COME AWAKE

PURSUING THE HEART OF JESUS THROUGH PRAYER & FASTING

AUSTIN OAKS CHURCH
INTRODUCTION
We are excited that you are joining us on this four-week journey of fasting and prayer in pursuit of Jesus’ heart. There are many different ways you can participate in this journey. The point is, you participate. When we corporately seek God, He does a unique work in our hearts and it draws us closer to Him. Read through the fasting overview and prayerfully consider what your plan will be for the next four weeks. We will have special Thursday evening worship and prayer nights all through July that will correspond with this guide. We would love for you to commit to participate if you are comfortable and able. We are working to make them available online through Facebook & YouTube also. Either way, join this journey. You won’t want to miss out!

FASTING OVERVIEW
Why
Fasting enables the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and a transformed life. As followers of the way of Jesus, we fast because we know that we cannot be filled on bread alone. We don’t have to get all our desires here and now, because we have a promise that we will have it all in the coming age. We fast from what we can see and taste, because we have tasted and seen the goodness of the invisible and infinite God — and are desperately hungry for more of him.

Scripture on Fasting
-Psalms 35:13
-Ezra 8:21-23 Seeking humility
-Luke 2:37 Prayer & Fasting
-Exodus 34:28 Seeking God’s direction
-Joel 2:12 Fasting in repentance
-Matthew 6:16-18 Intimacy with God
-Matthew 4:2 Fasting for spiritual strength
-Acts 13:3 Guidance from the Holy Spirit
What it is
Fasting is voluntarily going without food — or any other regularly enjoyed, good gift from God — for the sake of heightening our awareness of spiritual need. A key scripture on fasting is Matthew 9:14-17. The context of fasting in Jesus’s mind is longing. Longing to see people healed. Longing to see people saved. Longing to see marriages redeemed and relationships restored. Longing for justice and peace and ultimately, longing for the Kingdom of Heaven here on Earth. We ache, and we long for this to happen. Fasting creates a longing and need in our bodies to make us more aware of our desperate need for spiritual connection with Jesus. It shows a willingness to prioritize our spiritual needs over our physical.

How to Get Started

1. Start small-
If you have never fasted before, start where you feel comfortable and work from there! Maybe you start by fasting from one meal or fasting from your phone before you choose to do a day long fast.

2. Plan What You’ll Do Instead-
Fasting isn’t merely an act of self-deprivation, but a spiritual discipline for seeking more of God’s fullness. Which means we should have a simple plan for what we will pursue in place of what we’re fasting from. Each fast should have a specific spiritual purpose so identify why you’re fasting and connect your time to that purpose.

3. Be prepared-
Fasting is to sacrifice our comfort and desires. To be without something will be a challenge and a place where the enemy will bring temptation to cave into an easier route. Go in knowing exactly what your plan is and why you’re doing it. This will help you fight giving into your growling stomach or fidgety spirit. When you feel tempted to give up, talk to God and ask for help.
**Fasting from Food**

1. **Total Fast**- Abstain from solid foods and beverages for 24 hours, drinking only water.

2. **Partial Fast**- Abstain from solid foods for an extended part of the day, drinking only water. You could fast from sunrise to sunset or from breakfast to lunch.

3. **One Meal Fast**- Sacrifice one full meal a day.

4. **Beverage Fast**- Abstain from solid foods for 24 hours, drinking only water and liquids such as milk or other health beverages.

5. **Daniel Fast**- Abstain from meats and other favorite delicacies. Take only small portions of fresh vegetables, fruit and juices.

6. **Esther Fast**- Abstain from solid foods for 72 hours, drinking only water. (Esther 4:16)

**Other Fasts**

Fasting from food is not necessarily for everyone. If you have a health condition, a history with eating disorders, or if you feel that abstaining from food is not a wise choice for you, that's ok! Consider fasting from something that takes a great deal of your time, thoughts or money. We’ve listed some ideas below:

- Social Media
- Entertainment (movies, sports, video games, shows, YouTube, music)
- Your phone
- News & Media
- Other consumption, like browsing the internet, Amazon, shopping, etc.

