

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FASTING



RADICAL CHANGE MINISTRIES

Published by Radical Change Ministries

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01



WHAT IS FASTING?

The definition of fasting is simple - you give up or abstain from food for a dedicated amount of time.

The how and when are important, but I'd like to encourage you not to get stuck in the mechanics of fasting. At the end of the day, it's not about how long you fast or the method you choose. The reason for your fast is what you should focus on. Focus on the why.

Fasting, at its core, is actually an exercise of prioritisation. When we prioritise something we designate that thing as the most important. When we fast, we physically prioritise God.

We show Him that He is more important to us than our own needs and wants. To give something up means to sacrifice it – you are saying to God: food is something my body needs and I really enjoy, but I'm giving it up because I want to prioritise You. You are more important.

Think about your own daily life. If you prioritise your health, you sacrifice your time by going for a run or working out at the gym. The rewards, however, are greater than the sacrifice – you feel better, you look better, you become stronger, your confidence grows, your body is healthier so it fights off sickness more effectively thus you spend less time and money on doctors and medication, etc.

God understands that sacrifices are difficult. After all, He made the ultimate sacrifice by sending Jesus to earth to be crucified for us. God gets it, so He rewards us for the sacrifices we make for Him.

Every person is unique, every fast is unique, so the rewards too, will be unique.

That's why many people write down a prayer list to focus on during a fast.

Some people may be praying for answers or direction in a specific area of their lives. Others may be praying for healing in their body or restoration of a family. Don't be surprised when the Lord rewards you with something you weren't even expecting. Prayer and fasting done together unlock supernatural rewards.

WHY ARE YOU FASTING?



Go ahead and journal your reason for fasting.....

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C H A P T E R

02

EXAMPLES FROM THE BIBLE

Fasting is not one of God's ten commandments, so there is no law documented in the Bible saying it is a sin not to fast. Jesus never commanded His followers to fast as a rule. However, Jesus himself fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. As Christians, we look at the life of Jesus as an example of how we should live our lives. So if Jesus fasted, wouldn't you say we should too?



During the sermon on the hill, documented in the book of Matthew, Jesus taught His disciples about what He defines as a righteous life. Here, He gave them the framework for what a life should look like for a follower of Jesus. Within this teaching, He talks about fasting.

16 *“When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*

Let's zoom in on Matthew 6:16. Jesus starts by saying: "**When** you fast, do not look sombre...". Note the **when**. He didn't say **if** you fast. He continues to teach His disciples what not to do when they fast. The fact that He uses the word when and then continues to teach His disciples how they should be or act during a fast, means it is safe to assume that Jesus expects His followers to fast, just as He expects them to pray. In a parallel verse in the same chapter, when teaching about prayer He said: "**When** you pray...". Not **if** you pray. He teaches about prayer in the same way He teaches about fasting. I think you'll agree that if Jesus taught His disciples about fasting while giving them a framework for a good life there is no reason for us not to fast today.

Learn more about prayer in our e-book: [The Beginner's Guide to Prayer](#)



TAKE SOME TIME TO READ MORE ABOUT PEOPLE FASTING IN THE BIBLE

- Moses fasted before receiving the ten commandments – Deuteronomy 9:9-18

9 When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water. 10 The Lord gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the Lord proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

- David fasted, mourning his child's illness – 2 Samuel 12:1-23

22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.'

- Elijah fasted while escaping Jezebel – 1 Kings 19:4-8

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers." 5 He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, "Arise, eat." 6 Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. 7 The angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you." 8 So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

- Ezra fasted while mourning over sin – Ezra 10:6-17

6 Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While he was there, he ate no food and drank no water, because he continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

- Esther fasted for the safety of the Jews – Esther 4:15-17

15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

- Darius fasted for the safety of Daniel – Daniel 6:18-23

18 Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

- Daniel fasted for an answer to prayer – Daniel 10:1-3

At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. 3 I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

