

AWESOME GOD

— MIDYEAR PRAYER, FASTING & CONSECRATION

JULY 6–8, 2021



AWESOME GOD



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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FASTING

WHY FAST?

Fasting is a spiritual tool God uses to advance His kingdom, change the destiny of nations, spark revival, and bring victory in people's lives. At the start and middle of each year, we take time to pray and fast in order to humble ourselves before God, consecrate ourselves to Him, and corporately agree for breakthroughs.

Jesus fasted.

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **MATTHEW 4:1-2**

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. **LUKE 4:14**

Jesus knew He was going to need spiritual strength to fulfill His purposes. Fasting makes us spiritually strong and prepares us to do God's work.

Fasting is an act of humility and consecration.

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. **EZRA 8:21**

As we humble ourselves through prayer and fasting, we receive God's grace and have access to His heart.

Fasting helps us become sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." **ACTS 13:2**

When we deny ourselves of natural cravings and worldly distractions, we become more sensitive to God's voice. Then we are better able to focus on God and submit to His will.

Fasting brings revival.

“...if my people who are called by my name 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 CHRONICLES 7:14

Throughout history, God has brought revival and delivered nations from destruction in response to prayer and fasting. Fasting helps us prevail in prayer and intercession.

Fasting is healthy.

Fasting cleanses your digestive system from toxins. Doctors consider fasting a cure for certain allergies and diseases. The discipline of fasting helps break unhealthy addictions in our lives.

PLANNING YOUR FAST

Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” JOSHUA 3:5

Pray—Spend time reading the Bible before the fast. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in your prayers. In the succeeding pages, write down your faith goals and specific prayer requests for your family, friends, church, and nation.

Commit—Pray about the kind of fast you will undertake and commit to it ahead of time. Record your plan and ask God for grace to help you follow through with your decisions.

Act—Start eating smaller portions a few days before the fast. Avoid food high in sugar and fat. Plan to limit physical and social activities for the week of the fast. Ask someone to be your prayer partner throughout the fast and share your faith goals and answered prayers with him or her. Continually pray for each other even after the fast.

NOTE: Consult a physician, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, or taking medication. If your situation does not allow you to do a full fast, determine what will work best for you.

WHILE FASTING

[Jesus] answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” **MATTHEW 4:4**

Focus—Set aside time to work through the devotional. Be ready to respond to God’s word and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Pray—Join at least one prayer meeting in your local church. Intercede for your family, church, pastors, nation, campuses, and missions throughout the week.

Replenish—During mealtime, read the Bible and pray. Drink plenty of water and rest as much as you can. Be ready for temporary bouts of physical weakness and mental annoyances like impatience and irritability.

BREAKING THE FAST

¹⁴*And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.* ¹⁵*And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.* **1 JOHN 5:14–15**

Eat—Reintroduce solid food gradually. Your body will need time to adjust to a normal diet. Start with fruits, juices, and salad, then add more vegetables. Eat small portions throughout the day.

Pray—Don’t stop praying! Trust God’s faithfulness and timing. Carry your newfound passion for God throughout the year. Be in faith for God to answer your prayers.

MY PLAN

Day 1

FASTING OPTIONS:

- Water only
- Liquid only
- One meal only
- Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

Day 2

FASTING OPTIONS:

- Water only
- Liquid only
- One meal only
- Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

Day 3

FASTING OPTIONS:

- Water only
- Liquid only
- One meal only
- Other _____

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

I AM THANKFUL TO GOD FOR...

ANSWERED PRAYERS

List highlights, answered prayers, and lessons learned so far in 2021.

FOR THE REST OF 2021, I AM SEEKING GOD AND TRUSTING HIM IN THESE AREAS...

PERSONAL FAITH GOALS

Spiritual Revival • Physical Healing • Prosperity and Abundance •
Rich Generosity

MY FAMILY

Restoration of Relationships • Household Salvation

MY EDUCATION/CAREER

Excellence • Promotion

MY MINISTRY

Small Group Growth • Salvation of Classmates and Colleagues

| “If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” MATTHEW 18:19

My Prayer Partner: _____

I AM COMMITTING TO PRAY FOR...

