

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

A Practical Curriculum on Prayer, Fasting & Scripture

By Lashana Ingram

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." — James 4:8

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Module 1: Understanding Prayer

What Is Prayer? · Why We Pray · Types of Prayer

Module 2: How to Pray

A Step-by-Step Guide · The Lord's Prayer Model · Practical Prayer Life

Module 3: Understanding Biblical Fasting

What Is Fasting? · Purpose of Fasting · Types of Fasts

Module 4: How to Fast

A Practical Guide · Preparing for a Fast · During & After the Fast

Module 5: How to Read the Bible

Approaching Scripture · Bible Study Methods · Building a Reading Plan

Module 6: The Importance of Scripture

Why the Bible Matters · Scripture in Daily Life · Memorizing & Meditating

MODULE 1: UNDERSTANDING PRAYER

What Is Prayer?

Prayer is simply **talking with God**. It is a two-way conversation — not just us speaking to God, but also listening for His voice, guidance, and peace. Think of it like texting or calling your closest friend, except this friend is the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator of the universe who *actually* wants to hear from you.

Prayer is not a ritual reserved for church services or emergencies. It is meant to be a **lifestyle** — an ongoing relationship where you share your thoughts, fears, gratitude, and needs with God.

Key Scriptures:

***Jeremiah 33:3** — "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."*

God invites us to call on Him and promises to answer. Prayer is not shouting into the void — there is a loving God on the other side ready to respond.

***Philippians 4:6-7** — "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

This verse teaches that prayer is the antidote to anxiety. When we bring *everything* to God — not just the big stuff — He replaces worry with supernatural peace.

***1 Thessalonians 5:17** — "Pray without ceasing."*

Prayer isn't meant to be a once-a-day event. This short but powerful verse tells us to keep an open line of communication with God throughout our entire day.

***Matthew 6:6** — "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."*

Jesus teaches that prayer is personal and intimate. It's not about showing off to others — it's about a private, honest moment between you and God.

Why Do We Pray?

- **To build relationship with God** — Prayer deepens our connection with our Creator.

- **To seek guidance** — God directs our steps when we ask Him (Proverbs 3:5-6).
 - **To find peace** — Laying our burdens before God brings rest to our souls.
 - **To intercede for others** — We can stand in the gap for family, friends, and even strangers.
 - **To express worship and gratitude** — Prayer is one way we honor God for who He is.
-

Types of Prayer

- **Adoration / Worship** — Praising God for who He is (Psalm 95:6).
- **Confession** — Admitting our sins and asking for forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- **Thanksgiving** — Expressing gratitude for what God has done (Psalm 100:4).
- **Supplication** — Making personal requests and needs known to God.
- **Intercession** — Praying on behalf of other people (1 Timothy 2:1).

MODULE 2: HOW TO PRAY

A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners

If prayer feels intimidating, don't worry — there is no "wrong" way to talk to God. Here is a simple framework to get started:

Step 1: Find a quiet place. Remove distractions. Put your phone on silent. This is your time with God (Matthew 6:6).

Step 2: Start with praise. Begin by telling God what you love about Him. Thank Him for specific things — your health, your family, a new day.

Step 3: Confess and be honest. Tell God about your mistakes. He already knows, but confession keeps your heart clean and humble (Psalm 51:10).

Step 4: Bring your requests. Share what you need — wisdom for a test, healing for a loved one, direction for your future. Be specific!

Step 5: Pray for others. Lift up your family, friends, church, community, and even your enemies (Matthew 5:44).

Step 6: Listen. Sit quietly for a moment. God may speak through a Bible verse that comes to mind, a feeling of peace, or a gentle impression on your heart.

Step 7: Close in Jesus' name. We pray in the authority of Jesus because He is our mediator (John 14:13-14).

