

Day of Prayer and Fasting

Handbook and Resources

Praying for a Heart like Jesus

as We Seek to Love a Broken World

Third Quarter 2021

Sabbath, July 3

Revival
& REFORMATION

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Visit www.revivalandreformation.org for information.

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An Invitation to Fast and Pray

If ever there was a time in history that we should be urgently praying for a heart like Jesus, it is now. Our world is in crisis. Tension, anger, pain, and suffering abound on all sides. People are dying without knowing the Savior's love. We need His love and the Holy Spirit's power to share the good news of salvation with others, preparing them for Jesus' soon return. Before He comes, however, something must happen.

Ellen White writes, "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:12)" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69).

Recognizing our great need for a heart and character like Jesus, we invite you to join our church family for a special day of prayer and fasting. Our theme will be "Praying for a Heart like Jesus as We Seek to Love a Broken World." Our prayers will focus on heart needs: praying for healing for each other, for a heart more like Jesus, for stronger faith for the hard times, and for courage to witness as we share God's character of love with a broken world. We will pray especially for deeper love for each other, for the lost, and for those dying without hope.

Why is this day of prayer accompanied by fasting?

We fast because we are in earnest for God's blessing. When we read the Bible, we see that fasting is not an option. It's a given. Matthew 6:17 doesn't say, "If you fast," but rather, "When you fast." If we study all the fasts in the Bible, we find that every time God's people prayed *and fasted*, God worked mightily on their behalf—from deliverance from enemies in battle to supernatural deliverance from prison to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we see a pattern. This pattern repeats itself all through Christian history. Fasting has always been part of the lifestyle of believers, just like prayer and Bible study. In fact, every major character in the Bible fasted.

We are told, "Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should *set aside days for fasting and prayer*. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 188, 189, emphasis supplied).

Fasting is more than just skipping meals. Fasting is choosing to do without something in order to pray more intentionally and with more heart and soul focus. Many choose to skip meals, but not everyone can do without food completely, and not everyone chooses this type of fast. That's okay. We encourage you to pray and ask God what type of fast He wants you to do. You might choose to eat more simply, or you might choose to fast from social media, television, or other time-consuming habits. Whatever you do, it's important to remember that fasting isn't about earning a heavenly reward. The main point of fasting is removing distractions so we can seek Jesus more wholeheartedly. As Derek Morris, president of Hope Channel, likes to say, "We fast from the world so we can feast on Jesus."

We invite you to be part of this special day! Whether you choose to fast or not, we believe God has a special blessing in store for you.

Perhaps you are wary of corporate prayer because you don't like to pray aloud. We invite you to join anyway. You can pray along with others silently, lifting up the prayer requests of others and praying for the people and things God brings to your heart. And if you fear that your prayers aren't "good enough," know that God hears not only our words but also our hearts. He's not looking for "good enough" prayers but for sincere worshippers seeking Him. Even if we don't know what to pray, He knows. He hears. And He invites us to pray *together*. "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that

they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matt. 18:19).

Hebrews 10:24, 25 says, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

The Day is approaching. Now is the time to pray! Don’t miss the abundant blessings that God has waiting for you.

Instructions for Leaders

- Distribute the handout “An Invitation to Fast and Pray” to church members at least a week or two before this special day so members can prepare.
- Instead of including a full sermon, we are providing material to help local leaders prepare a sermon. A Sabbath morning church service that focuses on this quarter’s prayer theme may inspire more members to join in your afternoon prayer time.
- A children’s story is included to help children see the power of unselfish love.
- A devotional reading for the afternoon prayer program, “Becoming Loving and Lovable Christians,” is provided. This devotional reading should be followed by a corporate prayer time.
- We recommend scheduling a minimum of 2-3 hours for this afternoon prayer program; many plan to pray together for a full afternoon, however. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead.
- Do not feel that you must rush through all of these materials during the afternoon program. Choose what you need and abbreviate as necessary. Ask God to help you plan a prayer time that is best for your situation.
- Print or e-mail the handouts “Prayer Focus: Love According to God’s Word” and “Powerful Prayer Promises” for the afternoon prayer time.
- If you have questions about how to lead a united prayer group, see instructions in this packet at the end of the “Suggested Afternoon Program.”