- Jesus fasted before temptation by satan in the wilderness – Matthew 4:1-2

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

- Paul fasted after his conversion – Acts 9:1-9

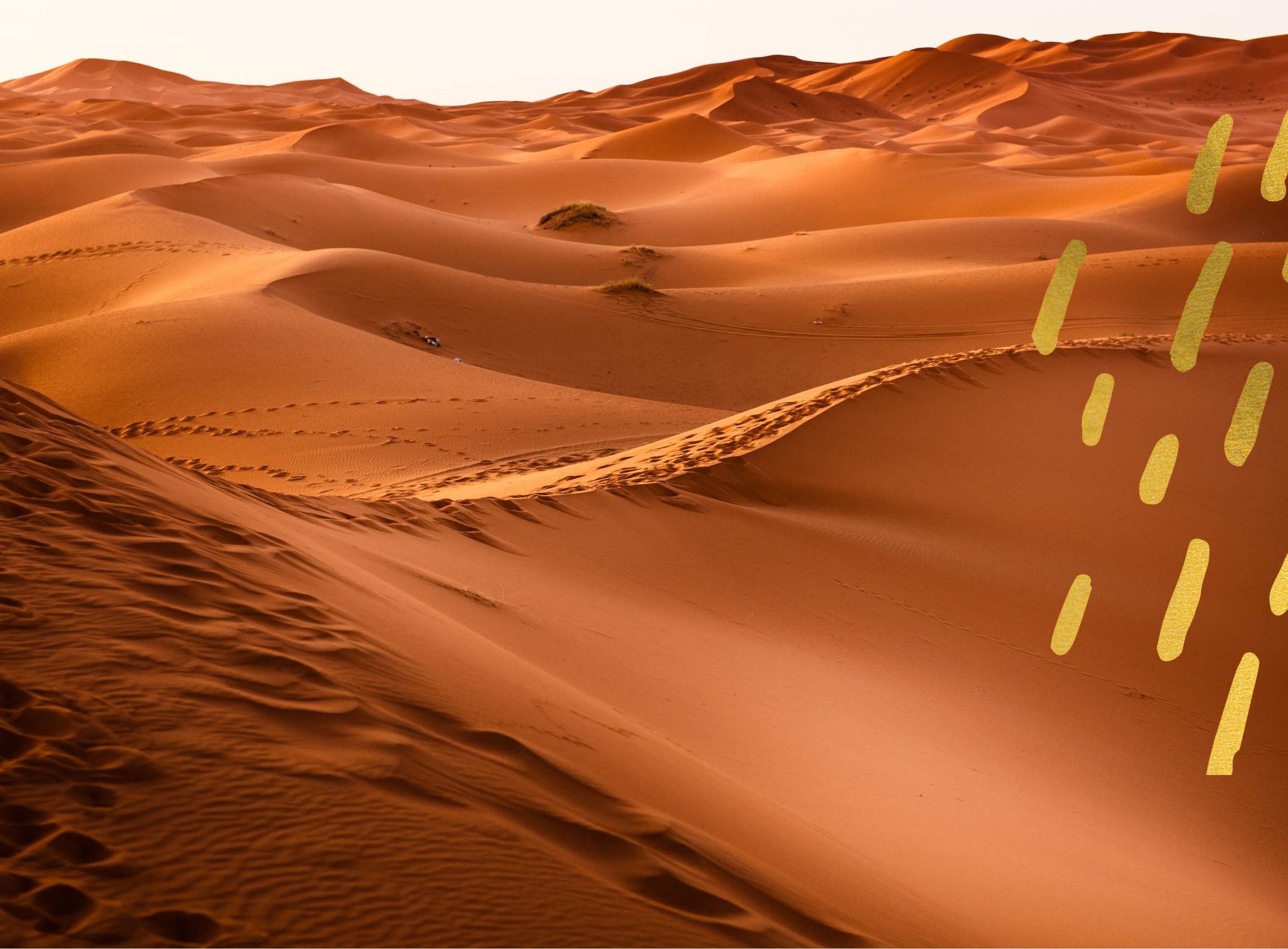
7 The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8 Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9 For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

- Church elders in Antioch fasted before sending out missionaries – Acts 13:1-3

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 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.” 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

C H A P T E R

03



WHEN TO FAST

If you've read some of the accounts of fasting in the Bible, you'll notice that prayer and fasting together were the key ingredients used when people needed a breakthrough in their own lives or in the lives of those they were fasting for. Jesus himself fasted right after He was baptised by John, before He started His ministry. Both are critical events in the life of Jesus and here we see Him fast right in the middle of the two.


Throughout the Bible we see people fasting at different times for a variety of reasons – protection, answers, direction, wisdom, healing, deliverance and in matters of life and death. Just like there is no law documented in the Bible stating Christians must fast, the Bible doesn't specify dates or reasons for fasting either.