NAME

REQUEST(S)

I AM COMMITTING TO PRAY FOR ...

MY CHURCH

Church Leadership • Provision • Discipleship Ministry

MY COMMUNITY

Campuses and Educational Institutions • Local Government • Outreach Opportunities

MY NATION

Government Officials • Spiritual Revival • Economic Prosperity • Peace and Order

GOD IS WITH US

JOHN 1:1–3, 14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.... ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Additional Reading: Matthew 1:23; Philippians 2:5–8

We started 2021 reflecting on our awesome God, and we will continue to do so in our midyear prayer and fasting.

When we think of God being great and awesome, His infinite power, knowledge, and presence, as well as His glory and majesty, come to mind. We think of God being infinitely bigger than the universe He created, which He simply spoke into existence. He is transcendent, far above anything in all of creation, whose greatness we cannot fully fathom.

However, God's awesome greatness is not only demonstrated by how big He is. It is also demonstrated in His ability to humble Himself, come down to our level, and become small like us—even stooping lower to save and serve us.

God demonstrated this in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God, who is Himself by nature God, and by whom God created all things, both visible and invisible. Yet He took human form and became man, with all its limitations. Can we even begin to imagine this? The infinite and limitless God, in His awesome greatness of power and goodness, took on limitations. The immortal one became mortal. The timeless one stepped into time and grew from infancy to adulthood. The self-sustaining one experienced hunger and thirst. The Creator of the universe took on the form of a creature.

God is not just somewhere out there, far above and beyond our minuscule lives. He is a God who has come down to our level and is experientially and intimately acquainted with our human situation—our weaknesses, frustrations, and suffering; our dreams, hopes, and aspirations; the big things and the mundane things in our lives. He is a God who is *with us* (Matthew 1:23). This is the God we serve.

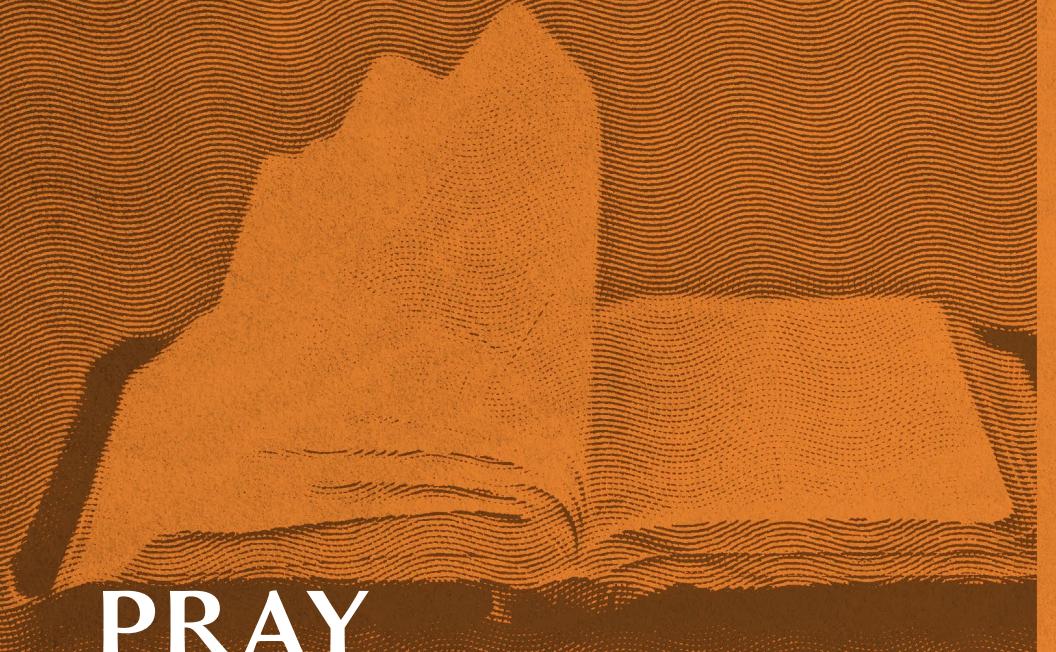
As we continue plodding through this unprecedented season in the world, let us remember that we are never alone. For the rest of this week, we will know that God is our comforter, guide, and restorer. His love, kindness, and faithfulness know no bounds. Together, may we know and experience how great and awesome our God is—He who chose to make Himself small in order to be with us.