Suggested Sabbath Morning Program

Suggested Order of Divine Worship Service

Day of Prayer and Fasting, July 3, 2021

Prelude

Platform participants enter

Doxology

Invocation

Offertory

Offering Response

Offertory Prayer

Hymn: "Live Out Thy Life Within Me" (SDA Hymnal #316)

Children's Story: "Turning the Other Cheek"

Scripture Reading: 1 John 4:19-21

"We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

Intercessory Prayer

Special Music

SERMON: "Praying for a Heart Like Jesus as We Seek to Love a Broken World"

Closing Hymn: "O, How I Love Jesus" (SDA Hymnal #248)

Benediction and Announcement of Details for Afternoon Prayer Program

Postlude

Suggested Afternoon Program

Place: Gather in the sanctuary, outside under some trees, or, if your group is small, meet in a comfortable room in someone's home that offers privacy and no distractions. If meeting in person is not permissible, Zoom is an online video conferencing service that might be an option for you (zoom.us). You can also meet by phone.

Opening Praise and Worship (15-20 minutes): Music always sets the mood for worship, so begin with a few songs of worship to inspire reverence and encourage seeking after God.

Maybe invite a few members to share 30-second testimonies of answered prayers or praises to God between songs.

Welcome and Announcements: The leader should welcome people and share an idea of the flow of the afternoon.

Opening Prayer: Designate a person

Share the Devotional: Have someone share the devotional, "Becoming Loving and Lovable Christians."

United Prayer leader: The following instructions should be shared briefly before prayer time.

- We are here to pray as a family. Remember that everything shared is confidential.
- Please be comfortable during the prayer time. If meeting together in person, feel free to change positions—sitting, kneeling, standing, etc. If on Zoom, you might consider turning off the camera during prayer for fewer distractions.
- Speak up so we can hear you, or be sure to unmute your microphone if on Zoom.
- Claim scripture and pray God's promises back to Him. (Use the provided promise sheet.)
- Claim the righteous life, sacrifice, and ministry of Jesus in prayer (John 14:14; Rev.8:3).
- **Keep prayers brief** (a single thought or 1-2 sentences). Save lengthy prayers for the prayer closet. People tend to grow weary with long prayers. We are told the angels grow weary, too (*Prayer*, p. 258).
- People can pray multiple times (briefly) during corporate prayer times.
- Last but not least, please allow everyone an opportunity to speak up and pray without one person dominating the prayer time.

NOTE TO PRAYER LEADER: Remember that silence in prayer time is fine. Don't feel the need to fill every silent moment or end the prayer time prematurely. While some people jump in and pray quickly, others take longer to feel comfortable praying aloud. When silence happens, let it linger. Allow God to speak silently to hearts.

If you are concerned because you've never led united prayer before, you can learn more by reading *Praying for Rain: A Mini-Handbook for United Prayer*. It can be found online here: <https://www.revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/praying-for-rain>.

Time to Begin!

Corporate Prayer Time: Take 2-3 hours for corporate and small-group prayer, or longer as the Holy Spirit leads. We encourage you to follow the “Prayer Focus” themes included in these materials, and intermingle other prayers as the Holy Spirit leads. Don’t feel obligated to rush through all the materials.

A Time of Praise & Worship (Corporate Prayer Time)

Take time to praise and worship God and thank Him for who He is and what He’s done! Pray from the heart. “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise” (Ps. 100:4).

Praying for Love According to God’s Word (Corporate Prayer Time—See Handout 1)

As leader, read one Bible passage at a time, then stop and allow people to pray over that specific passage at it relates to their own lives and the life of the church body. This is the key focus of today’s prayer time—praying for a heart of love like Jesus. We need to measure our lives according to God’s Word. We begin to change when we pray that He will make us like Him!

Praying for Spiritual Healing (Corporate Prayer Time)

Have people take turns briefly sharing spiritual needs (not physical needs or children’s needs but specific spiritual needs) that they need help with or deliverance from. Before we can pray for others, we need to experience healing ourselves.

After a person has shared (emphasize brief sharing, maybe one minute or less), have 2 or 3 people volunteer to pray for that person’s needs.

