

2026

***CHURCH
FAST***

FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 13

DEVOTIONAL - VOLUME 3



March 9

Because As He Is, So Are We in This World

Godwin Izuegbunam

Read: 1 John 4:17

Fasting is almost a universal practice across many world religions. Its widespread observance suggests that it must be associated with meaningful spiritual benefits; otherwise, it would not have endured across generations.

Recently, a medical colleague of mine, who practices Islam, made a statement about the Ramadan fast. He admitted he was merely observing it as a ceremonial duty and could not wait for it to end so that normal life could resume. Sadly, such an attitude is not uncommon.

The people of Israel in Judaism also struggled with misconceptions about fasting. Through the prophet, God asked:

"When you fasted and mourned... did you really fast for Me, for Me?"

Zechariah 7:5

And again:

"You will not fast as you do this day, to make your voice heard on high."

(Isaiah 58:4)

Fasting, therefore, is not about religious ceremony, outward appearance, or human approval. It is about alignment with God.

When I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, I sought to follow the Jesus Way. He submitted to water baptism "to fulfill all righteousness" (**Matthew 3:15**). He was filled with the Holy Spirit, overcame temptation, and began His ministry in the power of the Spirit (**Luke 4:1–14**).

Desiring to grow in that same pattern, I prayed for strength and embarked on a 40-day fast. At its conclusion, I asked the Father to teach me what I needed to understand — and He graciously did.

A. The True Purpose of Fasting

To overcome the flesh and live by the power of the Spirit.

This involves:

Becoming a Lover of God's Word

(Deuteronomy 8:3; 1 Peter 2:2)

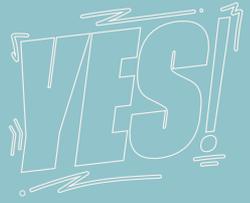
Becoming a Person of Prayer

(Luke 6:12; 18:1; Mark 1:35)

Resisting Sinful Desires by His Strength

(1 John 4:4; Romans 6:11–14)

Fasting weakens the dominance of the flesh and strengthens sensitivity to the Spirit.



B. Fasting Helps Us Focus on What Is Above

(Colossians 3:1–2)

This involves:

Hungering and Thirsting for Righteousness

(Matthew 5:6)

Cultivating God's Heart of Compassion and Mercy

(Isaiah 58:6–7; Matthew 25:34–40)

Developing the Meekness of Christ

(Matthew 11:28–30)

Growing in Passion to Share Christ

(John 20:21; Romans 1:16–17)

True fasting transforms the heart. It aligns us with Christ's character and mission. Because as He is, so are we in this world. Fasting is not an escape from life — it is preparation to live life in the power of the Spirit.

PRAY:

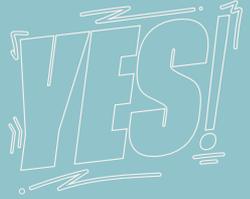
Heavenly Father,

Teach us to fast in a way that pleases You — not as a ritual, but as a pathway to deeper intimacy with You. Help us overcome the flesh, walk in the Spirit, hunger for righteousness, and reflect the heart of Christ in this world. May our lives truly mirror Him. In Jesus' name, Amen.

March 10

Yes to Faith Promise

Veronica Wright



At the end of 2024 I suddenly became a single mom. I had bills to pay, was in the process of a bankruptcy, two small children to care for, and I hadn't worked in nearly six years. I asked God to open the right doors for me that would allow me to provide for my children while also being able to care for them and continue to homeschool my oldest. I started applying for any job I was even marginally qualified for and saw as door after door closed, I wasn't even able to get a single interview. Late February of 2025 I saw a posting for a job I didn't at all feel qualified for but felt God calling me towards. I heard Him say to me, "If you trust Me, I will provide. I will qualify you for what you need if you say yes to Me." The interview was unlike any I had experienced, it began with prayer and I felt the Holy Spirit throughout the whole meeting. At the end, I said "yes" to the job opportunity and trusted that God would provide not only the qualifications but the income necessary.

At Mission's Conference last year I really prayed and sought God for what my Faith Promise should be. My life circumstances were uncertain, I had just accepted a new job, I had no money of my own, but I was committed to saying "Yes" to whatever God brought to my heart. He presented me with a number that seemed scary, it was more than I had ever promised before, even when I had another person's income contributing, and even then I had never been able to be consistent. I kept asking God if this was truly the number He wanted or if it was just coming from me, again I heard Him say "Say yes to Me and I will provide." I decided to take a leap of faith and commit to a number beyond what I felt capable of promising, but what I knew God was calling me to say "Yes" to.