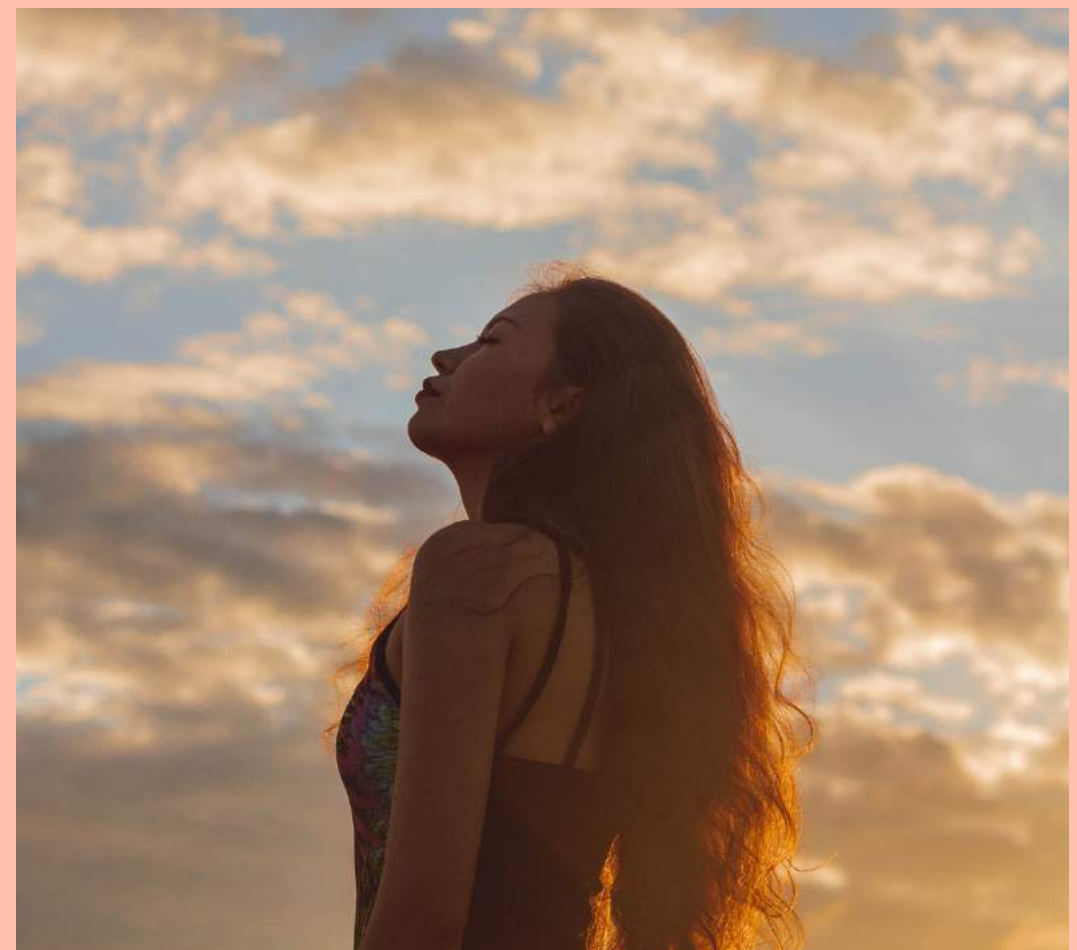
You can decide when you would like to fast and you can also choose whether you would like to fast as an individual or as part of a group.

SOLO FASTING

Fasting and prayer are similar because you can pray and fast as an individual or as a group.

There are examples of both individual and corporate (group) fasting in the Bible. You can fast by yourself. If you are fasting alone and would like some support join Radical Change Ministries

 on [Facebook](#). Our community has seasoned fasters who can support and guide you through your fast.



GROUP FASTING

A corporate fast is a group fast. Churches, Bible study groups, worship teams and families often fast together.

A popular example of a corporate fast is when churches fast at the beginning of the year – First Season Fast. This fast sets the tone and intention for the entire upcoming year.

When we come together and fast as well as pray as a group we are in agreement and believe that God will be faithful. This practice of coming into agreement as two or more finds its roots in Matthew 18:19:

“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.”

C H A P T E R

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TYPES OF FASTS

There are four types of fasts documented in the Bible. One is not more important or more effective than the other. The type of fast you choose will depend on what you feel you can manage or what God puts in your spirit.