Praying for Personal and Church Needs (Small Groups)

Divide into small groups to pray for personal needs. If someone didn’t get to share a personal need during the earlier corporate time, this is where everyone can take turns praying for one another in groups of 2 to 4.

Praying for Our Mission as a Church (Corporate Prayer Time)

Take time to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for the ability to witness, and for strength and courage to share the three angels’ messages in a fresh and relevant way. Pray for backslidden members, the community, outreach, and unsaved neighbors and friends. Pray as the Holy Spirit leads. Pray big prayers!

Close with Praise (Corporate Prayer Time)

Close the prayer time with corporate praise. Worship God and thank Him, not just for what He’s already done, but for what He’s going to do.

Encouragement: After the prayer time ends, encourage people to keep praying for one another, or to set up small prayer groups in their homes if they haven’t already. (If members would like to join daily united prayer calls happening in their part of the world, encourage them to learn about *24/7 United Prayer*. More information can be found online: revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/join-us-for-24/7-united-prayer.)

Break the Sabbath Fast with a Special Evening Meal: Some churches may choose to have a meal together after the prayer time to break the fast. Keep the meal simple but make the food and atmosphere attractive to create a special occasion. If social distancing prohibits this, do a “praise picnic.” Take turns sharing praises and more testimonies of answered prayer, even if it’s over Zoom. Suggested Children’s

Story for Day of Prayer and Fasting, July 3, 2021

Turning the Other Cheek

By Melody Mason

Tom was a Bible worker in a part of the world where sharing the gospel is not always easy and many Christians are persecuted for their faith.

Tom and his wife had been in an accident. Their motorcycle had been stopped beside the road when another cyclist came along and hit them. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured, even though both motorcycles were damaged. The man who hit them was drunk. He was also the chief of a nearby village.

Although Tom didn't have much money, instead of getting angry over the accident, he asked the chief, "How shall we solve this problem?"

Now if you were in a motorcycle accident or a car accident and someone else had run into you, how would you treat them? Would you be upset and angry and demand that they pay for the damages? What if they had no insurance and no money? Would you still demand they pay?

That's how we usually are. But Tom didn't respond that way. When he asked the chief how they should solve the problem, he was willing to do whatever the chief said.

"You need to fix my motorcycle!" the chief rudely told Tom.

Without argument, Tom paid for the motorcycle repairs. But he didn't stop there. In addition, he went to visit the chief and started looking for ways to help him and his family, even offering to go out and plow his field. Tom did so many nice things for this chief and his family that people in that village could not help but take notice.

"Our chief is a very rude man!" someone told Tom one day. "Why are you being so kind to him? No one ever manages to be friends with our chief!"

"Because I love Jesus and I want to share His love with others," Tom responded.

Not long after, some of the villagers asked Tom if he would teach them more about Jesus. By the time Tom shared his story, he was already doing Bible studies with a number of the villagers, and a few were already preparing for baptism. The amazing miracle is that this village was in an area where Tom had previously tried to share the gospel. His efforts had always been unsuccessful. But now, through Tom's kindness to the chief, God had made a breakthrough.

Just think—if Tom had reacted to the accident the way most do, he never would have been able to reach this village for Christ. Can you imagine how different things might be in our world—and even in our church today—if we went the extra mile and served with such selfless humility, even when we've been wronged?

Instead of getting revenge, Tom paid the chief back with love. The Bible explains it this way: "Love is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Cor. 13:5). This week, look for a chance to show kindness, even when people don't deserve it.

Let's pray!

Sermon Suggestions

[We encourage you as pastor/speaker to develop your own sermon for this special Sabbath. These Bible verses, questions, quotes, and thoughts may help as you prepare.]

