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P R A Y E R



JESUS IS INVITING YOU IN

There is a lot in our world to trouble us and weigh us down. It's been like that since 'The Fall', and it will continue to be till Jesus' Return. The Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness are at war right before our very eyes and in our own lives.

We believe God is not calling us to pick up the stresses, or use that as an excuse to be passive without action, but He is calling us to a place of depth. A place where our fruit and capability to lean in is unique, shaped and formed from a place of surrender in the secret place. Our secret power is found in the secret place. This is where our actions are formed with a posture of identity, rest, learning, mediation, listening, stillness, and waiting upon Him first. Not second or third. Not our phones. We aren't starving for more worries, we are starving for the one who calms it all.

We feel it is an important time to give God our full attention first before we continue on the mission he has us on for all races, all faces, and all ages. All the mission work we do is critical, but who we do it with (God), why we do it, and how we do it, with God's heart, only flows through letting him have the deepest parts of us. Especially before coming into HVN in LAN vision event may our hearts be soft with his heartbeat for us. Every God work flows from + with love.

You ever wonder why the enemy is so loud? The reason the enemy is so loud and shouts, because he is far away, but it seems like he is close. The truth is the reason God is like a whisper, is because he is closer than the air we breathe, and when we slow down and tune in, we sense the gentle whisper guiding us every second, "You are not alone. I am with you."

*We say yes to the soul work. The internal core of our being. And **the soul work is the slow work**. It takes TIME. There is no quick fix. Love = Time. This work yields the highest return in who we are. Becoming deeply secure in God. We are children of God and actions follow suit.*



Matthew 6 is a perfect fit for our lives right now. Jesus teaches us how to pray, deal with worries, and ultimately to seek God first. If he says this is the template for first, may we heed to our Chief Shepherd. Let's just read this section of it:

Matthew 6:25-34 CSB 25 "Therefore I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Consider the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? 27 Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? 28 And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don't labor or spin thread. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. 30 If that's how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won't he do much more for you—you of little faith? 31 So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,** and all these things will be provided for you. 34 Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Wow, God is telling us that today has enough to focus on, so focus First on the One with us now and over the day. Today is already hard enough, if we don't focus on what we can control first, we will be swept away in the current.

How can it be that Jesus is our daily bread? He is sweeter than life!

But what if it's not about what happens when we don't connect with God first, but it is more about what happens when we say yes to that 24/7, 365 invite he is offering His Kids. What if we form a new habit of being with and not feeling pressure but just his passion for us. What if it is about sitting at his feet to learn as a disciple, weeping with our greatest fears, praying through our anger, being real about our shame and doubts, then

watching Him resurrect us new and new again in His power. Shining his presence to all that they feel the Lord inviting them into. That there is a seat at the table. You get the point, we hope...This is of first importance.

Research has shown to develop new habits, do something for 21 days to increase the likelihood of having the new habit become a way of life. Therefore 21 is a period of time that aims to create a deep well in us.

This short document is a simple reminder of a constant truth, God is always ready to meet with us. He is inviting us in all the time. He is patient. He is not condemning us. He is allowing us the beauty to have the spirit of living water be in the core of our soul. This type of invitation is always available and not about length, but it's always a posture of slow. Never rushed or overwhelmed. God is in control, even when we can't see it he is working. We have seen him do it time and time again. If you are reading this, you have experienced the Grace of God first hand, the fact he even allows us the privilege of access to the throne when our sin casts us out. But Jesus' "Yes" brought us closer than the air we breathe.

When we pray, he hears us. He cares. He already knows. We are communicating and connecting with the maker of the universe.