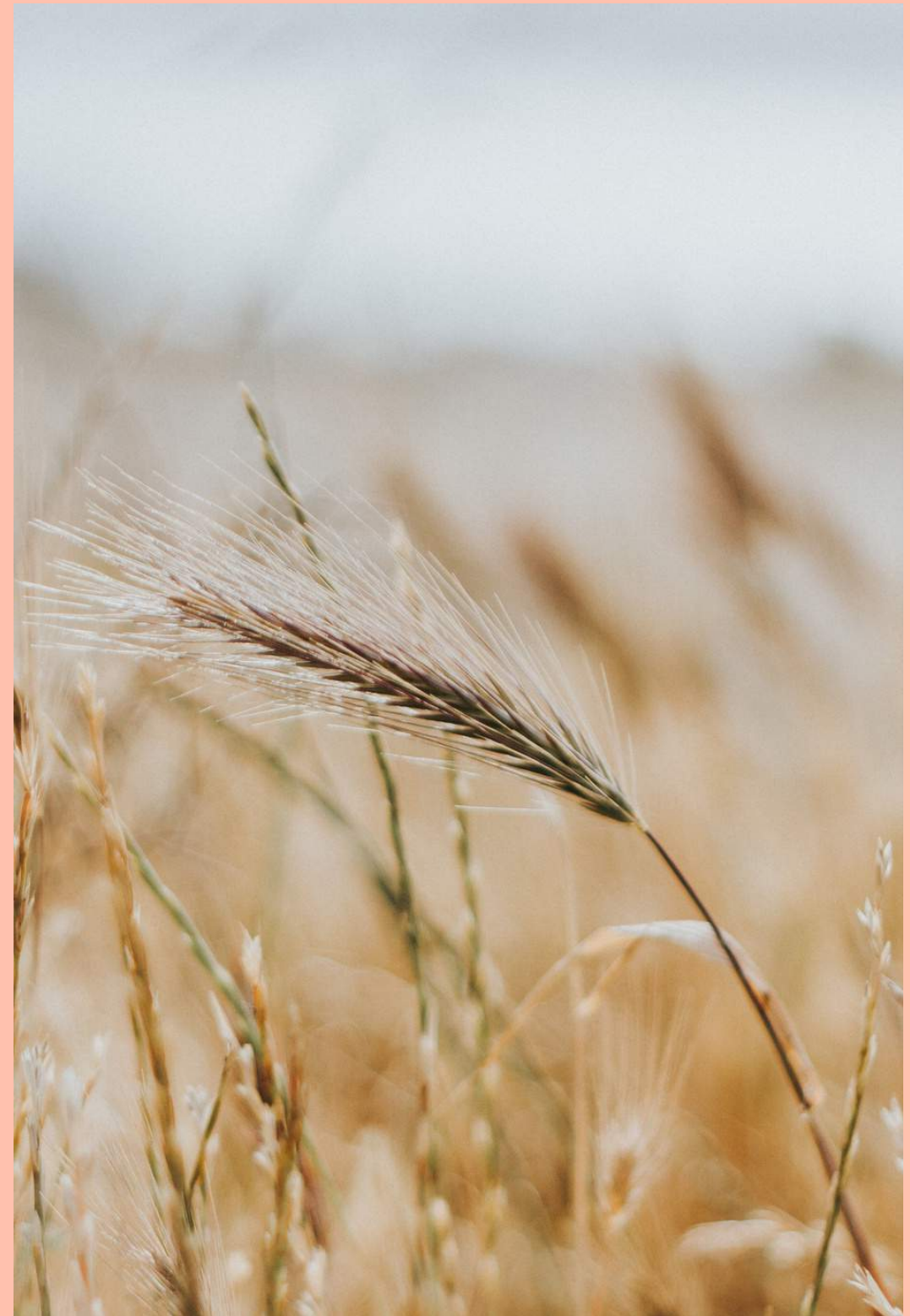
If this is your first fast, start out with something manageable. Start by perhaps cutting out a single meal or not eating snacks after a certain time at night. Alternatively, you could start by cutting out a specific food type, like carbohydrates or an ingredient, like sugar. The more you practice fasting, the more you'll find your confidence grow in your own ability to manage your fast.

THE PARTIAL FAST

The word partial means incomplete or part of. When you choose to do a partial fast you won't be giving up food and drinks entirely, only a part of it. Decide whether you will be cutting out a particular meal, ingredient or food group.

Most people opt for a partial fast because it is best suited for beginners. Start by deciding what you would like to cut out. You may decide to have only two meals a day, for example breakfast and lunch and cut out dinners. You could also decide that instead of cutting out an entire meal, you just want to stay away from a specific ingredient. Many people who choose this route cut out sugar during a fast, which means they avoid all food items that may contain sugar. Alternatively, you could decide to cut out an entire food group for the duration of your fast, for example, meat, dairy or carbohydrates.