We highly encourage you to consider fasting from media for one full week of this journey as a way of recognizing your greater dependence on God’s Truth and not the world’s.
WEEK 1 – Hope from God’s Purpose

_Songs for Worship_
Hope Has a Name by River Valley Worship
Living Hope by Phil Wickham
Christ is Risen by Matt Maher
Deliverance by Gateway Worship
All My Hope by Hillsong Worship

_Day 1_

_Read_
Ephesians 1:16-18; Rom 15:13

_Reflec_t
1. Re-read the expression used in this passage about hope. Who has called you to this hope?

2. Read Eph 1.3-12 and ponder what this “hope” is. Who is the one who has provided and promised this hope?

3. When we create our own hopes & put our hope in the things of this world, we set ourselves up for disappointment, discouragement, depression & even devastation. What hopes have you placed in earthly things that have led to one of these four outcomes?

4. Read Rom 15:13 & consider how can you redirect your hope to the hope which God has called you to & experience His joy and peace?

_Pray er_
Father, you are the source and the strength behind our hope. You started the process by choosing us and you will finish it by saving us from this fallen and broken world. Forgive me for continuing to put my hope in things of this world. My frequent disappointment & discouragement reveal my short-sighted hope. Today, I redirect my hope to the absolute surety of Your salvation and the infinite joy that exists in Your presence. I can’t wait to be with you forever! Until then, my hope is in Your plan while my feet walk this shaky, temporal earth.
Day 2

Read
Romans 8:18-25

Reflect
1. Hope involves an anticipation of some better future. How does this passage reveal where our hope should be as Christians?

2. What does this passage say is true about our present world? Is our present world a good place for us to attach our hope?

3. In what hope does Paul say we are saved according to vs 23-24?

4. Being courageously honest, how much have you placed hope in things you can see?

Prayer
Father, I am so encouraged by the fact that I am part of your plan to renew all things. My present, broken body is part of the current creation that groans and longs to be renewed. Forgive me for expecting too much from my brokenness and the brokenness of creation. Instead, turn my heart and my eyes to the hope of all things being made new. At that time, our hope will become reality and never again will we be disappointed!

Day 3

Read
Psalm 33:16-19

Reflect
1. In verses 16-17, what does the psalmist reveal are typical sources for us to place our hope and trust?

2. How do you see people, including yourself, hoping in these sources today?

3. According to verses 18-19, who does God “see” and what
does He promise for them?

4. Ponder the fact that God will ultimately deliver you from the worst this world can throw at you . . . death! What does that give you courage to face today?

**Prayer**
Father, forgive me for the many ways I have placed my hope in the structures and strengths of this world. Our gov’t is not my security. The medical field is not our hope. The economy is not my provider. My health and my safety are not my source of strength. You, Lord, alone can rescue me from death and keep me alive in times of distress. Even if I should perish, You will raise me from the dead to be with you forever!

**Day 4**

**Read**
1 Peter 3:14-16

**Reflect**
1. How does having a hope that is anchored in God’s future, renewed heaven and earth make it easier to face present suffering?

2. When we respond with gentleness and respect to the reviling or mistreatment of this world or others, how does it reveal our true hope?

3. Why might doing so lead to someone asking why your hope is so different?

4. Hope is vital to evangelism. One of the best opportunities we will have to share the gospel will come through how we face suffering & difficulty in this world. This is one factor for why the gospel has spread most when Christians are facing opposition.

5. Where do you need to display hope amidst a present struggle?

**Prayer**
Father, my heart is frequently focused on this present world and
what it offers me. However, when I see what you have planned for us I can hold more loosely what I possess in this world. Lord, my hope in your future is at the heart of my witness to others. When I am not shaken by difficulty or suffering in this world it shouts to others that my hope is anchored somewhere else. You are my hope. Show me how to reveal that today through any difficulty I may face.