Sermon Title/Theme: Praying for a Heart Like Jesus as We Seek to Love a Broken World

Bible verses and questions to consider as you prepare your sermon:

- 1 Cor. 13 – What can we learn about true love from this passage? What are some of the ways that Christ demonstrated this love in His own life?
- John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; Deut. 6:5; Deut. 7:7; Prov. 8:17; Jer. 31:3; Hos. 14:4; Eph. 1:4 – What do these passages tell us about God's love?
- John 21:15-17 – Why is "love" the true prerequisite for ministry?
- Matt. 22:37-39 – What does it mean to love God with heart, body, mind, and soul?
- 1 John 4:16, 20, 21 – How can we love and worship God, even when people hurt us or take advantage of us?
- Matt. 5:43-46; Prov. 25:21, 22 – How should we love when we've been wronged?
- Matt. 5:23, 24 – How do love and forgiveness work together and why should we be willing to take the first step in reconciliation with others?
- Mark 11:25, 26 – Why is it important that we forgive? Will we be saved if we don't forgive?
- Matt. 12:34 – Why is it important that our heart be in the right place?
- Phil. 2:5; 1 John 4:20 – What type of mind and heart should we pray for?
- 2 Cor. 10:4, 5 – What kind of weapons should we fight with?
- John 17:21 – Why it is important that we be ONE in the Lord?
- Mark 3:14; 2 Cor. 3:18 – What is our first calling as Jesus' disciples, and how do we grasp a deeper understanding of His unconditional love?
- 1 John 2:6; 1 John 3:1, 2 – How do we daily abide in Jesus?

Excerpts from the book *Daring to Live by Every Word: Loving God with Heart, Body, Mind and Soul* by Melody Mason:

The Bible tells us in Romans 8:29 that God's purpose for our lives as believers is to conform us to the image of His Son. This means that Christ's character of love must become our character.

"We should study more earnestly the character of our Saviour. We should imitate the lovely Pattern that God has given us. We should dwell upon the matchless charms of Jesus until there will be nothing satisfying in this perishing world. We should desire to reflect his image in kindness, in courtesy, in gentleness, and love, then 'when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is'" (*The Review and Herald*, May 28, 1889, par. 8).

What better way to become like Jesus than by learning to love and serve those in our closest circle of influence, those who annoy and frustrate us and rub us the wrong way?

When we look at the character of Jesus, we see that He was a beautiful picture of unconditional love, mercy, and grace.

Of course, we worship and praise God for these character traits, and we often preach about them from the pulpit. The ironic thing is that when God asks us to exhibit these virtues to others, we hold back—

because these others, well . . . they don't really deserve such love! But are any of us deserving?

If you live with family, have a difficult roommate, or happen to be married to an imperfect person, consider the following:

- How would we ever learn unconditional love if we lived with someone who always met all the conditions for our love?
- How would we ever learn mercy, patience, longsuffering, and compassion, if we lived with someone who never failed us, who was never difficult to live with, who never sinned against us, who was never slow to acknowledge their wrongs or ask for forgiveness?
- How would we learn to pour out grace on someone who does not deserve it, if we were living with someone who was *always deserving of that grace*?

If you are part of the human family, more than likely you are living with family, roommates, friends, or maybe even a spouse who does not meet all your needs or expectations. More than likely these individuals disappoint you and at times fall short of the conditions you expected them to fulfill. But perhaps God allows us to live with less than perfect people so that we can learn to give unconditional love—like Christ has done for us.

Tell me! Are we most like Christ when our husband, wife, children, roommates, or family members are meeting all our needs, and we really don't have to sacrifice much at all? Or are we most like Christ on the hard days, when grace, mercy, and unconditional love is needed? The answer is obvious. That's why we must cling to Christ, and continually abide in Him, for by ourselves, we cannot give such unmerited grace, mercy, and love. The good news is that Christ is "the inexhaustible source of grace" (*Child Guidance*, p. 149). He has all that we need and more!

Additional Quotes from Inspiration:

"The Love of Christ, revealed to us, makes us debtors to all who know Him not" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 81).

"The love of Jesus attracts; it will subdue the hardest heart" (*Christian Experience and Teachings*, p. 40).

"The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416).

"Let us go forward, and not backward. We want a new conversion daily. We want the love of Jesus throbbing in our hearts, that we may be instrumental in saving many souls" (*The Review and Herald*, June 10, 1880).

"The love of Jesus must be the motive of all effort. It impels, it constrains, it captivates" (*Testimonies on Sabbath School Work*, p. 105).

"If the love of God is not appreciated and does not become an abiding principle to soften and subdue the soul, we are utterly lost. The Lord can give no greater manifestation of His love than He has given. If the love of Jesus does not subdue the heart, there are no means by which we can be reached" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 237).

"Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns will be emptied, the pools become dry; but our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain. We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing,—'a well of water springing up into

everlasting life.' From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187).

"Human nature is ever struggling for expression, ready for contest; but he who learns of Christ is emptied of self, of pride, of love of supremacy, and there is silence in the soul. Self is yielded to the disposal of the Holy Spirit. Then we are not anxious to have the highest place. We have no ambition to crowd and elbow ourselves into notice; but we feel that our highest place is at the feet of our Saviour" (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 15).

"I saw that the remnant were not prepared for what is coming upon the earth. Stupidity, like lethargy, seemed to hang upon the minds of most of those who profess to believe that we are having the last message. My accompanying angel cried out with awful solemnity, 'Get ready! get ready! get ready! for the fierce anger of the Lord is soon to come. His wrath is to be poured out, unmixed with mercy, and ye are not ready. Rend the heart, and not the garment. A great work must be done for the remnant. Many of them are dwelling upon little trials.' Said the angel, 'Legions of evil angels are around you, and are trying to press in their awful darkness, that ye may be ensnared and taken. Ye suffer your minds to be diverted too readily from the work of preparation and the all-important truths for these last days. And ye dwell upon little trials and go into minute particulars of little difficulties to explain them to the satisfaction of this one or that.' Conversation has been protracted for hours between the parties concerned, and not only has their time been wasted, but the servants of God are held to listen to them, when the hearts of both parties are unsubdued by grace. If pride and selfishness were laid aside, five minutes would remove most difficulties. Angels have been grieved and God displeased by the hours which have been spent in justifying self. I saw that God will not bow down and listen to long justifications, and He does not want His servants to do so, and thus precious time be wasted that should be spent in showing transgressors the error of their ways and pulling souls out of the fire" (*Early Writings*, pp. 119, 120).

"We must have a knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that will result in contrition, before we can find pardon and peace. . . . It is only he who knows himself to be a sinner that Christ can save. . . . We must know our real condition, or we shall not feel our need of Christ's help. We must understand our danger, or we shall not flee to the refuge. We must feel the pain of our wounds, or we should not desire healing" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 158).

Personal Stories:

- Share real-life stories about how God has grown your (the pastor/speaker's) faith through experiencing undeserved love.
- Share stories of love in the face of hate.
- People often forget sermon points, but they remember stories!

Additional Resource to Read and Share: *God's Last Effort to Awaken His People* by A.M. Dart. To download, click here: <https://www.revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/gods-last-effort-to-awaken-his-people>.

Make an Appeal: Ask the King of Love to fill our hearts. If His throne is in our hearts, His love will flow out of our lives, and we will want to help others prepare for His soon coming.

Becoming Loving and Lovable Christians

Praying for a Heart Like Jesus

Ellen White writes, "The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian. To live such a life, to exert such an influence, costs at every step effort, self-sacrifice, discipline. It is because they do not understand this that many are so easily discouraged in the Christian life" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 470).

Are we loving and lovable Christians? Are we prepared to be poured out for a broken world in need? Unfortunately, too often we act the opposite of how the Bible tells us we should live and love.

When we read about the life of Jesus in the Gospels, we discover that the discipleship model He laid out for us to follow is completely upside down and backwards from how society encourages us to live. It's contrary to the worldly rules for success.

Here are some examples:

- Man says if you want success, always strive to be first. Jesus says the first shall be last. (See Matt. 20:16.)
- Man says take care of yourself. Jesus says it's all about taking care of others. (See Matt. 20:28.)
- Man says pamper yourself and live life to the fullest. Jesus says we must die to self and live for others. (See Matt. 16:24.)
- Man says do good so everyone can see and reward you. Jesus says that if our motive is to be seen by men, we will have no reward in heaven. In fact, He says that what we do in secret is really what counts most. (See Matt. 6:1, 6.)
- Man says make friends with the rich and famous so you can get an edge. Jesus says learn what it means to serve the least of these, for they are the greatest in My kingdom. (See Matt. 25:45.)
- Man says lay up your treasures here and focus on getting as much as you can now. But Jesus says the earthly treasures you lay up now will be destroyed. The only treasures that last are those you give away. (See Matt. 6:19, 20.)