BECAUSE GOD IS WITH US, WE ARE NEVER ALONE.

Reflect

Look back at the past six months. How have you grown in your understanding of God? Amidst all that's happened, how has He been near to you?

Read and meditate on Matthew 1:23. Reflect on areas of your life where there seem to be much pain and uncertainty. Imagine God with you and telling you, "I am here with you, My child. You are not alone." How can His presence and nearness enable you to face these challenges?



PRAY

Dear God, thank You for not just being great and awesome in ruling and reigning over the earth. Thank You for also being near me, for sending Your Son to become a man and live among Your creation. May I grow in my understanding and appreciation of Christ's incarnation. I pray that Your Holy Spirit will guide me, speak to me, and lead me deeper into Your word. Every day and every moment, I believe You are with me. I am not alone. I am never alone. Because of this, I can face every battle ahead, I can boldly proclaim the gospel, and I can advance Your kingdom in this world. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.



GOD IS OUR COMFORT

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3–5

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

Additional Reading: Psalm 46; Psalm 119:50, 76; John 14:16–17; Hebrews 4:14–16; Revelation 21:3–4

In November 1873, a man named Horatio Spafford planned a much-needed trip to Europe with his family. The past two years had been calamitous for them. Because of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, their finances had taken a steep downturn and most of their property and investments had burned to the ground.

At the last minute, Spafford was forced to stay behind because of sudden business demands, and his family went ahead on the steamship. But what was meant to be a family getaway turned into a horrific tragedy. As the ship was crossing the Atlantic, it collided with another vessel. All four of Spafford's daughters perished; only his wife survived.

Spafford found out about his daughters' demise in a telegram, and immediately sailed to England to meet his grieving wife.

Truth be told, tragedies like this are no longer alien to many of us. The coronavirus pandemic has endangered everyone and put to death millions around the world. The trials we've faced have wounded our souls.

Through gaping cracks, however, the light of God's comfort shines through. This was Paul's message in 2 Corinthians: God is our comfort. Paul didn't just write this; having faced trials of many kinds throughout his life and ministry, he had experienced God's comfort firsthand.

The transcendent God who governs all things from His heavenly throne is also an immanent God who is close to the brokenhearted:

- Our heavenly Father is the *God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction.*
- Jesus is our great High Priest, and is able to empathize with us and invite us to approach Him with confidence, so that we can receive mercy and grace in our time of need. Because of His sacrifice on the cross, we are comforted by the truth that we are accepted in the throne room of heaven.
- The Holy Spirit is our comforter and counselor who empowers us and intercedes for us when no words can express our grief. A "comforter" (in Greek, *parakletos*) literally means one who is called near for help by comforting, encouraging, or mediating on behalf of someone else.

In the face of grief, the entire Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is by our side when we call to Him for help. This is our comfort and confidence. Trials and suffering allow us to experience God's comfort in tangible ways, in the same way that the darkest of nights allows us to behold the beauty of the stars.

As Horatio Spafford traveled to meet his wife and his ship passed over the place where his daughters had died, he soothed his broken spirit by writing a timeless hymn that continues to soothe believers today:

*When peace like a river attendeth my way
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well with my soul*

In this world broken by sin, pain and death are inevitable. But God has promised to redeem and restore all things. Someday, He will wipe away every tear, death and sorrow will be no more, and we will experience permanent joy in the presence of the God of all comfort forever (Revelation 21:3–4). Our comfort and hope are deeply anchored on the certainty of His promise.