Daniel was famous for fasting and his fast of choice was the partial fast. In Daniel 10, he speaks of eating no delicacies, no meat or wine. So he cut out any rich, indulgent food like desserts, meat and alcohol.



This means during this particular fast Daniel only allowed himself whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes. On a different occasion in Daniel 1, we learn he consumed vegetables and water only.

The Daniel Fast has been a popular go-to for fasters in recent years.

What you decide to cut out is completely up to you. Remember, it's about prioritising God. You're sacrificing a meal, ingredient or food group you love to show Him that He is more important than the things you like and want.

Online resources:

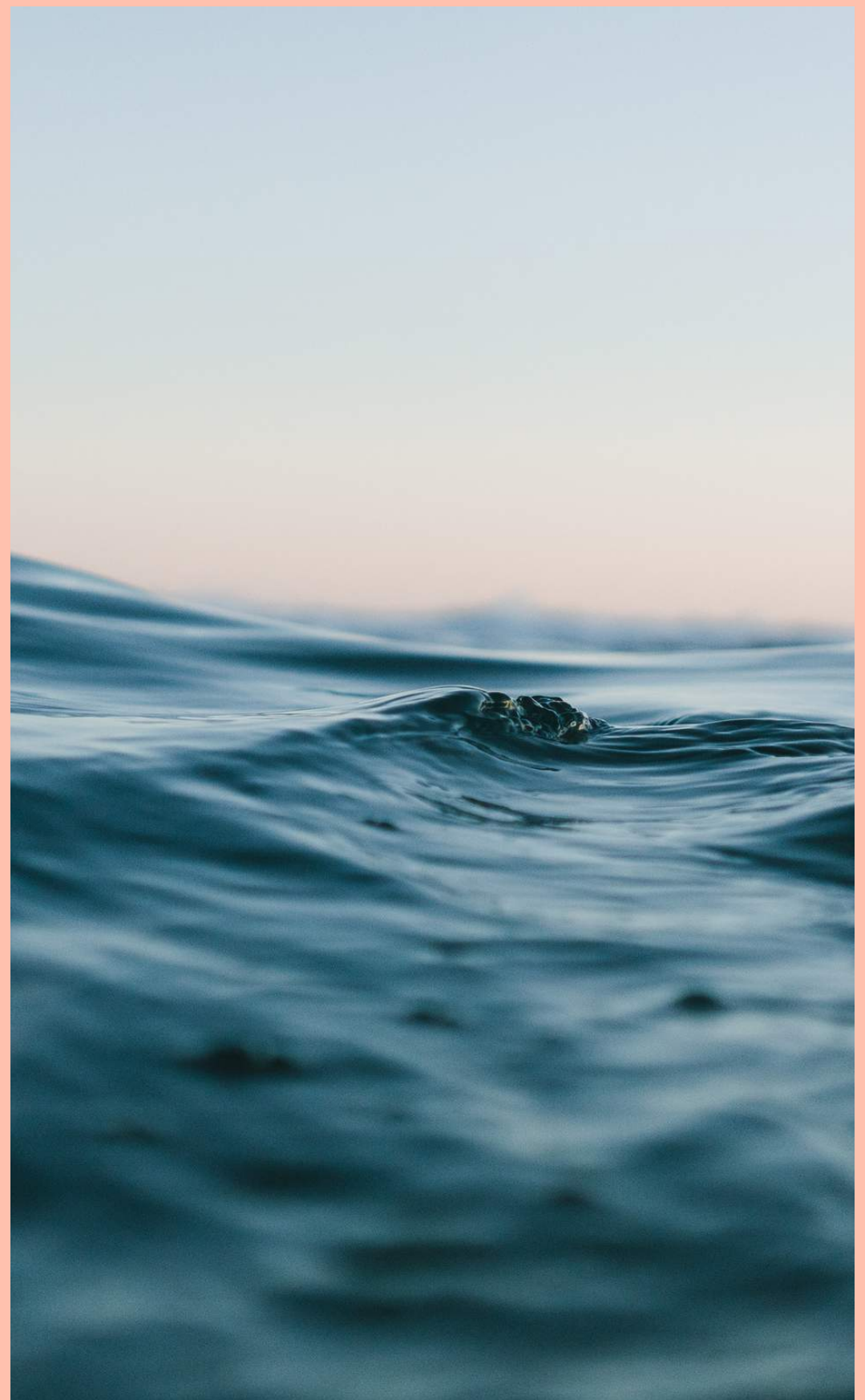
- [What is The Daniel Fast?](#)
- [Recipe ideas - breakfast](#)
- [Recipe ideas - lunch](#)
- [Recipe ideas - dinner](#)
- [What happens to your body when you fast?](#)



THE REGULAR FAST

Traditionally, a regular fast means refraining from eating all food. You'll only be consuming water and pure juice.