In May of 2025 my life changed again, I had even more bills to pay, I had just filed for bankruptcy, I hadn't yet started getting paid for my job, and the other person I shared responsibilities with was officially fully out of the picture and no longer capable of contributing. Still, I faithfully made my Faith Promise tithe, unsure of how everything would fall into place but trusting that God would honor His promise to me if I kept my Yes. Now, nearly a year after making that promise and that Yes, I have been able to give what I committed to each month. By the grace of God, my obedience - my Yes -, and the love of others, my bills have been paid, my kids have been cared for and everything has fallen into place (for the most part :)).

Trusting God and giving Him your "Yes" can be scary. I had no idea how I would be able to make ends meet and commit to a tithe in an amount beyond anything I had done before. God though, God knows more than we ever could and He knows how it will work out. When we trust Him, miracles happen. As we are fasting and preparing for this Mission's Conference, seek God and what He is asking you to say "Yes" to in the coming year.

Read: Philippians 4:13, Matthew 19:26, Matthew 6:28-30

Pray:

Lord God, begin to speak to me about my Faith Promise for 2026. Break my heart for the nations. God I thankyou that you are my provider and I can trust you in all things. I want to say Yes to Faith Promise giving. Lead me with an amount that I can believe and trust you for! Amen.

March 11

The Destination

Anonymous



Imagine for a moment you're on your way to reach a destination so you punch it into GPS and follow the route. The destination could be a job, a promotion, financial success, getting married, or setting your kids up for success to get into a great college with scholarships. Imagine you're following the map and you come to a fork in the road. And at the fork in the road, God is telling you to turn left and you can see the route ahead on the map but it looks exhausting to navigate the twists and turns, the hardships and the obstacles and it looks like it will take longer to reach your destination if you turn left. In life we are sometimes prone to turn right because that's what the map says to do and the road looks easier and more efficient even without even considering maybe God has a different plan. We stick with the plan because it makes sense and why would God want to change it.

In life we may eventually find ourselves having reached your destinations and goals but the question is posed "did you do it in your own strength and or in His". There is a lot that we can accomplish in our life without God's help, people do it all the time according to the world's standard of success. But we can't forget that God's strength will always be stronger, God's way will ALWAYS be better than ours. So why are we so quick to we sell ourselves short of God's favor and ignore Him when he speaks. You still reached your end destination, however, you are now found having reached the goal "you" made for yourself, but found it at the cost of being less than what God had intended for you to be in that moment.

This happens because we chose to turn right when God was telling us to turn left. Let's be clear about one thing... the blessing I am referencing is not the blessing of reaching your destination in this scenario, I'm talking about the blessing that can only come from God and can only be received along the path of obedience. God's blessings were waiting for you on the path if you would have turned left when he told you to. Sometimes the blessings we miss out on is the rest we get in his presence, the blessing could have been you discovering you're stronger and braver than you know. The blessing could have been financial breakthrough or the blessing could have been healing in your marriage, family or healing in your mind and heart. We all want God's blessing and we all want his healing in our life but sometimes the lack of seeing his healing in our life doesn't come from a lack of faith. It's because of a lack of listening to his voice. We fail to receive so many blessings in our life because of our failure to listen.

The beauty of God's grace is he doesn't shove it in our face or remind of us of how much we missed out on. He gives us opportunity after opportunity to listen. But the question I have to ask myself is how much of God do we miss out along the journey because I only choose to listen to what I want to hear. We miss out on so many blessings, healings and moments of anointing in our life that He longs to give us. The ability to claim heaven's blessings to be present here on earth in our life does not come by taking the path we think is easiest or by taking the path that we think is better. It only comes by listening when he speaks and walking obediently into the fullness of life He has waiting for you along the path.

Deuteronomy 28:2 "And all these blessings will overtake your life because you obey the voice of the Lord"

Matthew 7:14 "Narrow is the way and difficult is the way that leads to life "

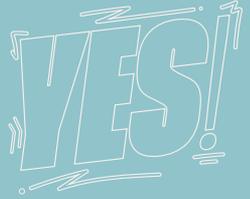
Pray:

Father, thank you for never giving up on us. We ask that you would Forgive our stubbornness and resistance when you speak. We pray that in the moments we wrestle with listening to your voice that we would remember that your way is always better. Help us to love you more and to not settle for anything less than what you desire from us. In Jesus' name, amen.

March 12

A Perspective on Suffering

Scott Alloway



"Dad, why does God allow suffering?"

"Great question son. What causes suffering? Could it be consequences from our choices?"

"Yes, I suppose it could."

"Have you ever thought about a world without consequences?"

"Wow, that would be bad."

"Yep."

