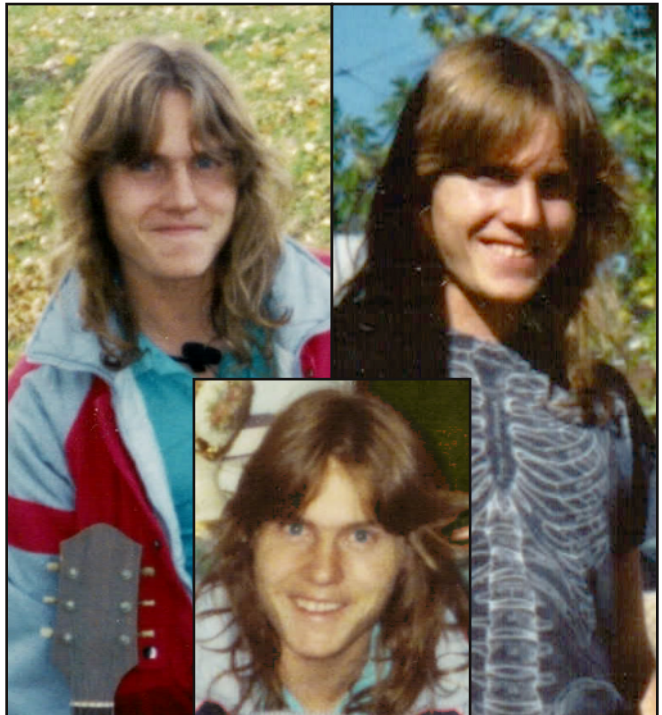
The Need for More Faith

One day a man approached nine of the disciples (the other three were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration) pleading for his son to be delivered from his torment. They tried to cast out the devil but failed. When Jesus came down from the Mount He cast out the devil. Afterwards, "...came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:19-21).

Jesus said the reason the devil could not be cast out was because of their unbelief. If they would have had more belief (faith) the devil would have been cast out. This was demonstrated

when Jesus cast him out immediately. Their faith needed to be strengthened for them to have success in this battle. Regardless of how wicked the devil was (some are more wicked than others – Matthew 12:45) if they would have had enough faith, the devil would have been cast out. These nine disciples very likely had a jealousy problem at this time. With Jesus choosing the other three to go with Him up to the mountain top, the other nine may have been focused on their desire to be the greatest. They had this problem all the way until the last supper the night before Jesus was crucified (Luke 9:46; 22:19-27; Mark 9:34; 10:37-41).

Friends, the desire to be the greatest is still a problem among



Me a few days after my new birth

God's professed followers today. It really needs to be removed before we can have unrestrained success in our daily battles and in our outreach. Jesus explained how our faith can be strengthened and this attitude removed: prayer and fasting. Fasting is a valuable aid in pushing self down and lifting Christ up so He can arise in our hearts and our faith can be increased (Isaiah 60:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:11; 5:17; Galatians 2:20; 4:6; 5:22).

Amazing Things Happen

Fasting can enable great things to happen. Notice what happened when Daniel fasted: "I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:... Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding" (Daniel 9:2, 3, 21, 22). God sent His angel, Gabriel, to talk with Daniel when he was praying and fasting.

Another time Daniel fasted from pleasant food for three weeks: "In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself

at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude" (Daniel 10:2-6).

God takes notice when we seek Him with prayer and fasting. Cornelius, an uncircumcised Gentile, sought the Lord with prayer and fasting, and the Lord sent an angel to talk with him. Cornelius explained to Peter, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:30-33).

We do not know if someone was praying for Cornelius, but it very well could have been happening. The Bible says, "I exhort therefore, that,

first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:1-5). God wants us to pray for everyone because He wants everyone to be saved. There were people praying for me when the Lord invaded a drug party to rescue me from drugs. I say “invaded” because I was not expecting the Lord to reach me where I was, nor did I invite Him. I am so thankful He showed up!

When God tells us to pray for all men He means it. It may take a while for our prayers to be answered, but that does not mean we should stop. I have heard stories of prayers being answered after the one praying has passed away. Regardless of how hopeless the circumstances appear, still pray for all people. Your prayers are being heard, and we have the promise, “...pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

God wants to do more for us than we have been ready to receive. The absence of God doing great things in our behalf is not a lack on God’s part,

but on our part. His door is wide open, we need to open the door on our side (Revelation 3:20). Prayer and fasting can help us open the door widely for God to come in and do great things in and through us. God said, “...turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness...” (Joel 2:12, 13).