When Jesus fasted in the wilderness, He did a regular fast. We assume that He did drink water because in Matthew 4 it states that Jesus was hungry when He left the wilderness. Not thirsty and hungry. During this time the devil also tried to tempt Jesus with food. Not water.



THE FULL FAST

Choosing the full fast means that you will not have any food or liquids for the duration of the fast.

A full fast means that you will not have any food or liquids for the duration of the fast. Paul and Esther both did full fasts, not eating any food or drinking any liquids at all. This is for advanced fasters only and it is recommended that this fast is very short. Please consult your general practitioner or physician before starting a full fast.

OTHER TYPES OF FASTS

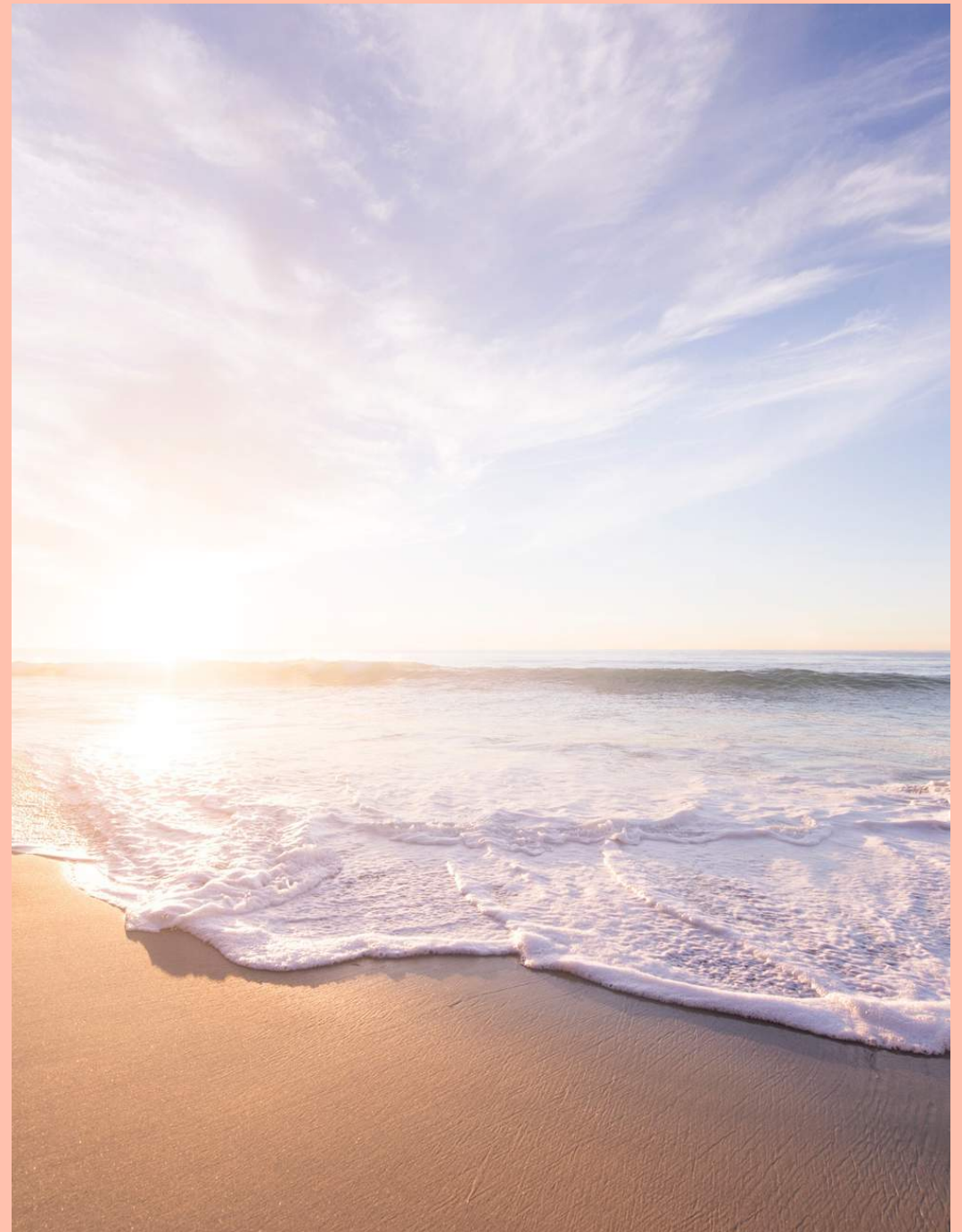
There are individuals who are not physically able to fast. Just because you cannot give up food does not mean you can't participate in the fasting experience. It is not necessarily about what you give up, but more about what that item means to you and how it reminds you to stay focused on God. For example, it might be a bigger sacrifice for you to give up a favorite video game or television show, rather than food.