Day 5

Read
Colossians 1:3-5

Reflect
1. What does vs 5 say is the reason for the “faith” and “love” the Colossians have demonstrated?

2. If our faith in Jesus and our love for others is based on “the hope laid up” for us in heaven, how vital is it that we know and ponder this hope?

3. Knowing you have an unbelievable future with God, what can you do today to radically trust Jesus and love others sacrificially?

Prayer
Father, I often fail to trust you and love others because I haven’t fully grasped the hope I have in You. Lord, show me afresh the beauty of what you have done and have planned for all who trust You. When I am overwhelmed by the glory of You and the promise of eternal life, I can live by faith and love others more sacrificially. Spirit, ignite in my heart the hope reserved for me in heaven and secured through the gospel work of Jesus.
WEEK 2 – Power for God’s Purpose

Songs for Worship
All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name
How Great Thou Art
Praise to the Lord, The Almighty
Breakthrough by Red Rocks Worship
Unstoppable God by Elevation Worship
Defender by UPPERROOM
Mighty Warrior by Elevation Worship

Day 1
Read
Ephesians 3:14-16; 1 Corinthians 1:18

Reflect
1. When you think of power, do you most often associate it with a person’s outer or inner being?

2. How do you see people misusing “outer” being power in today’s world?

3. How did Jesus demonstrate His “inner” being power while on earth? According to Paul (1 Cor 1:18) how is this power received by the world?

4. How do you need to be strengthened with power in your inner being?

Prayer
Father, I too often seek power in my outer being so that I can have greater influence in my world. However, You want me to be strengthened in my inner being so that Your greater purpose can be showed in my life. Jesus showed this inner power when He humbly, yet powerfully, died on the cross for our sin and for Your glory. Grant me the power I need in my inner being to put sin to death and live fully for You, Lord.
Day 2

**Read**
2 Timothy 1:7

**Reflect**
1. How do we see from 2 Tim 1:7 that inner power is not weak?

2. When have you witnessed someone with this kind of inner power & seen its strength?

3. Why does “good” power require love and self-discipline? What happens to power when these things are absent?

4. Where do you need God’s love, power and self-discipline to overcome your timidity?

**Prayer**
Father, forgive me for thinking that inner power is weak. Forgive me for the many times I have thought if I only had more “outer” power I could change the things I want to see change. My lack of “outer” power has made me timid. But, You have not given me a spirit of timidity. Spirit, fill me to walk in the love, power & self-discipline You have granted.

Day 3

**Read**
2 Peter 1:3

**Reflect**
1. According to Peter, what has God given us through His divine power?

2. How do we receive “everything” we need for godly living, according to this verse?

3. Knowing & experiencing God & His calling on your life is key to living a godly life. Where is your life lacking godliness right now?
What do you need to know & experience about God to be transformed?

**Prayer**
Father, You have granted to me everything I need to live for You. I don’t need anything else. I just need You. Your divine power dwells in me through Christ. Your loving revelation of Jesus Christ and what He has done for us is the means by which You have provided all I need. Jesus lived with perfect power in this world. He died for my sin and was raised by Your power so that I might experience that same power in my life. Lord, fill me with Your power in my inward most being so that I can live for You.

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**Day 4**

**Read**
Romans 1:16

**Reflect**
1. How does the gospel declare the power God wants people to see?

2. What is it about the gospel that we may be ashamed of?

3. Where do you need to trust the gospel as God’s power for salvation & not rely on your own, nor the world’s, power?

**Prayer**
Father, I am too easily ashamed by the gospel. Sure, I can easily talk about it in church or with my Christian friends, but when it comes to others, I am frequently ashamed. Lord, show me how I trust too much in the powers of this world. Forgive me for trusting in anything else to save people other than the simplicity and power of the gospel. Spirit, fill my heart and my mouth with the beauty and power of the good news of Jesus Christ. I need not be ashamed of the incredible ways this truth has transformed people and our world.
Day 5

Read
Ephesians 1:18-23

Reflect
1. How do verses 20-23 reveal that God’s power is not just “inner” power but outer power as well?

