

OUR AWESOME GOD

7 DAYS OF
PRAYER AND FASTING

20-26 NOVEMBER 2023

lifepassion **CHURCH**
Loving God, Loving people

OUR AWESOME GOD

Given the current state of affairs in the world, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Lord may be returning soon. The news around the world today can be depressing, the devastation caused by natural disasters, the conflicts and wars going on, racial tension and so on.

Our world is hurting and broken and all these can be overwhelming. But whenever we feel disheartened or driven by fear or anger by these events, we must remember that God is sovereign and He is still on the throne! He knows the future and absolutely controls what will happen. Isaiah 46:9-11 says, *“⁹Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’ ¹¹From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.”*

As we push on and begin to prepare for next year, we find more reason to fix our attention on who God is. The purpose of the ‘Our Awesome God’ theme is to lead us into a deeper understanding of God’s greatness and goodness resulting in worship, holiness, and mission.

We would like to thank Every Nation Churches (<http://www.everynation.org>) for allowing us to use this material.

We eagerly await what the Lord will do for us, in us and through us during these very special 7 days.

FASTING GUIDE

What is Fasting?

Biblical fasting always has to do with eliminating distractions for a spiritual purpose. It is deliberately abstaining from the normal routines of life in order to spend focused time in prayer and the study of God's word and seeking to align our lives with God's will. Remember, your personal fast should present a level of challenge, but it is very important to know your body, your options, and most importantly, to seek God in prayer and follow what the Holy Spirit leads you to do.

Scripture References for Fasting

Matthew 6:16-18

Matthew 9:14-15

Luke 18:1-14

Pick your Fast *(You can choose to do more than one)*

There are different kinds of fasts. The most important part of fasting is the time we spend with God in prayer. If we deny ourselves food and do not pray, then we will accomplish nothing. The following types of fasts are simply referencing to what we can abstain from while we seek the Lord in prayer.

Full Fast: Drink liquids only. Drink plenty of water. PLEASE CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR FIRST.

Daniel Fast: Eat only vegetables, fruit, water, and juice. Drink plenty of water.

Partial Fast: Not eating one or two meals on a specific day or abstaining from certain kinds of food.

All-day Food Fast: Abstaining from food one day or multiple days.

Non-Food Fast *(Fasting from distractions)*:

- Media (TV, Movies, etc.)
- Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Activities (regular hobbies, sports, etc.)

You can create any combination or create your own.

Day 1 of 7

GOD IS GREAT AND GOOD

Today's Scriptures: Isaiah 57:15, Jeremiah 10:6, Revelation 4:11, Psalm 119:68, Luke 18:19

Devotional

In the classic children's book series, 'The Chronicles of Narnia,' the reader is often reminded that Aslan is not a tame lion. When the eldest Pevensie girl, Susan, is told that Aslan is a lion, she says, *"I'd thought he was a man. Is he— quite safe?"* The friendly Mr. Beaver responds, *"Safe?... who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."*

Like Susan, who had misconceptions about Aslan, we often have misconceptions about God. A lot of these misconceptions arise when we downplay either God's greatness or His goodness. When we talk about God's greatness, we refer to God's attributes that belong to God alone—such as infinity and omnipresence. When we talk about God's goodness, we refer to God's attributes that humans can also have—such as mercy and kindness. If you focus only on God's greatness, you may have a hard time believing that He loves you, especially under challenging circumstances. But if you focus only on God's goodness, you may start to think of Him as a 'tame lion' who lacks power.

In Isaiah 57, the prophet rebukes the Israelites for their unfaithfulness. Instead of worshiping the one true God, they have turned to the powerless gods of surrounding nations. The people don't remember their great and good God, for if they did, they could never worship another.

Isaiah had a profound revelation of God's greatness, often giving Him the name, the Holy One of Israel. He reminds the people that God is the All-Mighty who dwells in the high and holy place and inhabits eternity. But Isaiah doesn't stop there. He then reminds the people that the Lord is the one who is with the lowly in spirit. Not only is He a great God, awesome and holy, but He is good, reviving those who come to Him in humility and repentance. Surely a God such as this is worthy of all our worship.

But so often, we are like the Israelites. We forget how awesome our great and good God is. We allow other people, objects, ideas, goals, dreams—the list goes on and on—to steal the worship only He deserves. This week, we will be exploring the attributes of God in two categories: His greatness and goodness. In considering His greatness, we will learn that He is transcendent, unchanging, and sovereign. In looking at His goodness, we will examine how God is just, long-suffering, and kind. As we meditate on God's greatness and goodness this week, may the Holy Spirit reveal our misconceptions and hidden idols, that we may redirect all our worship to the only one who is worthy.