THE SEXUAL FAST

If you aren't able to take part in a fast from food, you might want to consider a fast from sex. During this fast, married couples abstain from sex.

In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul writes a letter establishing the idea of Christian marriage in the early church. He writes that husbands and wives should fast from sex to devote more time to prayer. They should do it in agreement and only for a set amount of time.



THE IDOL FAST

Fasting from worldly things that take up too much of your time or attention.

The Bible only documents fasting from food and sex, but many Christians choose to fast from other things too. If fasting is an act of prioritising God then fasting from the things we normally prioritise in our lives provides a great alternative for those who can't fast from food. This fast will be specific to your life and the things that draw too much attention or take too much time. Some people fast from television for a set time while others log out of all of their social media accounts. The point is to use that time to prioritise God – praying, worshipping or reading the Bible.




C H A P T E R

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HOW LONG TO FAST

There is no written rule in the Bible about the length of a fast. Choosing the length of your fast will depend on what you feel you can manage at the time. As a beginner, don't over-complicate your fast. Start with something manageable and short. As your faith grows your fasting will change. Once you've chosen the type of fast you would like to do, go ahead and choose the duration of your fast.



THERE ARE SEVEN DIFFERENT DURATIONS OF FASTS DOCUMENTED IN THE BIBLE.

One Day

Judges 20:26 – fasting to seek direction from the Lord.

Three Days

Esther 4:16 – fasting for wisdom, discernment, protection and guidance.
Acts 9:9 – Saul fasts after an encounter with the Lord and his conversion.

Seven Days

1 Samuel 31:13 – fasting for wisdom and guidance as well as about grief.

Ten Days

Daniel 1:12 – Daniel was fasting for favour, strength, wisdom, and discernment.

Fourteen Days

Acts 27:33–34 – Paul and the men on the ship fasted from food for protection and wisdom.

Twenty One Days

Daniel 10:3 – fasting in times of distress and mourning.

Fourty Days

Matthew 4:2 – Jesus fasts in the desert after being baptised by John.
Exodus 34:28 – Moses fasts before receiving the ten commandments.
1 Kings 19:8 – Elijah fasts while escaping persecution by Jezebel.

There are only three 40-day fasts in the Bible. Each person was divinely appointed and touched by God for this type of fast. Most people who do a full fast do so by divine appointment. In other words, they were specifically directed by God to do a full fast for a specific reason or outcome. Needless to say, they have supernatural help during this fast due to its extreme nature.


C H A P T E R

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LET'S GET STARTED

Decide which fast you are going to follow and for how long. Look at your calendar and pick a start and finish date.

Use the Daily Fast Planner on the next page to Plan your meals. Whether you decide to cut out one ingredient or decide to eat vegetarian meals only, meal planning will stop you from grabbing anything and everything when you're hungry.

Plan what you are going to do when you're not eating. If you're cutting out a meal or several meals a day, think about using the time you would've spent eating to speak to God. Pray, read the Bible, watch your favourite church services or pastors online, read up on your favourite Christian topics. Spend time with Him.

Tell the people who live with you that you will be fasting. This is not to elicit sympathy, but to save people the effort of preparing a meal you may not eat or to encourage them not to offer you items you're fasting from.



Put reminders up. Most people eat out of habit, not necessarily because they are feeling hungry. If you're used to walking to the fridge and grabbing a snack or putting sugar in your coffee, put a bright pink note on the door to serve as a reminder.

Journal your fast. Use the spaces provided in this e-book to write down your fasting journey. Write down what you're praying for, how you're feeling and what you're learning.

