

## DAY 11 | RETURN TO THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Written by Steven Stewart

**“If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, get rid of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths that are among you, dedicate yourselves to the LORD, and worship only him.”  
1 Samuel 7:3**

For twenty years, Israel lived under Philistine oppression while the worship of false gods crept into their lives. They knew the LORD. They had seen His faithfulness. Yet somewhere along the way, familiarity bred complacency, and the things of the world began competing for their hearts.

Then something changed. Scripture tells us that Israel began to long for the LORD. But Samuel challenged them, saying that longing alone was not enough. If they were truly returning to God, something had to change. They needed to put away their idols, dedicate themselves to the LORD, and worship Him alone. Biblical repentance is more than feeling sorry or wanting things to be different. It involves turning away from what has taken God’s place and returning to Him with our whole heart.

***Confess what needs to be confessed. Remove what needs to be removed. Surrender what needs to be surrendered. And above all, hear Samuel’s invitation: Return to the LORD with all your heart.***

As Israel gathered before the LORD, they fasted, confessed their sin, and even poured out water before Him (1 Samuel 7:6). In a dry land, water was precious. Interestingly, people worshiped Baal as the god who supposedly controlled the rain. While Scripture does not tell us exactly what pouring out water meant, it gives us a beautiful picture of surrender: placing what is valuable before God and declaring our dependence on Him.

Maybe something has slowly taken a place in your heart that belongs to God. Fasting gives us an opportunity to quiet that distraction and seek the Lord again. Don’t merely give something up for 21 days. Ask God to search your heart.

What would it look like for you to “pour it out” before the Lord and trust Him with it completely?