Reasons for Fasting

Nehemiah learned that his people were facing very difficult circumstances. He was told: “The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned

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certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 1:3, 4). The Lord heard his prayer and Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, sent him with letters and an army to help his people (Nehemiah 2:9).

When you or someone you know is in great affliction that is a good time to seek the Lord with prayer and fasting. We should not only pray for our friends, but also our enemies. Jesus said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that

hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). King David did this: “False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother” (Psalms 35:11-14). David prayed for his enemies with prayer and fasting, and even mourned for them.

When destruction was prophesied against Ninevah, the king proclaimed a fast for his kingdom and the Lord heard and delivered them (Jonah 3:5-10). When persecution was made a law in Esther’s time they sought the Lord with prayer and fasting and the Lord worked it out for good to His people (Esther 4:3, 16).

Prayer and fasting can open the doors for God to speak to His people. “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2, 3). “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (Acts 14:23).

Fast^{ing} in Our Day

The scribes and Pharisees complained to Jesus about His disciples

saying, “Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days” (Luke 5:33-35).

Jesus foresaw our day and knew that we would need to fast when He would not physically be with us. He is always with us by His Spirit (Matthew 28:20), but His physical absence gives us the need to fast.

Paul admonished us to fast when he wrote to married couples saying, “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (1 Corinthians 7:5).

A Solemn Assembly

The book of Joel has many prophecies for our day; some of which are very similar to the book of Revelation (Joel 2:30-32; 3:14-16). Joel said, “Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD” (Joel 1:14). He also wrote, “Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her

closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:15-17).

We are living in a solemn time. Events are about to break loose on this world worse than any time in history (Matthew 24:21). If there ever was a time we need to be seeking the Lord with all our hearts, it is now! Fasting is a good idea, and doing it collectively as the body of Christ will accomplish more than doing it alone. Solemn assemblies and fasting make sense at the times in which we live.

Yet, our fasting must be according to God's plan. He said, "Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned... did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?" (Zechariah 7:5, 6). If fasting and mourning is done only in an attempt to benefit ourselves, it will not accomplish what we need.

God continued, "Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart"

(Zechariah 7:9, 10). Seeking the Lord by fasting and prayer must be done for the right reasons. We should be seeking for God's character to flow through us and bless those around us. If this is not the goal we are seeking in our prayer and fasting, then we are going about it in the wrong way. God's true blessings will trickle down to affect the way we treat people. Let us seek the Lord to fill us so fully that He will

make a positive change in the way we relate to those around us.

Do Not Imagine Evil

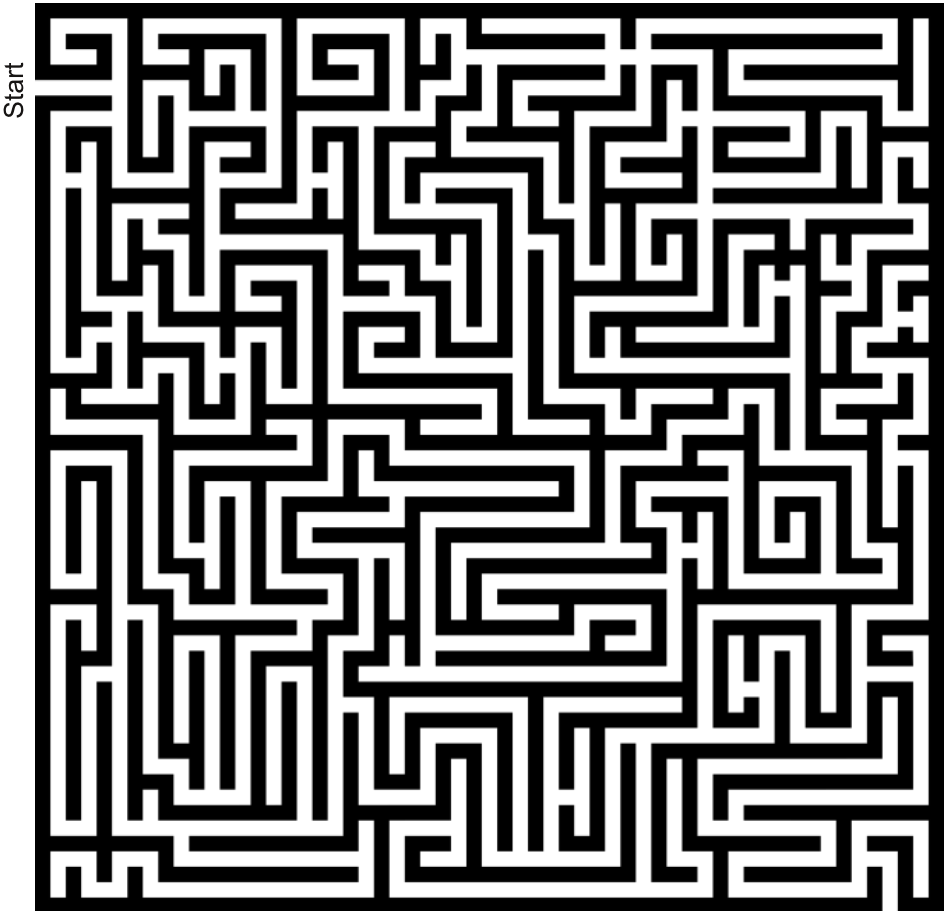
God explained, "These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD" (Zechariah 8:16, 17). God repeated this sentiment twice, "let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart." Far too many people have looked for evil in others and found it where there is none, and "have condemned the guiltless" (Matthew 12:7). God hates this!