We have included daily declarations in the following chapter which cover health, prosperity and peace. Speak these over yourself every day while you fast to build your faith.

DAILY FAST PLANNER

DATE / /

BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
NOTES		TO DO
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A PRAYER FOR WHEN YOU FEEL HUNGRY		
<p>OUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME. YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE. FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN.</p>		

FASTING JOURNAL

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C H A P T E R

07

DAILY DECLARATIONS

RADICAL CHANGE MINISTRIES

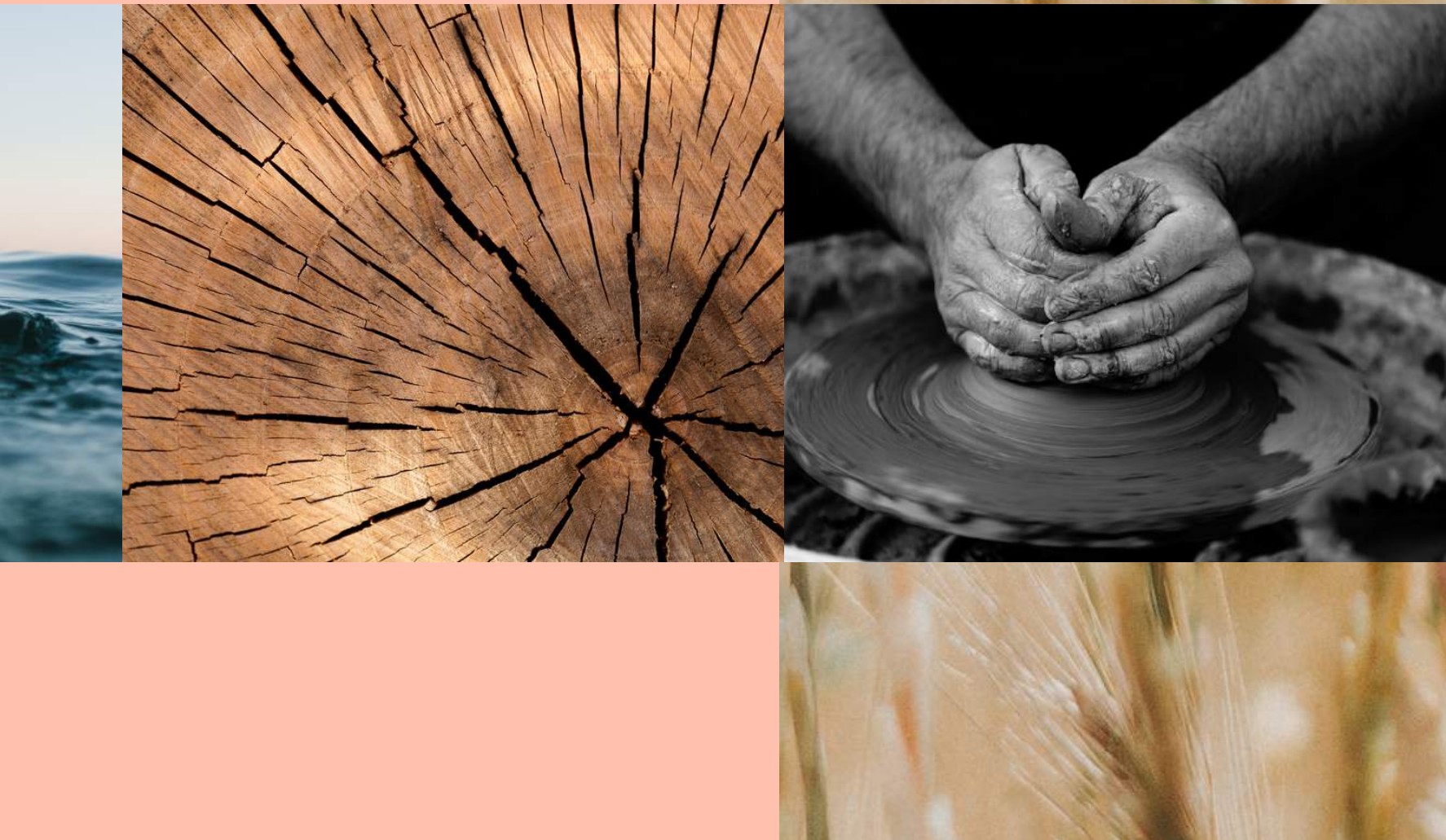
Our declarations are all based on scripture and aim to build your faith on a daily basis.

Simply click on the link below to access the PDF which you can download or print.

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