Like Spafford, as unthinkable as it may sound, may we respond to life's tragedy, grief, and pain with trust in our God who comforts us. May God's presence also cause us to say, "It is well with my soul," and may we comfort others with the comfort we have received from Him.

THE ENTIRE GODHEAD IS BY OUR SIDE WHEN WE CALL TO HIM FOR HELP.

Reflect

In the past six months, what has caused the most grief or hardship in your life? How has God been *a very present help* to you in trouble (Psalm 46:1)? What are you learning about Him through these challenges?

God's comfort is not just for our benefit. It is also for others who are suffering. Who can you comfort with the comfort you have received from God? What are you willing to do so they can know God as their comforter?



PRAY

Dear God, I cast all my cares upon You, for You are the God of all comfort. Thank You for being my only source of true comfort, my refuge, and my strength. By Your mighty word, You calm the storms that rage in my heart. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for me. Through You, I can come boldly before the throne of grace and find mercy and grace in my time of need. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for You are my helper, counselor, and comforter. Use me as Your vessel to comfort those in need with the same comfort that I have received. In Jesus' name, amen.

GOD IS OUR GUIDE

EXODUS 15:13

“You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.”

Additional Reading: Nehemiah 9:19–21; Psalm 25:4–5; Proverbs 3:5–6

Traveling is one of the many things the pandemic has limited for us. Everyone likely misses going on a trip, whether local or international, visiting old favorites and discovering new places. But if you were to travel to an unfamiliar place, what is one thing you would need? Practically, you will need assistance in navigation, whether it's an app, a physical map, or a person who knows the way. Before you journey into the unknown, you will need a guide.

Since the beginning, God has shown Himself to be a faithful leader. All throughout Scripture, God has guided His people. In Exodus 15, Moses and the Israelites were praising God after their miraculous journey out of Egypt. They were celebrating God's faithful and powerful work in leading them out of slavery and opening up the Red Sea so they could safely cross over. God had guided them even in the midst of the unfamiliar and the uncertain.

The years 2020 and 2021 have brought a lot of unfamiliarity. So much remains uncertain, and this has caused confusion, doubt, and fear. We still wonder how things will work out. We need help. We

need a guide. We need someone who knows the way and can lead us in this difficult time. Like sheep that need a shepherd, unless God guides and leads us, we will not be able to find our way. Left to ourselves, when doubts and fear consume our hearts, we will lean on our own understanding and end up striving to make our paths straight. God, in His wisdom and guidance, is the only one we can rely on to direct our paths.