Thought for today: Because God is great and good, He is worthy of our worship.

Personal Reflections

- Which aspect of God's character is harder for you to believe—His greatness or His goodness? Why do you think that is?
- List all the reasons you believe God is worthy of your worship.

Prayer

O God in heaven, there is none like you. You are great, mighty, and powerful, yet you are good, kind, and just. None of your characteristics overshadow the others. You are worthy of my worship, not only because of what you have done for me, but because of who you are. You are an awesome God. Lord, I pray that this week your Holy Spirit would teach me to better understand your greatness and your goodness. Open my eyes to see you at work in my life and in the world around me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Day 2 of 7

GOD IS TRANSCENDENT

Today's Scriptures: Exodus 15:11, Deuteronomy 3:24, 2 Samuel 7:22, Ephesians 4:4–6, Hebrews 1:3

Devotional

Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa, is one of the most iconic mountains in the world. While Table Mountain is beautiful from below, the views from the top are even more breathtaking—Lion's Head, Camp's Bay, the Twelve Apostles. There is nothing like standing on a mountain peak, looking down at the world around you. But at some point, we all have to leave the mountain peak and make the long trek back down to reality.

Thankfully, the same is not true for our awesome God. As Creator, God is transcendent. That means that He is distinct from everything else in creation, surpassing the laws of nature. He dwells in the high and holy place, and there is no one and nothing in the world like him. He exercises control and authority in all of creation, and the miraculous becomes possible.

In Exodus 15, Moses and the people of Israel lift a song of praise to the Lord after He miraculously parted the Red Sea and delivered them from the hands of Pharaoh. After seeing God's transcendent power on full display, they sing, "Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?" In defeating the Egyptians, the Lord also showed that He was mightier than the Egyptians' gods. There is no obstacle or opposition too big for our awesome God!

As we begin this week of prayer and fasting, you may be facing your own obstacles and opposition to your faith. You may be praying for the salvation of a loved one, for healing for you or someone close to you, or financial breakthrough. Or you may be dealing with trials, temptations, and testing in your faith. You are holding onto God and crying out for a miracle. Be in faith. Because God is above His creation, He can part a sea, make manna rain from heaven, and cause water to spring forth from a rock. Through him, we can trust that miracles can and do happen according to His will.

Thought for today: Because God is transcendent, miracles are possible.

Personal Reflections

- Are you currently facing an obstacle or opposition to your faith? What is it?
- How can meditating on His transcendence make you pray in faith?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, you are exalted in the heavens yet near to your children. I rest in the fact that you are transcendent and powerful. Through you, anything is possible. The Israelites saw your power on display when you parted the Red Sea, and I ask that you would move through the difficulties I face today through your will. You alone are awesome in glorious deeds, and I thank you that you hear my prayers. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 3 of 7

GOD IS UNCHANGING

Today's Scriptures: Numbers 23:19, Psalm 102:25–27, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17, Hebrews 6:17

Devotional

Duct tape was developed during World War II as a waterproof, rubber-based adhesive. Since then, duct tape has garnered a reputation for its durability. It is such a durable material that it's now commonly used by DIY crafters to make anything from formal dresses to canoes. Duct tape has its reputation because of its constancy and reliability. Its makers promise us that it is waterproof and durable, and they deliver—every time.

Today, we are exploring God's unchangeability—His constancy. God's unchangeability refers to the fact that His character and eternal purposes don't change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is constant and reliable. This fact is very comforting in a world full of change and uncertainty. Because God doesn't change, He can be trusted and relied upon absolutely.

The author of Hebrews says that when God desired to show the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it with an oath. Since there was no one greater than Himself, He used His own name when He made His vow. The author goes on to say that part of God's unchanging nature is that it is impossible for Him to lie. Not only can we trust Him absolutely, but we can also trust His Word.

While the Bible makes it clear that God's character and purposes are constant, we also see that God responds to our actions, such as our prayers and our faith. As you pray this week, be assured that God's response will be based on His unchanging character and eternal purpose.

Thought for today: Because God is unchanging, our faith has a firm foundation.

Personal Reflections

- How does trusting in God's unchanging character and Word help you to have a strong faith?
- How will knowing that God will respond to you based on His unchanging character and eternal purpose impact the way you pray?