If you think these principles are extreme, they are merely the icing on the cake of Christian living. This next command is where the rubber really meets the road. This is where true Christianity is really put on display for the glory of God:

- Man says, "eye for eye and tooth for tooth" and "love your neighbor but hate your enemies." But Christ says love your enemies. If you are slapped, turn the other cheek. (See Matt. 5:38-44.)

Let's look at this command more closely as recorded in the Book of Luke.

"Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.

For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:28-36).

Imagine how different our world would be if every Christian put these principles into practice! Imagine how soon the Holy Spirit would be poured out and the work would be finished if we modeled the love of Christ this way.

Ellen White writes, “Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:12). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 69).

John 13:35 says, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

This afternoon, we are going to focus our prayers on asking God to give us loving and lovable hearts—not just for those nearest, but for a world in need. When the Holy Spirit is abiding in us, His love and fruit will flow out of our lives.

What exactly does this kind of life look like? It looks like Jesus! Jesus was the fruit of the Spirit *personified!*

In Galatians 5:22, 23 we are told, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

The simple reality is that if the Spirit of God dwells within us, Holy Spirit fruit will come out. Not just one fruit, but all the fruit!

In order for this to happen, the focus of our prayers must change. Rather than praying that God would make us more peaceful or joyful, we should pray that the God of peace and joy would dwell within us, through His Spirit (John 14:27; John 15:11). Rather than praying to be more faithful or self-controlled, we should pray that the God of faithfulness and self-control would live within us (1 Thess. 5:24; Heb. 10:23). Rather than praying to do good and be good, we should pray that the God who alone is good would overtake us (Matt. 19:17). Rather than praying to be more loving, we should pray that Love Himself would fill us (John 15:10).

That’s the essence of what it really means to abide. We need Jesus to live in us through His Holy Spirit—as He intended (Eph. 2:22). And when His Spirit is in us, only good things will come out.

You may have heard people say, “Knocking over a glass doesn’t determine the contents that will be spilled. It merely shows what was already inside the glass.” The same should be true when a Christian is wounded or offended. The way they respond merely shows what’s already in their heart. It is in crisis that true character is revealed, and it is in crisis that we see who is truly filled with godly, selfless love.

Ellen White writes, “The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416).

Let’s pray that God would do this in our lives today. May we display His character of love and reveal what His grace has done for us!

Prayer Focus: Love According to God's Word

(Read the following Bible passages one at a time, stopping after each passage to pray that God's truth would become your reality. Repent and confess where you've failed and ask God to change your heart and give you His heart of love for Himself and others.)

Pray that you would truly fall IN LOVE with Jesus.

"Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Eph. 1:4)

Pray that God would forgive you for a profession of faith without genuine love.

"So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain." (Eze. 33:31)

Pray that God would give you a new heart.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." (Eze. 36:26)

Pray that God would lead you to love Him with all your heart and soul.

"And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." (Deut. 30:6)

Pray that God would help you love even those who hurt you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." (Matt. 5:43-45)

Pray that God would help you love even the "brother" who irritates you.

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 John 4:20)

Pray that God would help everything you do to be done in love.

"Let all that you do be done with love." (1 Cor. 16:14)

Pray that God would pour out the fruit of the Spirit in your daily life.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22, 23)

LOVE: Pray that God would teach you to abide in His love.

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." (John 15:10)

JOY: Pray that His joy would be in you, and that this joy would flow to others.

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." (John 15:11)

PEACE: Pray that His peace would fill you, so you will share this peace with others.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27)

LONGSUFFERING: Pray that His longsuffering spirit would hold you, for His glory.

“Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:1-3)

GOODNESS: Pray that Jesus’ righteousness would cover you, for you cannot be good.

“O my soul, you have said to the Lord, You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You.” (Ps. 16:2)

FAITHFULNESS: Pray that His faithfulness would strengthen you, so you can be faithful.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Heb. 10:23)

GENTLENESS: Pray that His gentleness would soften you and make you gentle.

“You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your gentleness has made me great.” (2 Sam. 22:36)

SELF CONTROL: Pray that His spirit of self-control would abide in you.