2. If God has this “outer” power but has chosen not to fully use it across our world yet, what should that reveal to us about His plan?

3. Since God will exercise the fulness of His power across time and the world to raise everyone and judge all, why can we – as Christians – courageously live through present injustices with love and self-discipline?

Prayer
Father, You are mighty and victorious. There is no power in this world that comes close to You. You created all things. You will bring all things under Your judgment. You will renew all things for Your glory. Strengthen me with the immeasurable power with which You accomplished Your most glorious act in all of creation: raising Jesus from the dead & seating Him above every spiritual power that exists. Wow! You exercise that same power in me. Lord, strengthen me to live courageously in light of this truth, for nothing in this world can separate me from You.
WEEK 3 – Strength to withstand opposition to God's purpose

**Songs for Worship**
A Mighty Fortress is Our God
How Firm a Foundation
O Church Arise
See a Victory by Elevation Worship
Stronger by Influence Music
Mighty God by Elevation Worship

**Day 1**

**Read**
Ephesians 6:10-13

**Reflect**
1. According to vs 10, from where does our strength come to stand against our opposition?
2. Too often we attempt to fight in our own “strength” and resources or we fight the battle against the wrong enemy. According to vs 12, what is our struggle NOT against? In what ways do you find yourself fighting too frequently with physical enemies instead of our true enemies?
3. Ask God to open your eyes this week to the “full armor” He has for you so you can stand against the schemes and strategies of the devil.

**Prayer**
Father, You are my strength! Forgive my pridefulness that too often trusts in my own strength, strategy or resources. My struggle is not against this world that I see, but against the spiritual forces of evil. I don’t have the resources to win this battle. But, You do. Open the eyes of my heart to see the weapons You have purchased for me through Jesus Christ. Teach me to be strengthened by You and equipped with Your armor.
Day 2

**Read**
Ephesians 1:19-22 & 6:12-15; 2 Cor 10:3-5

**Reflect**
1. God’s power and strength toward us who believe is demonstrated by what He did in Jesus Christ. What power & strength did the Father exercise in Jesus according to vs 20-22?

2. How is our current struggle (see vs 12) against similar “enemies” that God conquered when He raised Jesus Christ?

3. How does Paul say we need to fight and what “strongholds” does Paul say we need to demolish according to 2 Corinthians 10:3-5?

4. Tomorrow, we will begin to arm ourselves with the weapons God provides to demolish the arguments & schemes the evil powers of darkness use to hinder our knowledge & experience of God.

**Prayer**
Father, You are working in me with the same power you worked in Jesus when you raised Him from the dead and seated Him in the highest position over all spiritual powers & authorities. I cannot avoid this battle by sticking my head in the sand. I have to learn to fight against cosmic powers of evil. One of their greatest weapons & strategies is twisting your Truth and sowing their lies. If I walk in lies, I will lose my daily battles. However, if I take those lies captive in Christ, I can demolish them and tear them down with Truth. Your Truth. You have already conquered all these spiritual forces in Jesus Christ. I must believe that and walk in that Truth. In Christ, You are working this same power in my life to give me victory over the schemes of the enemy. Teach me to stand.
Day 3

Read
Ephesians 6:13-15

Reflect
1. When Paul says to arm ourselves with truth like a belt around our waist he is using a military metaphor. A Roman soldier would wear a belt that was used to tuck his tunic up so that he wouldn’t trip in battle. If we want to stand in our battle with the enemy, we must secure our lives with truth or we will get tripped up by the enemy’s schemes. Where do you need to be truthful in your life to avoid getting tripped up?