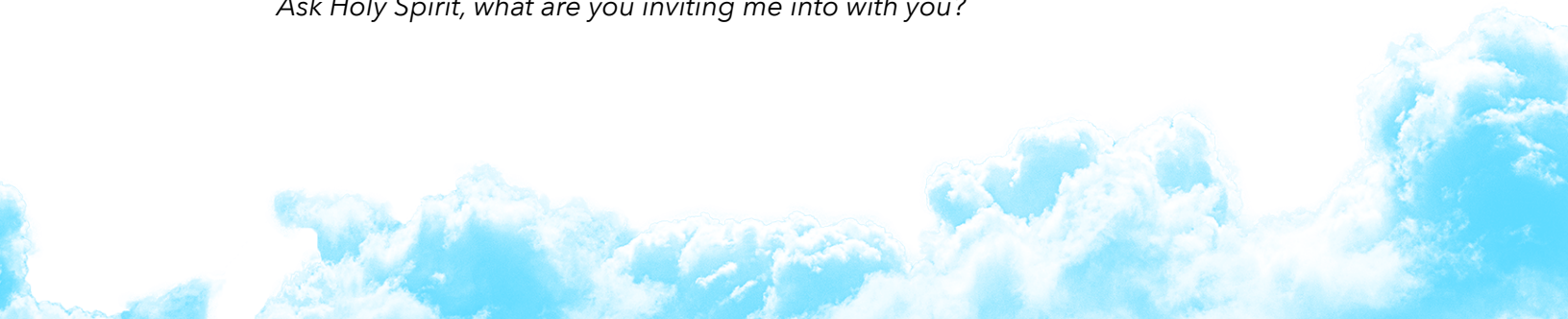
When we fast, we disconnect fast from the vices and connect fast to the one who will never let his sheep go.

We don't want another exercise, we just want you God!

*How about it, will you accept the
Invitation with God in 2021 First?*

None of this is heavy but a gentle nudge in our spirit.

Ask Holy Spirit, what are you inviting me into with you?



Why - God is our First Love

What - 21 Days of Prayer, Anywhere

Where - Anywhere you are

When - Anytime you want, begins Monday 1/11/2021

What - 21 Psalms to pray through together, one Psalm a day (A psalm a day keeps the doctor away, jk :-), meditate on God's word and sit at the feet of Jesus. Let the Spirit flow. You can do a fast also (ideas included). Us growing deep roots individually with God and collectively as a body in God is formed through seasons of oneness with God.

Who - City Life Family

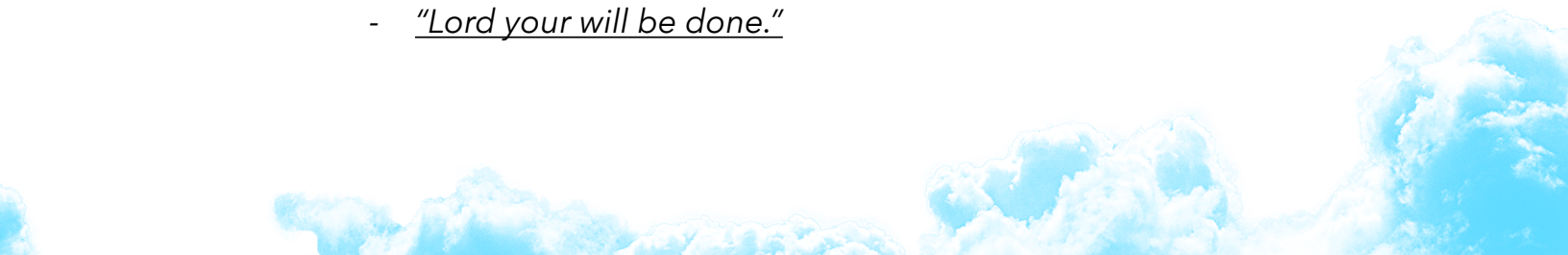
What you will need - Use the online Bible, a written Bible, crack open a commentary as well and enjoy. biblegateway.com has free commentary on the right hand side

Why the Psalms - for centuries the Psalms have been a refuge of God's people for praise and to pray through. It's a prayer book.

What is prayer - in the simplest way it is "talking to God."