Prayer

Lord, you are a safe dwelling place for all generations. You do not lie or fail to keep your promises. Jesus, you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. Because you are unchanging, I give you my anxieties and trust that my life is in your perfect plan. I repent of when I have doubted and ask that you would help me to trust you more. God, thank you for your constant faithfulness! In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 4 of 7

GOD IS SOVEREIGN

Today's Scriptures: Romans 8:28, Job 42:2, Genesis 50:19–20, Daniel 4:34–35

Devotional

If you are a parent, you have probably had to tell your child to stay away from the stove or fire. If you have a curious child, they probably asked you why. You try to explain, but they don't understand your reasoning. Eventually, you resort to, *"Because I said so."*

The book of Job follows the story of a righteous man's attempts to grapple with his intense and seemingly senseless suffering. Finally, in chapter 38, God shows up and speaks to Job. But He doesn't offer words of comfort or answers to his questions like we might imagine. Instead, Job gets the equivalent of a parent's "because I said so" when God says, *"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?"*

Job humbles himself and acknowledges God's sovereignty, proclaiming that He can do all things and that His purposes can't be hindered. He understands that the Lord is the sovereign King of creation. Job then says in Job 42:2–3: *"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."* In God's sovereignty, Job's trials were meant to purify his faith and produce endurance in his character. God remained compassionate, merciful, and in control through the suffering. After seeking comfort and answers for forty-two chapters, Job finds the real source of comfort—not in having his questions answered, but in repenting for his doubts and trusting the Lord.

Trusting in the Lord's sovereignty is much easier said than done, especially when we are experiencing our own trials and pain. How can we trust that God has our best interest in mind in the middle of difficult circumstances? We can look to Jesus, the innocent sufferer, who suffered and died to save us. In the middle of overwhelming pain and sorrow, when God's ways don't make sense to us, we can look to the cross and be comforted that our sovereign God saw fit to send His Son to die that we might be saved.

Thought for today: Because God is sovereign, there is comfort for times of trouble.

Personal Reflections

- What trial are you currently facing? How can trusting in God's sovereignty bring you comfort?
- How does looking to the cross assure you that God always has your best interest in mind?

Prayer

Father, you are sovereign over everything in the universe. Your kingdom knows no end and no limitation. No enemy can ruin what you have planned. In your sovereignty, you sent your Son to die on the cross that I may be comforted and know your greatness. God, teach me how to humble myself before you. I release control over my own life and ask that you would grant me your peace. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 5 of 7

GOD IS JUST

Today's Scriptures: Deuteronomy 32:4, Genesis 18:25, Romans 3:26, Revelation 15:3

Devotional

The mimic octopus, first discovered off the coast of Indonesia in 1998, is a master of disguise. This tricky sea creature can change its shape, colour, and movements to impersonate up to fifteen different predators. In today's devotional, we start looking at God's attributes of goodness. These are His attributes that we, as His people, are called to imitate. But unlike the mimic octopus, whose mimicry is only skin deep, our imitation must begin in the heart.

Our awesome God is righteous, meaning He is right in all He does and is the very standard of what is considered right and good. As a good God, He holds us to these same standards, punishing evil and rewarding good. When you think of God's justice, you may only think of His punishment toward the wicked, such as the destruction of Sodom in Genesis 19. But we should also think of God's defence of the widow and the orphan. Because He is just, He takes up the cause of the righteous and is the defender of the one treated unjustly. He is a good judge, fair in all His dealings, the defender of the defenceless, and the rewarder of the righteous.

Trusting in God's justice can be challenging in a world full of so much injustice. If God is just, why do evil men prosper? Why do the righteous suffer? Why does injustice seem to prevail? But when these questions plague us, we can look to Jesus. He is the perfectly righteous One who suffered unjustly that we may be justified or made righteous in God's sight. Jesus understands and can sympathize with our suffering because He suffered in our place.

In the here and now, justice will often be incomplete. But that will not always be the case. When Jesus returns and brings the fullness of His kingdom, every wrong will be made right. Until then, we are called to stand for what is right, be fair in all our dealings and defend those in our communities who suffer unjustly.

Thought for today: Because God is just, He expects us to treat people right, offering respect, integrity, and fairness.

Personal Reflections

- Why is it necessary for a good God to be just? How does this attribute of God help you to understand what Jesus did for you on the cross?
- Micah 6:8 summarises the top three qualities God wants to see reflected in you, among which is to act justly. In which area of your life do you need to work more to reflect that quality?

Prayer

Jesus, you are the only just and wise King. I look to your ways to understand righteousness and goodness. Even though we are broken people living in a broken world, you can bring justice where there is injustice. You have called me to be your hands and feet, to speak truth, to defend the defenceless, and to stand for what is right. Guide my ways so that I would be your mouthpiece for justice in this world. In your name I pray, amen.