2. The breastplate of righteousness protects our heart from the enemy’s attacks. When we understand the right standing we have in Christ and choose to live right before God we protect ourselves from being vulnerable to the enemy accusing us and causing insecurity in our relationship with God. Where are you failing to trust the righteousness you have in Christ and live consistently with it?

3. The gospel acts as shoes in every battle giving us traction to bring peace in any situation we might face. Since Christ died for all sin and makes all righteous, we can bring this peace to even the most slippery or messy of situations. In what area of your life do you need to “walk” in light of the gospel to bring peace?

Prayer
Lord, I need every spiritual weapon you offer to stand firm in this battle. You have given me everything I need to live in victory, however, I cannot be passive. Lord, forgive me for the lies I have lived and the truth I have rejected. Cloth me with the righteousness of Christ to protect my heart. Put to death the sin I still cling to and train me to walk in your righteousness. Strengthen me to run into places of conflict with the good news of the gospel of peace. You have won this battle, You can win this battle, You will win this battle.
Day 4

**Read**
Ephesians 6:16-17

**Reflect**
1. The shield of faith is trust in God’s promises. When the enemy shoots a lie your way, faith in God’s promises will prevent (extinguish) it from landing. What lies are you believing that are confronted by truth in God’s Word?

2. The helmet of salvation protects our mind with the security of our salvation. When we lack confidence in Christ’s salvation, we become vulnerable to the enemy’s attacks & will lack confidence in our battle. Where do you lack security in your salvation & how has it hindered you in the battle to walk with Christ and win others for Him?

3. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is our only offensive weapon. Just as Jesus spoke God’s Word to Satan when tempted in the wilderness (see Mt 4:1-11), we need to respond to Satan’s attacks with Truth. How do you need to confront a present attack in your life with God’s Truth?

**Prayer**
Father, open my heart to the reality of your promises. When I doubt your promises I am vulnerable. The enemy can fuel my doubts and attack my mind. Lord, You have never failed to fulfill Your promises in the past. You have done everything You said You would do. I am secure in Christ because my salvation is based on His perfect obedience, not mine. Fill my heart and my mind with confidence in Your promises. Strengthen me to wield your Word against the attacks of the enemy.
Day 5

Read
Isaiah 41:10

Reflect
1. List all the promises God makes to His people in this short verse.

2. God spoke these promises to His people through Isaiah as His people were about to be conquered by Babylon and go into exile for 70 years. God wanted His people to know He was with them and would uphold them even through difficult times. How does this strengthen you today during a difficult time?

3. God’s “righteous right hand” speaks of His ability to deliver justice. He would eventually deliver the Israelites from their exile, as He promised. Our promises are revealed in Jesus Christ. How does God’s righteous deliverance of Jesus Christ comfort us when facing the difficulties of this world?

Prayer
Lord, Your promises do not fail when it looks like the world is a mess. Your ability to save is not dependent on the circumstances around me. You have overcome every situation and circumstance in the past to show Your mighty Hand of deliverance. You will do so again. No weapon formed against me, no circumstance overwhelming me is capable of keeping You from carrying out Your plan to save. If You rescued Jesus Christ from everything the powers of this world and the cosmic forces of darkness could throw at Him, then I am secure also.
WEEK 4 – Love to Motivate God’s Purpose

Songs for Worship
My Savior’s Love (I Stand Amazed in the Presence)
The Love of God
Oh How He Loves You and ME
God So Loved by Hillsong Worship
Hidden by United Pursuit
Lean Back by Capital City Music
How He Loves by John Mark McMillan

Day 1

Read
Ephesians 3:17b-19

Reflect
1. List the three actions Paul wants us to experience in relation to love in this passage.

2. As Christians, what has God already done for us that has “rooted and established” us in love? (see Rom 5:8)

3. From this position of being loved by God, why would God want us to further comprehend the vastness of His love and to experience Christ’s love that surpasses understanding?

