

SHILOH MB CHURCH



January Fast 2018

Fruit That Remains!

John 15:16

"Fruit that Remain"

Welcome to January Fast 2018! You are in for a Spiritual Treat!

Fruit that Remain: Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. John 15:16

Many things vie for our attention each day. We are continuously inundated with personal matters, professional aspirations, family crises, financial limitations and health. Feeling overwhelmed often causes us to choose things that help us detach from the pressures of reality so as to offer our souls a small break. There is nothing wrong with a much-needed reprieve. However, it may become problematic if the reprieve preoccupies our minds in a way that drowns out the small still voice of the Holy Spirit – who also, by the way, desires our undivided attention.

Fasting is a time-tested discipline for quieting the heart and feeding the soul. It is a spiritual discipline used by God to "settle" our hearts by calling us away from the popular "respite centers" of overeating, web-surfing, texting, channel-surfing, shopping, busyness, drinking excessively, and socializing. This call to fast is a call to disconnect from mind-numbing activities in order to quiet our hearts and hear from God almighty. Imagine God Almighty longing to say something to you that will change the course of your destiny! Remember, God is not willing to compete with others for our attention. This is why Jesus constantly stated, "If you have ears to hear....listen!"

The focus of this year's fast is "Fruit that Remain" which originates or comes from something, an effect, result, work, act, deed, advantage, profit, utility; praises, which are presented to God as a thank you offering; to gather fruit into life eternal. Christ wants His family to exude joy before our chaotic world through our faith, unity, character and confidence in God's word. **John 15:16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained (**appointed**) you, **that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:** that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. KJV. **How do we produce Fruit that will remain**1) Abide in Christ.2) Focus on building His Kingdom, and not your own.

My Hopes for this fast:

- That we will fight fervently for quiet time alone with God to really hear.
- That God will overwhelm you with joy and peace!
- That we will become more effective witnesses of Christ through our joy.

When You Fast

Prayer and Fasting - A Definition

Prayer and fasting is defined as voluntarily going without the comfort of food in order to focus on prayer and fellowship with God. Prayer and fasting often go hand in hand, but this is not always the case. You can pray without fasting, and fast without prayer. But when these two activities are combined and dedicated to God's glory, they reach greater effectiveness. Having a dedicated time of prayer and fasting is not a way of manipulating God. Rather, it is a time to align ourselves with God's desires for us. It's a time to rely on God to become who God has called and equipped us to be.

There is no specific command for believers to spend time in prayer and fasting. At the same time, prayer and fasting is definitely something we should be doing. Far too often, though, the focus of prayer and fasting is on abstaining from food. Instead, the purpose of Christian fasting should be to take our eyes off the comforts of everyday life and focus our thoughts on God.

Fast Guidelines

This time of fasting and consecration to the Lord should be a time of sacrifice. When you have a meal, please eat healthier foods. Drink plenty of water. **Things to avoid during the designated times include:** soda, fried foods, desserts, limited use of caffeine, alcohol, tobacco, and junk food. **Fasting begins at midnight Sunday night, and ends at 6:00pm on Friday of each week.** Modify your diet on the weekend (example of a modified diet is to commit eating one raw meal a day). You can also choose fruit in place of sweets on the weekend. Some individuals may have health concerns that supersede the fasting guidelines. Please enter into fasting prayerfully and medically informed. Ask your doctor if you have questions regarding fasting. We love you and want you to be healthy. You can fast in many other ways besides abstaining from food (i.e. no media, exercise daily, spend extra time in prayer, no shopping...).

Challenges for Each Week

- Make time for prayer.
- Get some exercise.
- Try to enjoy nature.
- Find time to pray with someone.
- Pray for your family, friends, community, church, and co-workers.

Fasting Intentions

As you begin this fast, it is important that you set your intentions. Without set intentions or goals, this time of fasting will only be a test of your human will as opposed to a time set aside for God to deal with your heart. Before writing down any goals, take some time before the Lord in prayer. Ask Him for revelation during this time of consecration. Perhaps God has already been speaking to your heart over the past few weeks. If so, ask Him for clarity and a willing heart to obey.

What is your personal reason for joining in the January Fast?

Set your intentions for this fast:

Example: I want God to reveal to me the things that keep me from becoming unified with others.

1.)

2.)

3.)

What are some things that you will do during this time of fasting that will help you to draw closer to God?

Example: I will begin morning devotion before I begin my day so that I can hear from God.

1.)

2.)

3.)

_____ **Week One: January 2nd – January 5th** _____

Fasting Guidelines: This week is the ***Beverage & Media Fast***. You may eat any meal. Drink only water this week. Avoid using any form of media (TV, movies, phones, videos, etc.) that is not work, ministry or school related.

Tuesday

Read Galatians 5: 16 - 21 and reflect on the conflict that you live with daily.

In what ways does your sin nature cause you to look for sources other than God for direction, strength or power?

What are the desires of your sin nature that cause you to fail to remember that your body belongs to God?

In what ways does your sin nature cause you to seek your wants and desires regardless of the cost to others?

Re-read Galatians 5: 16 - 21 and meditate on the power that you have daily to live and be led by God's Spirit.

Wednesday

Read Ephesians 2: 3 - 5

Spend time today meditating on the great love that God has always had for you.