John mistreated a man while thinking he was doing God a favor. He said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:49, 50). Here is an important

We should be seeking for God's character to flow through us and bless those around us.

**"Trust in the LORD with all
thine heart; and lean not
unto thine own
understanding. In all thy
ways acknowledge him, and
he shall direct thy paths."**

Proverbs 3:5, 6



Present Truth - Kids' Korner

Bible Word Search

Find the underlined words...

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

(2 Chronicles 7:14)

I C W G F Z W H P R T T N T A J A I A D
L H E A R A W H A L L H F T Q Z R G Z D
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"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

(Jeremiah 29:12, 13)

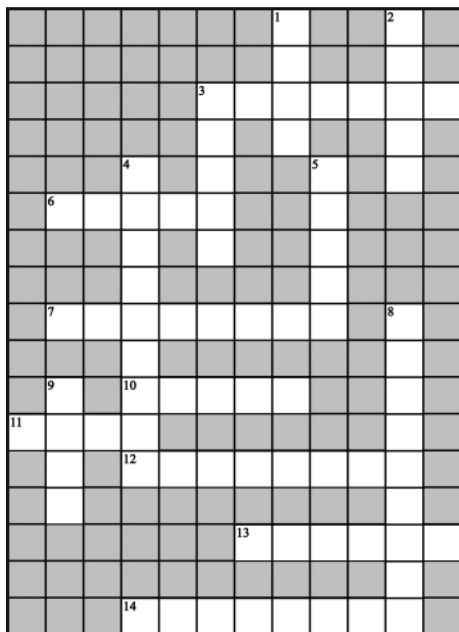


Present Truth - Kids' Korner

Bible Study Crossword - Personality of God - Part 11

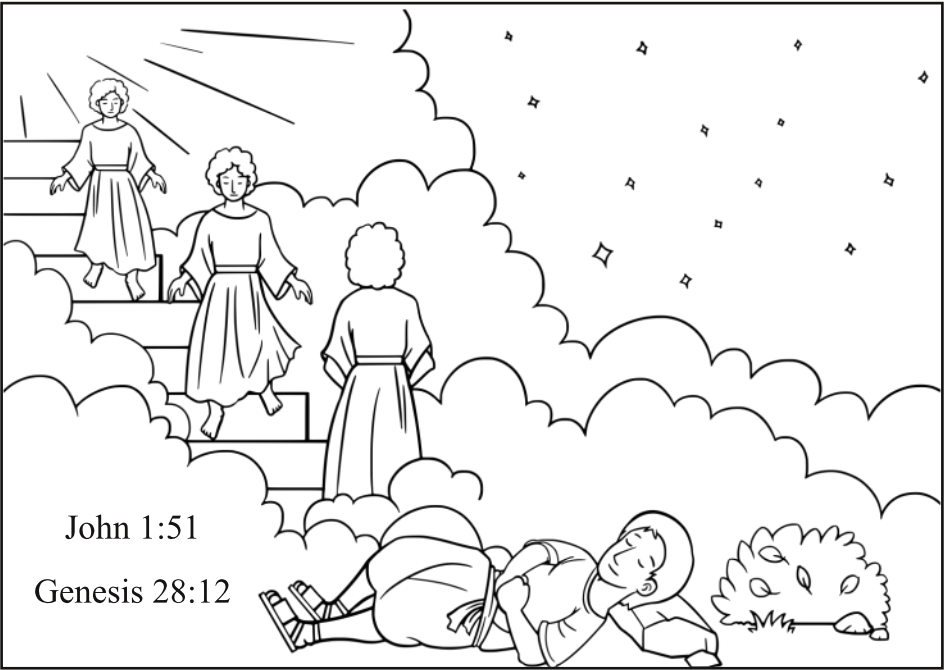
(The King James Version is required.)