4. What aspects of God’s love are you struggling to understand and experience that are resulting in an emptiness in your life rather than the “fullness of God”?

Prayer
Father, You have loved us with an everlasting love. You have poured out such great love that I can be called your child. You have loved me into Your family. Lord, help me to live and love more like you. Help me more fully understand and experience the infinite power and reach of your love so that I live like Your Son, Jesus, lived. May the fulness of my identity be found in you so that nothing in this world captures my affections more than You.
Day 2

Read
1 John 4:9-11; Romans 5:8

Reflect
1. Be honest with yourself, do you find it easier to love people who are loving toward you? Can you name some people who are unloving toward you that you still love? Would you be willing to die for them?

2. Our human love is so naturally tied to performance or conditions. We love those who are related to us or are good, pretty, smart, cute, or fun in our eyes. List several ways today's verses describe the “length and width, height and depth” of God’s love.

3. Why is it so important we are grounded in God’s love and are growing in our understanding and experience of it daily?

Prayer
Father, Your love is unsearchable and immeasurable. I cannot outrun it and I cannot comprehend the depths of it. You would send Your own Son to be punished and judged for my sin? Jesus, You would willingly accept that assignment out of love for broken and unlovable people? How do I grasp this? Lord, forgive me for loving only those who are easy for me to love. Show me true love, like Yours, that commits itself for the good of others even at great personal cost.

Day 3

Read
1 John 4:19-21

Reflect
1. According to 1 John 4:19, what is the reason we can love?

2. Our human love will always fall short of true love. Until we have experienced the true love of God, we are unable to truly love. How does John test in today's passage that our love for God is false?
3. If we do not treat our fellow Christians with love, no matter how different they might be from us, what does that say about the reality of our love for God?

4. When we hate our fellow Christians and say we love God, we have ultimately created our own god. Where are you struggling to love those God has called you to love?

**Prayer**

Father, You have demonstrated that love is not a reaction, but an initiating action. You acted in love toward us when we were unworthy of love. Now that we live in Your love, you call us to initiate love toward others who aren’t worthy of love. Grant me a deeper understanding and a powerful experience of Your infinite love so that I may love others likewise. Spirit, reveal the hate I have for those I’m called to love. Forgive me & empower me to love others like You have loved me.

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**Day 4**

**Read**

Ephesians 6:23-24

**Reflect**

1. Paul’s farewell to the Ephesians involves a blessing of grace to all who love Jesus with undying love. How would you describe your love for Jesus at this time?

2. What we love the most has the greatest impact and influence on our lives. Would you say Jesus has the greatest impact and influence on your life? How would you prove this?

3. No One loves you more or has a greater purpose for you than Jesus. What tempts you to chase & obey other “loves” more than Him?

**Prayer**

Father, You are worthy of my deepest affections and greatest devotion. Everything else I set my love on in this world will pass. You are eternal. You are good. You are satisfying. Open my eyes
to the depth of Your loving purpose for me and the affections You have for me. When I better understand these I will live more like Your child. Lord, forgive me for chasing the fleeting “loves” of this world. They will never satisfy me like You. I love You.

Day 5

Read
Revelation 2:1-5

Reflect
1. This passage is written to the church in Ephesus many years after Paul wrote his letter. How would you describe this church from what is written?

2. Jesus commends this church for many things but, according to vs 4, what is the one thing He has against them?

3. Have you ever considered how many things are done by the church that are not motivated by love?

4. What does Jesus call us to do when we have abandoned the love we had for Him & others? What would this look like for you?

Prayer
Father, show me how my love for You has waned. Reveal to me the actions that I believe are for You, but are not motivated by a deep love and affection for You. Spirit, search me and reveal to me what most captures my heart and my love. I am wrong for loving anything more than you, Lord. Nothing in this world or anywhere else has greater value or is more beautiful or glorious than You. Change my heart to pursue You first & foremost.