Got questions, Bible Project about the Psalms

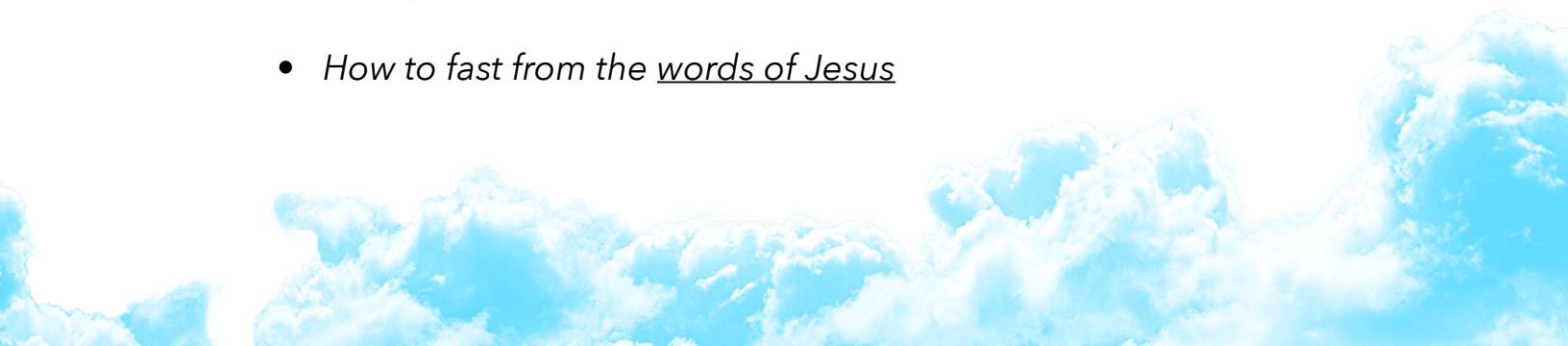
- Saying God we are desperate, dependent, & trust you.
- How to pray from the words of Jesus
- Prayer doesn't always change our circumstances but it always changes us. It works and works us. We partner in bringing HVN to Earth.
- "Lord your will be done."



TIPS

- *Silent Prayer - Try to Practice being still focusing on breathing, with each breath "Abba" Breathe in - "Ab", Breathe out-"ba"*
- *Take a basic meditation course on the Headspace App for free*
- *Health Kit to start your day*


FASTING

- *What - We deny ourselves to connect more with God. We disconnect fast, and connect fast to God.*
 - *Ideas - Water only, a meal, Daniel Fast, social media + news, etc*
 - *We don't just remove, but we replace it with more time with God.*
 - *Reminder - There is many benefits physically for fasting, but sometimes it can be hard at first. It can feel as if we are taking steps backwards before forward. We detox physically and spiritually. The reset is good for our souls.*
 - *How to fast from the words of Jesus*
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LET'S BEGIN

1. **Psalm 1** - We meditate & choose the way of the righteous.
"2...he meditates on it day and night"
2. **Psalm 2** - God help me see where you are at in the chaos.
"1 The nations rage... 4 the one enthroned in heaven laughs."
3. **Psalm 3** - God you fight my battles. *"4 I cry aloud to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy mountain"*
4. **Psalm 4** - You have set me apart. *"3 Know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself; the Lord will hear when I call to him. 4 Be angry and do not sin; reflect in your heart while on your bed and be silent. Selah"*
5. **Psalm 5** - You surround me. *"12...you surround him with favor like a shield"*
6. **Psalm 6** - God have mercy on me. *"2 Be gracious to me, Lord, for I am weak;"*
7. **Psalm 7** - Let justice reign. *"3 Lord my God, if I have done this, if there is injustice on my hands,"*
8. **Psalm 8** - You created the universe and remember me, how magnificent are you! *"3 When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you set in place, 4 what is a human being that you remember him, a son of man that you look after him?"*