We can categorize a lot of the world's suffering into consequences – either from our own choices or from someone else's – but we can't answer all questions about suffering. Sometimes we just don't know, especially with things like:

- Natural disasters
- Kids born with physical conditions
- Random accidents
- Sudden illness

First, we must have compassion. Suffering is hard, really hard, regardless of its reason. Second, we must look at sin. When Adam & Eve gave into sin, not only did it start a battle between flesh and spirit, but it put the world in a direction of pain and destruction. **Romans 8:19-22 "... For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."**

We can't bucket all suffering the same, and sometimes there's no comfort to offer, but nevertheless, we suffer. But let's also remember...

- God draws near during suffering
- Suffering may be the only teacher we listen to
- God limits our suffering and remains sovereign over it
- Jesus endured the cross with joy because He focused on who was on the other side of it

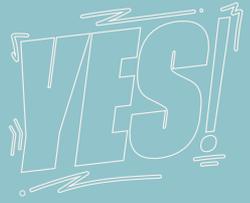
Pray:

God, even though I don't fully understand [my] suffering, please strengthen me as I put my trust in you and make the choice to walk by faith. Amen.

March 13

One Body with Many Members

Mercy Swanson



Read: I Corinthians 12:12-31

I Corinthians 12:12-13, ESV

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body"

We were not created to be alone. From creation, we see that there is significance and purpose that comes from being one with others in God's name. Even God Himself is three entities, and we were made in Their image. **"God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" (Genesis 1:26, ESV)** As we are created in God's image and He is not without Himself, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we are not to be without community.

If we, as the church, are divided, how are we any different from the world, which is also divided? We are called to be set apart, looking and acting different from the world, bringing unity to people of all nations, tribes, and tongues through the power of His Word.

The beauty of Christianity, especially in a mission-driven church, is that though we may come from different places and backgrounds, we come together as family through the Spirit by which we were baptized when we come together in His name to fulfill the Great Commission.

In Matthew 28:16-20, we see the heart of the Great Commission: to go and make disciples and baptize them in the way of the Spirit so that they may do the same. There is power when we come together with this same heart and say YES to God through our circumstances.

The most important YESes we will ever make are the YES to follow Jesus, the YES to serve, and the YES of compassion.

The YES to follow Jesus allows us to put Him and His way before our own. (Matthew 16:24-28)

The YES to serve shapes who we are and how we live. Even Jesus, the Son of Man, came to serve and give His life for us. (Mark 10:45, I Peter 4:10)

The YES of compassion moves us to missions. Not everyone is called to go, but EVERYONE is called to be involved. (Colossians 3:12-17)

TODAY: Read and rest with the scriptures in this devotional.

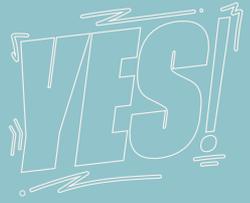
Reflect/Ask yourself:

- What am I doing to say YES to God today?
- What would it look like to add faith to my giving?
- Where can my YES lead?
- Will I say YES to God?
- What is God asking of me?

BONUS!

Light of the World

Michelle Erickson



We were created to seek the light in a world so easily darkened. Our pupils respond to the amount of light in our environment which allows our brain to process what is in front of us. The more light we have around us, the more we see clearly.

Jesus tells us that we are the Light of the World.

He tells us our light cannot be hidden, that the purpose of our light, is to be seen and to be shared with those around us. He tells us that we should let our good deeds shine like a light for all to see. Not to bring praise onto ourselves, but to praise His Holy Name for He has saved us from darkness.

(Matthew 5:14-16)

Walking as a daily beacon of light through our words and actions can mean a seed of faith gets planted, one gets nurtured, a path is illuminated, someone who was blinded by darkness can now see... nothing is impossible when our God is on the move!

Reflect

Am I surrounding myself with light sources (children of God doing good deeds)?

Am I being a light source to others?

Where, when, to whom do I need to focus on being a light?

Pray

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for illuminating my path and saving me from the darkness. I pray for others to see Your light shining through me so that they can come to know of Your miraculous love. I pray hearts are softened toward me as I share about You. I pray you give me the words to say what needs to be said and the knowledge to know when nothing needs to be said. I pray all these things in Your Name and for Your Kingdom, Amen.

YES!

MISSIONS CONFERENCE

MARCH 13-15 2026

ASK A MISSIONARY!

If you could ask a missionary anything what would it be?

As part of our Saturday 10am session, we will have a chance to interview some of our missionaries!

So, text your question to (480) 662-3816.

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY 13th

11:30am Pastor's Summit
Elevate Coffee Shop

6pm Potluck Dinner

7pm Session

SATURDAY 14th

10am Session

6pm Session

SUNDAY 15th

10am Service

6pm Session

No registrations required for Conference

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