- "If ye ____ me, keep my commandments." John 14:15—**11 Across**
- "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another ____, that he may abide with you for ever;" John 14:16—**4 Down**
- "Even the Spirit of ____; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:17—**10 Across**
- "...the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that ____ was not yet glorified." John 7:39—**2 Down**
- "...It is ____ for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John 16:7—**8 Down**
- "I will not leave you comfortless: I will ____ to you." John 14:18—**9 Down**
- "At that day ye shall ____ that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." John 14:20—**1 Down**
- "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will ____ myself to him." John 14:21—**14 Across**
- "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the ____?" John 14:22—**5 Down**
- "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our ____ with him." John 14:23—**6 Across**
- "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they



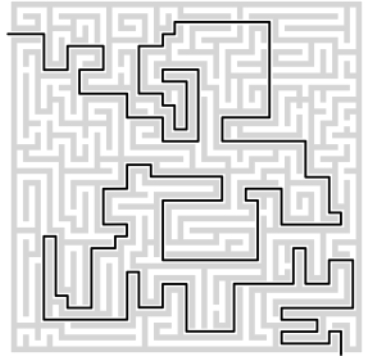
should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the ____ of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." Acts 1:4—**3 Across**

- "But ye shall receive ____, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me..." Acts 1:8—**3 Down**
- "This Jesus hath God ____ up, whereof we all are witnesses." Acts 2:32—**13 Across**
- "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having ____ of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Acts 2:33—**12 Across**
- "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having ____ some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Hebrews 11:39, 40—**7 Across**



John 1:51

Genesis 28:12



Answers



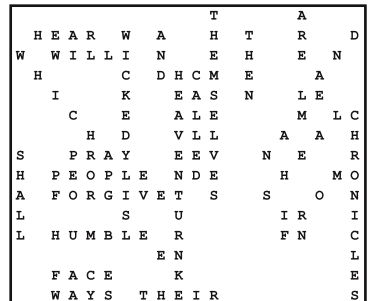
Bonus

How many times can you find the word “fasted” in the first article?

*Answer for the
Last*

Issue:

Life 26



lesson for all of us to learn; just because someone is not walking with us does not mean they are an enemy.

In the United States our courts have a saying, “Innocent until proven guilty.” Sadly, many turn this around and think, “Guilty until proven innocent.” As children of God we should imagine the best about people, and not seek for the smallest thing that can be used to destroy their characters. The Bible says, “...take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others” (Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22). Remember that “love covereth all sins” (Proverbs 10:12). “And above all things have fervent **charity** [love] among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

“The accuser of our brethren” has been “cast down” (Revelation 12:10). Let’s not pick up his work and try to find every little problem in others. I feel sorry for those who take up this work, and I pray, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Jesus said, “And why beholdest thou the **mote** [speck] that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first

cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:3-5).

Often, those who are seeking to discredit and destroy the reputations of others don’t care much if what they say is true, just as long as it accomplishes their goals. After Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver he came back to the priests and said, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that” (Matthew 27:4).

The priests didn’t care whether Jesus was guilty or innocent. They saw Him as a threat to their authority so He had to go no matter what (Mark 15:9-15). This unchristlike attitude is still very present today but will not exist in those who are fully surrendered to Christ. When we see persecution, we can be sure which side the persecutors are on.

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now” (Galatians 4:29).