Thursday

Re-read Ephesians 2: 3 - 5

Take the time to look for and record the ways in which you are living in God's favor and grace.

Friday

Read Colossians 3:7 - 10 and declare it for your life!

I am a reflection of God, the Creator. I have been made new. I will walk in it and draw closer to God each day.

_____ **Week Two: January 8th – January 12^h** _____

Fasting Guidelines: This week is the ***Meatless Fast***. You may eat any meal. Avoid all meats (this includes fish) and meat substitutes.

Monday

Read Matthew 26:41

Pray for the ability to recognize your areas of weakness and for the courage to take the way out of every temptation that God has provided for you.

Tuesday

Meditate on Matthew 26:41 and set time aside for introspection.

Reflect back on the last two, five, ten or more years of your life. Have you asked God to deliver you from an area of struggle (e.g. overeating, excessive spending, anger, fear, fornication, pornography, etc.), but you find yourself returning to that place again and again?

As you reflect, can you identify any triggers? In each instance, are there similar circumstances, emotions or people that push you towards that place of struggle?

Take your discoveries to the Lord in prayer. Ask him for the resolve and the strength to go deeper as you continue to reflect this week.

Wednesday

Continue your reflection. On a separate piece of paper, list the significant events that shaped your life. Pay close attention to any events that caused insecurity, trauma, or fear (e.g. unstable home life, loss through death or divorce, abuse, a controlling environment, etc.)

In your prayer time, go through your list. Ask God to reveal to you the ways that he has been with you, especially in the difficult times. Allow him to minister to you by the power of his Spirit today.

Thursday

Meditate on Psalm 19:13

Go back to your list. Ask God to reveal to you anything from that list that **connects** to what you discovered earlier this week about the triggers that push you towards that place of struggle.

Pray for healing in the broken places of your inner being. Declare in the name of Jesus that the residue of those hard things in your life will no longer be used as a means to pull you away from God.

Friday

Meditate on 2 Peter 1: 3 - 8 and rejoice because God has given you everything you need for life and godliness. Stand on his promises and grow in the Lord!

_____ **Week Three: January 15th – January 19th** _____

Fasting Guidelines: *This week is the **Cooked & Processed Food Fast**. You may eat any meal. Avoid eating any food that is not in its natural state. This means avoiding any food that needs cooking to become edible or food that has been processed in any way.*

Monday

Meditate on 1 John 4: 7 - 21

You spent last week in intense introspection. As you begin this week, meditate on this passage and be reminded that God lives in you and in you his love is made complete.

Tuesday

Meditate on 1 John 4: 7 - 21

As you continue to meditate on this passage, reflect on verses 19 – 21.

Examine your relationships with your sisters and brothers in Christ.

Identify anything that is preventing you from loving a particular sister or brother with the love of God. (e.g. disappointment, unresolved conflict, hurt, unforgiveness, etc.)

Pray for this person using God's word as your guide. Allow the Spirit of God to be a work in your heart.

Wednesday

Read Romans 12: 9 - 13

In what ways are devotion to, honor for and sharing with your sisters and brothers in Christ evident in your life?

In what ways do you offer hospitality to your sisters and brothers in Christ?

If you are feeling disconnected from your church community – regardless of the reason, let this be the focus of your prayer today.

Thursday

Meditate on Romans 12: 11 - 12 and let this passage guide your prayer today.

Friday

Meditate on Psalm 51: 2 - 12 and let this passage guide your prayer today.

_____ **Week Four: January 22nd – January 26th** _____

Fasting Guidelines: This week is the *LAWD-HA-MERCY Fast!* We will forego eating breakfast, lunch and dinner from **Midnight Sunday to Noon on Friday**. You may have liquids (anything that fits through a straw) at any time during this fast.

Monday

Meditate on Colossians 1: 10 and let this passage guide your prayer today.

Tuesday

Meditate on Galatians 5: 22 - 23

Reflect again on your life.

On a separate piece of paper, write down the nine (9) attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit. Give specific examples of how each of these attributes has been developed and are evident in your life.

Wednesday

Meditate on Galatians 5: 22 - 25

Take the list that you created yesterday into your prayer time. Thank God for each item on your list. It is a testament of God's work in your life.

Thursday

Meditate Philippians 3: 12 – 13

Thank God for the things that he has revealed to you during this fast. Record these revelations in a place that you can refer to again and again.

Friday

Meditate on Philippians 3: 14

As you bring an end to this time of consecration and fasting, keep pressing on towards the goal and the high call that you have in Christ Jesus.

_____ **Week Five: January 29th – January 31st** _____

Fasting Guidelines: This week is the ***Beverage & Media Fast***. You may eat any meal. Drink only water this week. Avoid using any form of media (TV, movies, phones, videos, etc.) that is not work, ministry or school related.

Monday

Read Galatians 5: 16 - 21 and reflect on the conflict that you live with daily.

In what ways does your sin nature cause you to look for sources other than God for direction, strength or power?

What are the desires of your sin nature that cause you to fail to remember that your body belongs to God?

In what ways does your sin nature cause you to seek your wants and desires regardless of the cost to others?

Tuesday

Re-read Galatians 5: 16 - 21 and meditate on the power that you have daily to live and be led by God's Spirit.

Wednesday

Read Ephesians 2: 3 - 5

Spend time today meditating on the great love that God has always had for you.

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