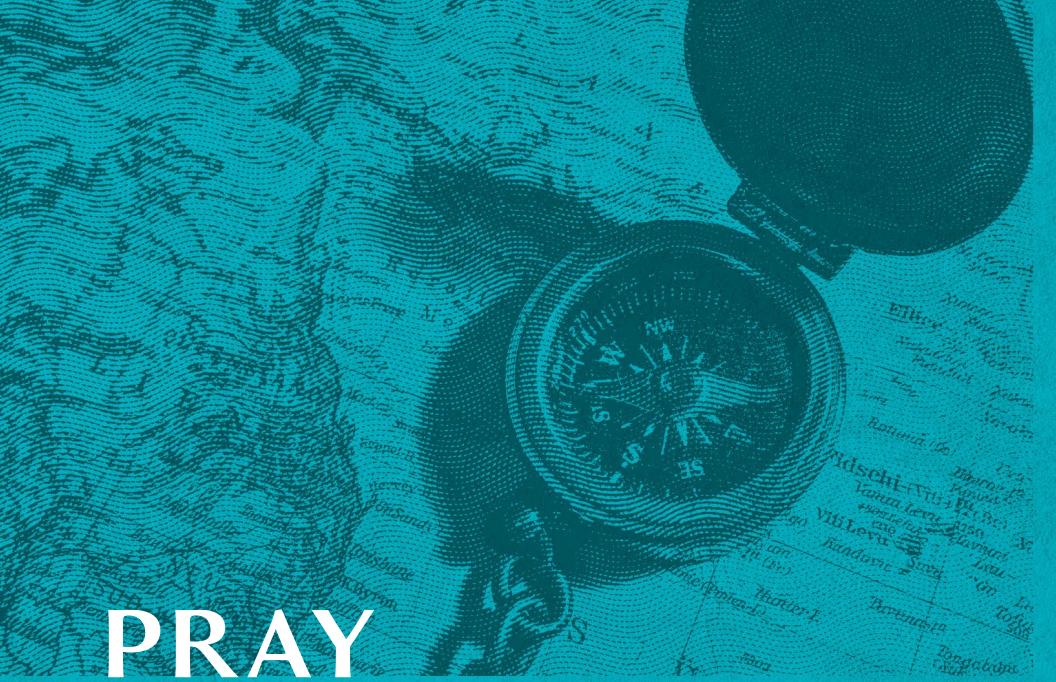
But God is not just a guide who points us to a better path. He isn't just a person we ask for directions when we've lost our way. He doesn't just hand over a map and walk away. God is a guide who makes the plan, directs our destination, and journeys with us. He walks with us every step of the way and wants us to follow His lead day by day. As we journey towards the rest of the year, our confidence and peace come from knowing that we are not alone. We don't need to walk in fear and doubt because God continually guides us through His word and Spirit. In His *steadfast love*, He leads us, and by His *strength*, He guides us.

BECAUSE GOD DIRECTS OUR PATHS AND GUIDES US, HE INVITES US TO TRUST HIM AND YIELD TO HIS PLAN.

Reflect

Are there areas in your life where you rely on your own plans and guidance, not God's? In what particular decision or situation do you need His guidance today, and what do you believe He is telling you about it?

How has God guided you through 2020 and the first half of 2021? Like Moses in Exodus 15, what song or Scripture have you held on to in this season that speaks of God's guidance in your life?



PRAY

Dear Lord, You guide me with steadfast love and lead me by Your strength. Make Your ways known to me, lead me in Your truth, and teach me to be humble and follow Your ways. In times of confusion and doubt, help me look to Your word and Spirit to guide my life. I am Your sheep, and You are my great Shepherd who loves me and walks with me in this journey. I choose to remember Your faithfulness to me, and I will continue to trust You with all my heart for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name, amen.



GOD IS OUR RESTORER

JEREMIAH 29:10–14

¹⁰“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.”

Additional Reading: Jeremiah 33:10–13; Psalm 30; 1 Peter 5:8–10

The prophet Jeremiah wrote to the Jews in Babylon, who had been deported from their land. He told them to prepare for a seventy-year exile, which was a result of God’s people disobeying His commands. God had been faithful to His people, but they remained stubborn and had to face the consequences of their sin. In spite of their rebellion, God promised comfort and assured them of His covenant faithfulness. The exile was meant for discipline, not destruction.

Through Jeremiah, God instructed His people to build houses and raise families in exile and to wait patiently for their return

(Jeremiah 29:4–9). God promised preservation. He reminded them that He had wonderful plans to prosper them and not to harm them, to give them hope and a future. God's people responded with repentance, turned back to Him, and opened their hearts to seek Him. God's purpose for His people had always been to display His righteousness to the nations, so that they too would want to follow Him (Deuteronomy 4:5–8). Therefore, as God's people turned back to Him, He not only promised to bring them back to their land, but also to restore their fortunes as in the past.

Eventually, the Babylonian empire was defeated and a remnant did return to the land. God did fulfill His promise. However, more than that, God's greater plan was fulfilled in a new covenant through Jesus Christ. Instead of laws being written on tablets, they are now written on our hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:31–35). Instead of sacrifice after sacrifice, salvation came through Christ's finished work on the cross and His resurrection. Instead of salvation only for the Jews, it is available for every person who calls upon the name of the Lord (Hebrews 8:6–13).