When the priests and Pharisees were discussing what to do with Jesus they said, “If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation” (John 11:48). Then the chief priest said, “Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the

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unto all words
that are spoken;
lest thou hear
thy servant
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thou thyself
likewise hast
cursed others.”**

whole nation perish not” (John 11:49, 50). To them it was all about protecting the empire they were seeking to build. When a ministry switches from being all about living to serve others to being all about protecting the structure, that is a sure sign they are no more following God’s direction. Most ministries and churches come to this place, some sooner than others.

If we are following Jesus we need to live to serve others, for that is how He lived His life (Mark 10:45). Speaking about the disciples, the Bible says, “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:24).

I pray that Jesus will manifest His life in us so thoroughly there will be no mistake who is our Lord. “For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:11). Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

The Fast God has Chosen

God revealed the type of fast He has chosen. First He explained the

type of fast He has not chosen. He said, “Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?” (Isaiah 58:4, 5). Here we learn that God is not pleased when His people come together to fight and debate. (For more information on this, request the study, “Strife and Separation.”)

The Bible continues, “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Isaiah 58:6). This reveals what is really important to God; how we treat each other. It is not normal to be this nice to people. Unless we are born again, we will not be able to live the way God designed for us to live (John 3:3; Galatians 5:22, 23). We can try to live this way on our own, but the results are terrible; fake Christians who appear good on the outside but inside they are miserable and full of wickedness (Matthew 23:25, 26; Revelation 3:14-22). (For a study on our need to be transformed, request the booklet, *You Must be Born Again.*)

Present Truth

Jesus told us about a man who was beaten, robbed, and left for dead (Luke 10:30-34). Three men passed by this injured man, but only one took care of him. The real difference between these men was not what they did, but how they felt about the wounded man. The Samaritan “had compassion on him” which moved him to action. The Levite and Priest would have done the same thing if they had compassion for him. The compassion, or love, was the difference between these men. It is love, or the lack thereof, that will be the determining factor between those who live forever with God and those who perish (Matthew 25:31-46). (For a thorough study on our need for love and how we can attain it, request our new booklet, *The Source of Love*.)

In the end, notice what really matters: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a

stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Matthew 25:31-40).

We will always have the poor with us (Mark 14:7). Be careful how you treat them, for Jesus said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” He takes it personally how we treat His children. Sometimes, when we minister to the poor we might be ministering to angels. “Be not forgetful to en-

tertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2). If we mistreat those around us Jesus may end up saying to us, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Matthew 25:41-43).



Continual giving starves covetousness to death, and Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). So, don't be afraid to give! When you see a need ask God to guide you on how much and to whom to give. In so doing you will be blessed more than the one to whom you are giving, for Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The Bible says, "The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself" (Proverbs 11:25 NKJV).

Continuing in Isaiah 58 we read about the results of helping those in need. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the

foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isaiah 58:8-12).

These are some powerful promises available to those who choose the fast that God has chosen; helping those in need. I pray that you will take this fast and find the promised blessing.

Conclusion

We have learned that fasting is a powerful tool that can enhance our prayer life and increase our faith. We are living in a time when these things are more important than ever, so please consider adding fasting to your prayer life. By all means, make sure you do it for the right reasons and in the right way.

Last April, 2018, three of the brothers in our study group accepted a challenge that was said to have greatly helped people in the past. The challenge was: For thirty days cut out media from your life (No television, movies, news, radio, Facebook, etc.), pray for an hour a day, read the Bible for an hour a day, and fast for 24 hours twice a week. This may sound extreme in our fast-paced world, but it really was not that difficult and it does have some profound benefits. We accepted the challenge and it was life changing.

I still used the phone for email and texting, and I still used Facebook to post invitations to our Bible studies, but I stopped using it to browse what other people are posting. I also decided

**Continual
giving starves
covetousness
to death,...**

to stop using my phone to play any games. I used to like to play word games. I did not realize how addicting these games were until I stopped. I did not miss the games, instead it was liberating to be free from them. They say it takes 21 days to break a habit. Well, they must be right. I have not played a game since and it has been over a year.

I am so happy I took this challenge. At the end of April, 2019, I took the same challenge again, and I am currently on it as I am writing this article.

Something that has helped me with getting well over an hour a day of reading the Bible is to listen to it in MP3 format.