9. **Psalm 9** - *We trust in you. "10 Those who know your name trust in you because you have not abandoned those who seek you, Lord."*
10. **Psalm 10** - *God, where are you, have you forgotten?
"12 Rise up, Lord God! Lift up your hand. Do not forget the oppressed."*
11. **Psalm 11** - *We are upright and see your face. "7 The upright will see his face."*
12. **Psalm 12** - *The Lord guards & protects us. "7 You, Lord, will guard us; you will protect us"*
13. **Psalm 13** - *We trust you and rejoice. "5 But I have trusted in your faithful love; my heart will rejoice in your deliverance."*
14. **Psalm 14** - *Only God is good. "3 All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt. There is no one who does good, not even one."*
15. **Psalm 15** - *Help us to be like this. "4...who keeps his word whatever the cost,"*
16. **Psalm 16** - *I will bless the Lord. 7 "I will bless the Lord who counsels me—even at night when my thoughts trouble me.
8 I always let the Lord guide me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."*
17. **Psalm 17** - *Crying out to you. "Lord, hear a just cause; pay attention to my cry; listen to my prayer—from lips free of deceit."*
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18. **Psalm 18** - *You have rescued us, you are perfect. "30 God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is pure."*
19. **Psalm 19** - *I am in wonder of you. "1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands."*
20. **Psalm 20** - *Our strength is in you God alone. "7 Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses, but we take pride in the name of the Lord our God."*
21. **Psalm 21** - *My soul is well exalting you. "13 Be exalted, Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might."*



Prayer Story from Pastor Jerome

Our prayers matter - We never know how or when God will answer them. I showed up at my 10 year reunion. I was anticipating this day to see my old classmates who knew the "Old" me. I had a team back home praying, and I fasted for the event. I sensed God wanted to do something powerful.

Here, I was a new creation for 6 years going to visit so many people who knew some of my darkest moments. I mean Junior Year, I am on the Varsity BBall team and then senior year, I am ineligible and doing jail time on the weekends (I believe I was in jail during my Senior Prom).

I entered the reunion at Trippers in Frandor (now Olga's). After mingling, I got to connect with some familiar faces. Loved interacting and connecting. I reconnected with one of my now great friends, John Mashni (Our valedictorian, his wife Nichole was our Salutatorian - you overachievers, well done!), which many of you know John.

One of my classmates approached me and said, "Remember me..."

At first I didn't. Her hair was shorter and dyed. Then she said, "It's me Suzanne."

In a split second, I thought, "It's good to see you", and at the same time, "dang it, I should say sorry for toilet papering, egging their house and a couple other stupid stories." Things I am not proud of.

She then said, "My mom and I heard about your conversion to Christ, and we cried." She had tears in her eyes, and my wife was standing right there.

Crystal never knew the old Jerome, and when she hears stories, she says it is like listening to/learning about an alien because of how drastic the difference. Which is a testament to God's grace obviously, if that contrast is that obvious. Never have I been perfect since, but the permanent grace of God has continued to work.

So back to the story.

Suzanne said, "When you moved into town at 8 years old, I remember writing that God would reach you in my prayer journal."

I responded, "Wait, what did you say?"



Suzanne, "Yes I would pray for you and I didn't know why I was so prompted to. I prayed for you for years. That is why, when my mom and I heard about your transformation, we were so emotional."

I was stunned to say the least. I was so grateful. Felt indebted. How precious and powerful. Who does that at 8 years old and still prays for someone for years?!

Crystal and I ended up taking her and her husband out to dinner. They are in ministry, and they are heroes forever to us. Thank you Suzanne for praying for the kid who egged your house (kids, don't try that at home). Maybe that was a sign to pray for me, but the truth was she wrote my name down way before that even happened, and she was being used as an instrument to bring HVN to earth. It is a beautiful story of God's spirit prompting her to pray and her responding with a "yes".

What a 10 year reunion, huh?

Was it her prayer why I was changed? Was it a work of the spirit only? Was it my grandma taking me to church as a kid? Was it the World Beyond Book I read at Mount Hope Church and playing basketball as a teen there, my mom telling me God was real, or was it long nights of deeply considering life? The answer is yes to all the above. God uses and used it all.

Ultimately, it is a work of His Spirit drawing us in, but how beautiful the mystery to bringing HVN down in our lives and places we reside. This story has always encouraged me what we pray in private one day we may just see a miracle in front of our own eyes. Remember the greatest miracle has already happened, we are forgiven and brand new. The rest are signs pointing to God's Kingdom.

May we be encouraged to pray without ceasing.

"God, we pray your Kingdom to come, and we put our faith out there for healing, hope, racial reconciliation, forgiveness, mercy and that we will trust you in the small and big. Amen"