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:5-8)

Pray that God would help 1 Corinthians 13 become a reality in your heart and daily life.

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. . . . And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Cor. 13:4-8, 13)

Powerful Prayer Promises

[A Collection of Bible Promises and Thoughts from the Spirit of Prophecy]

“Grasp His promises as leaves from the tree of life: ‘Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.’ John 6:37. As you come to Him, believe that He accepts you, because He has promised. You can never perish while you do this—never” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 66).

“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:3, 4).

“All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. . . . Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 827).

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

“Just as long as the church is satisfied with small things, it is disqualified to receive the great things of God” (*The Home Missionary*, Nov. 1, 1893).

“Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain. The Lord will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone” (Zech. 10:1).

“The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it” (*The Review and Herald*, Mar. 19, 1895).

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13).

“Will we wrestle with God in prayer? Will we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? This is what we need and may have at this time. . . . If we will walk humbly with God, God will walk with us” (*Prayer*, p. 87).

“If two of you AGREE on earth concerning anything that they ask, IT WILL BE DONE for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:19, 20, emphasis supplied).

“The greatest blessing that God can give to man is the spirit of earnest prayer. All heaven is open before the man of prayer. . . . The ambassadors of Christ will have power with the people after they have, with earnest supplication, come before God” (*Prayer*, p. 83).

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask ANYTHING according to His WILL, He hears us” (1 John 5:14, emphasis supplied).

“All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of

Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 149).

“And WHATEVER things you ask in prayer, BELIEVING, you will receive” (Matt. 21:22, emphasis supplied).

“Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 509).

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me . . . to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“If you want power you may have it; it is waiting your draft upon it. Only believe in God, take Him at His Word, act by faith, and blessings will come” (*Prayer*, p. 84).

“In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

“There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God” (*Christian Service*, p. 254).

“For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones’” (Isa. 57:15).

“From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300).

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise” (Ps. 51:17).

“The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 203).

“You do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:2). “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you WILL receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24, emphasis supplied).

“It is a part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 525).

“If you ABIDE in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it SHALL be done for you” (John 15:7, emphasis supplied).

“If we desire to know and to do God’s will, His promises are ours” (*From Heaven With Love*, p. 166).

“With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God ALL THINGS are possible” (Mark 10:27, emphasis supplied).

“Natural impossibilities cannot prevent the work of the Omnipotent One” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 535).

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man AVAILS much” (James 5:16, emphasis supplied).

“An appeal to Heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings” (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 82).

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have BELIEVED” (John 20:29, emphasis supplied).

“There is no danger that the Lord will neglect the prayers of His people. The danger is that in temptation and trial they will become discouraged, and fail to persevere in prayer” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 175).

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself STRONG on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” (2 Chron. 16:9, emphasis supplied).

“The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 148).

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly ABOVE all that we ask or think, according to the POWER [*His power*] that works in us” (Eph. 3:20, emphasis supplied).

“The Lord will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him” (*My Life Today*, p. 55).

“Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is NOTHING too hard for You” (Jer. 32:17, emphasis supplied).

“It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 146).

“Ask, and it WILL be given to you; seek, and you WILL find; knock, and it WILL be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7, emphasis supplied).

“In sincerity, in soul hunger, cry after God. Wrestle with the heavenly agencies until you have the victory. Put your whole being into the Lord’s hands, soul, body, and spirit, and resolve to be His loving, consecrated agency, moved by His will, controlled by His mind, infused by His Spirit” (*Prayer*, p. 75).

“And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:32).

“Man can accomplish nothing without God, and God has arranged His plans so as to accomplish nothing in the restoration of the human race without the cooperation of the human with the divine. The part man is required to sustain is immeasurably small, yet in the plan of God it is just that part that is needed to make the work a success” (*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 319).

“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

“We must look to Christ; we must resist as He resisted; we must pray as He prayed; we must agonize as He agonized, if we would conquer as He conquered” (*That I May Know Him*, p. 34).

“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (Num. 23:19).

“Just believe and praise God and go forward. We are almost home. . . . Bear your whole weight on the promises of God. Believe it is your privilege to believe” (Letter 31, Jan. 1, 1887).

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).