You can download it for free in many different translations and languages at www.audiotreasure.com. I have it playing on my phone constantly, and I have learned so much this way. Fasting for 24 hours was pretty easy since I eat twice a day anyway, so if I finish my second meal by 4pm, then I just skip breakfast and eat my next meal after 4pm the next day. That means I only skipped one breakfast, which is pretty easy to do.

I am not saying everyone should take this type of media fast, but I am sure it would do a lot of people good to do something like this. You may want to cut off media for an hour a day to dedicate yourself to prayer and reading God's word. Whatever you do, make sure you are going forward in your walk with the Lord. You do not want to become stagnant nor go backward. There is always room for improvement.

God's love is increasingly being revealed, and fasting and prayer helps us to see it more clearly.

I am pausing to pray for you now! "Our Precious Father, I pray that every day, our readers will find themselves closer to You, with a richer, deeper experience and a greater knowledge of Your love."

If you have not read the January-March 2019 issue of *Present Truth*, "The Source of Love," please take the time to do so. We have had more positive comments on that article than any other since I started writing in 1993. It is now available as a booklet.

God's love is increasingly being revealed, and fasting and prayer helps us to see it more clearly. It is all about perspective!

God's Spirit opens our eyes to see God's love in places we have never seen it before. It has always been there, but our understanding was too dull to see it. Thanks be to God, for "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

God said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14). I pray that your land will be healed, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Stay close to the Lord, "...cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days" (Deuteronomy 30:20). »

The Ten Virgins

by Tom Wofford

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:1-13).

All ten virgins slumbered and slept. But when the midnight cry was given only five of them were ready. Only five of them had enough oil. They were the ones who were concerned for their salvation and walk with God. They were the ones who had a daily relationship with the Saviour. The five

virgins who didn't have enough oil were careless with both. Maybe they only had a once-a-week relationship with God, or only called on Him when they were in trouble or a crisis. They both were advocates for the truth and were attached to those who believed the truth. The main difference is they didn't have the Holy Spirit in their lives, so their head knowledge did them no good. Think about this: fifty percent of those who professed to believe didn't make it to heaven. Jesus gave a talk about these people.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

We are saved by the sacrifice that Jesus made in our behalf. We have to only confess our sins and invite Him into our lives. Our debt is paid, but this does not give us a license to continue to live as devils, but instead gives us the ability and the privilege to live godly. »

(This study was written by a prisoner in Oregon. I pray it is a blessing. *Editor*)



Letters from our Readers



"Please resend the current January-March 2019 *Present Truth* titled, 'The Source of Love.' My latest issue got torn when going through the mail. Thank you." *Missouri*

"Thank you for the booklets." *New Mexico*

"We appreciate you. Thanks for keeping us on your mailing list. Blessings to you and the ministerial family." *Alabama*

"We praise God for you and your ministry! Maranatha!" *Virginia*

"Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your immense kindness! Praise the Lord. We cannot tell you what a blessing your books and material are! Thank you very much! May the Lord bless you exceedingly abundantly, is our prayer." *New Mexico*

"We SO appreciate the clarity with which you write and expound upon the truth of the Word of God. These books have been such a blessing to us and are tremendous outreach tools. We want to thank you and praise God for how He has used you in this critical work. We are looking forward to Roan Mountain Camp Meeting and seeing you there.

Are you going to be speaking at any spring meetings anywhere near Virginia? Seems like a long time until September! May God bless you and give you courage and peace as you encounter resistance as you share these precious, essential truths. We feel so blessed to have received this light from Heaven! Praise the Father and His Son Jesus Christ!" *Virginia*

"Thanks for all you did for us here in Indiana this Sabbath weekend. May the Lord bless in all you are doing for Him. May the angels keep you safe in all your travels. Thanks for all the literature you left here and what you are sending my way." *Indiana*

"Dear *Present Truth* Fellowship, We appreciate your newsletters and wish we lived closer so we can come visit with you. We would like five copies of your conversion story and five copies of *You Must be Born Again*. Did you ever put a book together of Kids' Korner? If you did we would like four copies of that. Thank you. God's blessings!" *Oklahoma*
(We have a Kids' Korner booklet now.)

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“For God so loved the world, that he
gave his only begotten Son, that
whosoever believeth in him should not
perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

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“And this is life eternal, that they might
know thee the only true God, and Jesus
Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

John 17:3