Day 6 of 7

GOD IS LONG-SUFFERING

Today's Scriptures: Joel 2:12–13, Romans 5:8, 2 Peter 3:9, Exodus 34:5–9, Psalm 86:15

Devotional

When we think of the term 'long-suffering,' we usually simplify it to the word 'patient.' We think that God's patience is much like our own and that He is simply waiting. But long-suffering means so much more than patience—it means that God is slow to anger. On the other side of His patience is His wrath.

Throughout the Old Testament, the people of Israel recount time and time again that the Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. They recognised just how deep sin is buried in the human heart yet how God perseveres in His goodness and love. The Israelites bounced back and forth between worshiping God and falling away from him. They saw firsthand just how slow He was to anger. His long-suffering nature does not last forever, but He endures longer than we can imagine.

We learn in 2 Peter 3 that God's promise of judgement and redemption will certainly come to pass. Even within that promise, He does not wish that anyone would suffer the fullness of His anger. He is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. God is just and merciful at the same time. As believers, we have benefited from God's undeserved goodness that leads us to salvation and life transformation. He gives us the promise of the new heavens and the new earth.

We believers should not forget that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). He has been long-suffering for our sake and continues to endure for non-believers. While others who don't know Christ are still in their sin, we are called to bring the gospel hope to them. Repentance and forgiveness are gifts for everyone all over the world no matter their past or current situations. It's not our job to save others, but it is a privilege to share the truth of God's hope with them.

When we grasp what it means for God to be long-suffering, it changes how we approach non-Christians. We learn to persevere in those relationships as we generously share our faith and love.

Thought for today: Because God is long-suffering, we can persevere in sharing the Gospel of God's mercy and grace.

Personal Reflections

- What specific things in your life has God been long-suffering toward? How have you responded?
- What would it look like for you to be long-suffering?

Prayer

God, you have displayed your patience in your Word and in my life. No one can show mercy and steadfast love like you do. Your example of patience is demonstrated on the cross where you died for the sins of everyone, even those who would not accept you. Even when I sin, you give me grace to repent because you are a good Father. I ask that your Holy Spirit fills me with the gift of long-suffering to show patience to others in the same way you have been patient with me. In your name I pray, amen.

Day 7 of 7

GOD IS KIND

Today's Scriptures: Ephesians 2:4-7, Deuteronomy 7:7-8, Luke 6:35, Titus 3:4-5, 1 Corinthians 13:4

Devotional

Have you ever looked around and thought, "what is going on?" There is so much wickedness in the world and it's not just existing, it seems to be prospering. God hates wickedness. Yet, those who do wicked deeds are people created in His image and likeness. He has the power to crush all the wicked, just as our finger does with a single helpless wandering ant. But He doesn't. Why? Because of His loving-kindness which is that gracious affection which He manifests to His creatures, not only in the blessings of creation and providence — but especially in the covenant of grace.

God's love for us is kind. Perhaps you are wondering, *'How do you know that God is kind?'* Think of His generosity in sustaining life and blessing us each day with so much we enjoy, even though we take so much of it for granted. Every day God showers His kindness down on us.

When we talk about God's kindness, we are referring to His benevolent concern for those He loves. What is so amazing about His kindness is that it's freely given, not earned, or deserved. In fact, the Bible teaches us that God shows His loving-kindness to those who don't deserve it! God set His loving-kindness upon Israel, though they were insignificant among the nations (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). He then led the Israelites with loving-kindness, despite their consistent unfaithfulness (Hosea 11:4). And because of His loving-kindness, while we were still sinners, He died for us (Romans 5:8). Because God loves us, He gives of himself, not for what He can gain, but for what we gain.

Despite our sin and unfaithfulness, God sent His Son to die for us so that we could be reconciled to him—so that we could have a relationship with this great and good God. We have done nothing to deserve this, but out of the overflow of His kindness, we have become the recipients of His grace. And for all eternity, the immeasurable riches of God's grace will be on full display for us to marvel at as we bask in His benevolent kindness toward us.

Thought for today: Because God is kind, we have an eternity of blessings to anticipate.

Personal Reflections

- Romans 2:4 says that "God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance." During this week, has God revealed anything in your life that you need to repent of? How does God's kindness help you to repent and trust in him?
- Does selfless kindness characterise your relationships? How does the revelation of God's kindness to us help you to express that kindness in your relationships with others?

Prayer

Lord, your loving-kindness has drawn me to you, to repentance, and into your promise of blessing. I have done nothing to deserve your kindness. But in Christ, you freely give me all that I need spiritually, physically, emotionally, and more. Your kindness brings joy to my heart in every season. Thank you for your eternal grace. As you open my eyes to your kindness in my life, help me to show that kindness to others around me. In Jesus' name, amen.