God is not just faithful to restore the fortunes of His people. His awesome ways include a greater hope in Christ in this life and for eternity.

BEYOND RESTORING WHAT WE HAVE LOST, GOD GIVES SALVATION, REDEMPTION, AND PEACE TO ALL WHO ARE FAR AND NEAR.

Reflect

Recall the losses and pain you have endured in the pandemic. Could God be using this for discipline and for your spiritual refinement? What is your response to the message of God's promise through Jeremiah?

Do you believe God is our restorer? How could God be preparing you to receive a greater blessing from Him and to do greater work for Him? How can you seek Him with all your heart and hope in Him every day?



PRAY

Lord, I believe You have a greater purpose in everything. I trust that You know the plans You have for me. I believe they are for my welfare, that You want to give me a future and a hope. I declare my dependence on You. I look to You to restore what I have lost, but more than that, I look to You for my salvation and peace. I pray that You would restore, confirm, and establish me. By Your grace, I will seek You every day and see Your glorious plans unfold for my life, my family, my nation, and the world. In Jesus' name, amen.

GOD IS LOVE

PSALM 136:1–4

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. ²Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. ³Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; ⁴to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever ...

1 JOHN 4:16

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Additional Reading: Psalm 103:8–13; Psalm 136; Lamentations 3:20–23

In our time of prayer and fasting, we have reflected on our awesome God: He is with us, and He is our comforter, guide, and restorer. These describe who He is, not just what He does for us. They go back to His very being and nature: God is love.

In the Old Testament, when God talks about who He is, He describes Himself as *abounding in steadfast love* (Psalm 103:8). The original word translated as “steadfast love” in the English Standard Version is the Hebrew word *khesed*. It is a word so full of meaning that many languages, including English and Filipino, do not have an equivalent word for it. *Khesed* has been translated as love, steadfast

love, loyal love, faithful love, loving-kindness, and mercy. These all capture aspects of *khesed*, but not its entirety.

God's *khesed* has been translated as "love" because it speaks of His motivation, which is other-centeredness. God is not selfish; He puts others' interests above His own. *Khesed* has been translated as "loving-kindness" and "mercy" because His love is not merely sentimental. In His loving-kindness and mercy, He acts for the benefit of those He loves. It has also been rendered as "steadfast love" because it is constant and never fails. It is not dependent on whether or not we are worthy or faithful. He always remains faithful.

In addition, it has been translated as "loyal love," "faithful love," and "covenantal love" because it shows that the basis of God's love is His loyalty to the covenant He made with His people. He remains committed and loyal to His people.

Out of God's steadfast and covenantal love, He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be with us and to save us (John 3:16). Because of His loving commitment that never fails, He brings us comfort and hope (Psalm 119:76; Lamentations 3:20–23), He is committed to lead and guide us (Exodus 15:13), and we can trust Him for restoration (Jeremiah 33:11–13). Whatever good thing we have lost, He can restore and give us something better, whether in this age or in the next.

God's love assures us that He will continue to be the awesome God that He is.

THEREFORE, WE CAN END OUR MIDYEAR PRAYER AND FASTING AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE REST OF THE YEAR GIVING THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD AND HIS STEADFAST LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.

Reflect

Read Lamentations 3:20–23. How have you experienced God’s love? How does your understanding of His mercies, love, and faithfulness give you strength and assurance to face the future?

Think of one family member or friend who needs a reminder of God’s love. How can you reflect Christ to this person? What can you do for him or her today?

PRAY

Dear Lord, thank You for Your love, which is steadfast, loyal, and active. Thank You that You never give up on me. Help me understand that Your love endures forever and Your mercies never come to an end. I pray that I would be rooted and grounded in Your love. May I face the future with the certainty of Your love and faithfulness to me. May I reflect Your love to everyone around me, honoring You and pointing them to Christ. I pray for people in my home, community, and nation to know Your love and turn to You. In Jesus' name, amen.



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