



## 2024 Renewal Devotional

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During this week, we invite our church to pray and fast with the focus on renewal.

Each day will be guided by a 5-day devotional designed to help deepen our spiritual understanding and draw us closer to our faith.

We will conclude with a Worship Night on Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, to worship, celebrate, and share the blessings of renewal.



Please find the brief guide to prayer and fasting below, as well as the devotional. Join us for renewal, prayer, and fasting, as we seek to strengthen our faith and find a deeper connection with God.

## **A BRIEF GUIDE TO PRAYER AND FASTING**

### **HOW TO FAST: FOOD & DRINK**

Here are a few options. Try the one which feels right to you.

1. a total 24hr fast: no food or drink (besides non-caloric beverages) from dinner on Tuesday until dinner on Wednesday.
2. a juice fast – no solid food, for either 24 or 36hrs.
3. a one-meal fast: skipping lunch on Wednesday. Note: if you usually consume caffeine, attempting to go without it will make your fasting day approximately 10X harder. You should probably still have your coffee – just have it black.

### **HOW TO FAST: TECHNOLOGY & MEDIA**

In addition to some sort of fast from food & drink, it's also important to fast from technology and media. (For most people, this is actually more important than fasting from food and drink.) Consider doing ALL of the following:

1. No social media of any kind all day.
2. No news or online articles all day.
3. Check email only three times all day, at three predetermined intervals
4. Put your phone in airplane mode, and check (and respond to) texts and calls only three times all day, at three predetermined intervals

### **HOW TO PRAY WHILE FASTING**

Every time you feel hungry (or tempted to check your phone / email / news site, etc.), do one of the following instead:

1. Read a psalm or two.
2. Sit in silence for a few minutes. Close your eyes and focus on deep breathing.
3. Pray for God's will and direction as we search for a new space.



## DEVOTIONAL

*[Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>]*

### **Romans 12:2-3**

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

From the time we were born, the world has been sending us messages that shape and form our lives. In the Jersey City/Manhattan area, we're told that success means having a high ranking job, or being the perfect student, or a flawless mother or father. Take some time to consider how your mind has been influenced by the world and what pressures or anxiety may have resulted. Offer your reflections to the Lord. Though we cannot rewrite these messages ourselves, Romans 12:2 tells us that the Lord can! Trust God in this promise and ask for a renewal of your mind and a rewriting of the messages.

### **PRAYER**

Lord, help me to discern the ways of the world from the ways of the kingdom. Uproot the many false messages that have been planted within me and give me wisdom to see how the world has negatively influenced me. Then, give me the strength to turn away from the patterns of the world and be transformed by the renewal of my mind. Lord, I surrender to you. Renew my mind to walk in your good, pleasing and perfect will. In Jesus' name.



[Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>]

**Jeremiah 31:33**

"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel  
after that time," declares the Lord.

"I will put my law in their minds  
and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God,  
and they will be my people.

This prophecy refers to the coming of Jesus Christ. No longer are we slaves to the Old Covenant law - a law in which we could never fulfill - we are now renewed with God's law written on our hearts. Yet, somehow, we still condemn ourselves as if we were living under the Old Covenant law! Consider how you may not be receiving the grace of the new covenant. How often do you talk negatively to yourself? Or, feel frustrated due to a lack of perfection? Or, criticize yourself for not "doing" enough? Jesus Christ frees us from all condemnation! Through Him we have become a child of God. Are we living according to that truth?

**PRAYER**

Lord, help to apply your new covenant to my life. Help me to no longer be a slave to the law and condemnation. Rid me of all anxiety. Protect me from my negative thoughts and reveal to me the law written on my heart. Let me understand how deep your love is for me - that you are my God and I am your child.



[Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>]

**Isaiah 43:18-19**

"Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.  
19 See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.

As we look at our past, we may long to return to a certain time. Or, we may look at a past time and find ourselves feeling regret. The Lord is telling us to dwell on our past no longer! God is saying to us, "I'm doing something new in your life now. Can you see it?" No matter what you are going through, know that He is working and bringing you life in this season. He does not desire for us to stay in the past but to live in the present and have hope for the future.

**PRAYER**

Lord, help me to dwell on the past no longer. I surrender any regret to you, knowing that your will for me is not to look at the past, but to look at what you are doing in my life right now! Give me eyes to see what you are doing in my life. Help me to look at things differently and perceive the newness you want to bring me.

[*Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>*]

**Psalm 51:10-12:**

- 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Create means to bring into existence. Only God can "create" something out of nothing. This is not a momentary operation, but an ongoing process. Only God can create in us a pure heart, give us the Holy Spirit, and restore our joy. We cannot manufacture joy or "will" our spirits. God is the source of all we are and all we have.

**A Prayer by Thomas Reade (1841)**

Adorable Jesus! I acknowledge my vileness, my worthlessness, my ingratitude. But, oh! let me still hope in Your mercy; still plead the merit of Your blood; still expect Your renewing strength; still long, and look, for the visits of Your grace. I am a sinner, and You died to save sinners.

You are the Rock of Ages, the everlasting Strength. Endue me with power from on high to overcome all my indwelling corruptions, which, like a thick cloud, intervene between my soul and You, the Sun of Righteousness, and thus prevent the rays of Your consolation from gladdening my heart, and making me to abound in the fruits of righteousness. To whom can I look- to whom can I go, but unto You, O Friend of sinners. Lord, I come invited by Your word. I come at Your sweet call, for pardon, peace, and holiness. You delight to save. O make me willing to be saved in Your way, and on Your terms. May I have grace to receive salvation as the gift of grace, and to plead for mercy as a lost sinner, through Your all-prevailing Name and merits.



[*Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>*]

**Mark 1:40-41**

40 A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. "If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean," he said.

41 Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" (NLT)

People looked upon the leper with contempt and disgust. The leper most likely looked upon himself in the same way. Yet when Jesus saw the leper, he had compassion on him, and he cleaned him, both externally and internally. Consider how you look upon yourself. What words come to mind? How do you think Jesus looks upon you? Does he have disgust and contempt, or does he have unconditional love and compassion towards you?

**PRAYER**

Lord, I thank you that you do not look upon me with contempt or disgust, but love me dearly and have unending compassion and mercy. Help me to look at myself in the same way. Grant me a greater revelation of your love for me! Lord, I long to be cleaned. I know it is not of my own will or might, but only your mercy and love that cleans me. So I ask you, dear Jesus, just as the leper asked, heal me and make me clean. I am willing.