The Lord's Prayer — A Model (Matthew 6:9-13)

Jesus gave us a template, not a script to repeat mindlessly. Each line teaches a principle:

- **"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name"** — Start with worship and reverence.
- **"Your kingdom come, Your will be done"** — Submit to God's plan over your own.
- **"Give us this day our daily bread"** — Ask God for daily provision and needs.
- **"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"** — Confess sin and choose to forgive others.
- **"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"** — Ask for protection and strength.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 6:9-13 — *"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name..."*

Romans 8:26 — *"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*

Even when you don't know what to say, the Holy Spirit prays through you. You are never alone in prayer.

John 14:13-14 — *"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."*

Hebrews 4:16 — *"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*

You don't have to be perfect to pray. God invites you to come **boldly**, not timidly. He is a loving Father, not a harsh judge.

Practical Tips for a Consistent Prayer Life

- Set a specific time each day (morning is great — Mark 1:35).
- Use a prayer journal to write down requests and answered prayers.
- Pray out loud if it helps you focus.
- Start with 5-10 minutes and gradually increase.
- Use the A.C.T.S. method: **A**doration, **C**onfession, **T**hanksgiving, **S**upplication.

MODULE 3: UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL FASTING

What Is Biblical Fasting?

Fasting is **voluntarily giving up food (or something else) for a period of time to focus on prayer and seeking God**. It is not a diet or a hunger strike — it is a spiritual discipline. When you fast, you are telling your body, "My spirit is in charge," and you are telling God, "I need You more than I need food."

Fasting has been practiced by believers throughout the Bible — Moses, David, Esther, Daniel, Jesus, and the early church all fasted. It is not outdated; it is a powerful tool that God still honors today.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 6:16-18 — *"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting... But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place."*

Notice Jesus said **"when you fast"** — not "if." He expected His followers to fast. But He warned against doing it for show. Fasting is between you and God.

Isaiah 58:6 — *"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?"*

God-honoring fasting has a purpose — breakthrough, freedom, and deliverance. It's not just about skipping meals; it's about spiritual warfare.

Joel 2:12 — *"Now, therefore, says the Lord, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."*

Fasting is an expression of wholehearted devotion. It demonstrates seriousness and urgency before God.

Acts 13:2-3 — *"As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."*

The early church fasted when seeking God's direction. Major decisions were made in the context of prayer and fasting.

The Purpose of Fasting

- **Spiritual breakthrough** — Breaking chains that prayer alone may not break (Mark 9:29).
 - **Hearing God's voice more clearly** — Removing physical distractions sharpens spiritual sensitivity.
 - **Humbling yourself before God** — Fasting is an act of surrender (Psalm 35:13).
 - **Seeking direction** — When you face major decisions, fasting helps you discern God's will.
 - **Repentance and renewal** — Fasting can accompany turning back to God with a whole heart.
-

Types of Fasts in the Bible

- **Normal Fast** — No food, but water is allowed. This is the most common type (Matthew 4:2).
- **Absolute Fast** — No food or water. This should be short (1-3 days max) and only with medical awareness (Esther 4:16).
- **Partial Fast (Daniel Fast)** — Giving up certain foods like meat, sweets, or processed food while eating fruits, vegetables, and grains (Daniel 10:3).
- **Non-Food Fast** — Giving up something like social media, TV, or gaming to dedicate that time to God.

MODULE 4: HOW TO FAST

A Practical Step-by-Step Guide

Before the Fast:

Step 1: Determine your purpose. Why are you fasting? Write it down. (Example: "I am fasting for clarity about college decisions.")

Step 2: Choose your type of fast. Start simple — maybe skip one meal or do a Daniel Fast for 3 days.

Step 3: Set a time frame. Beginners should start with 1 meal, then 1 day, then 3 days as you grow.

Step 4: Prepare physically. The day before, eat lighter meals. Drink plenty of water. Avoid caffeine withdrawal by reducing intake gradually.

Step 5: Prepare spiritually. Choose scriptures to meditate on. Plan specific prayer times during your fast.

During the Fast:

- When hunger hits, **pray instead of eating**. Let the hunger remind you to turn to God.
- Read your Bible more than usual. Use the time you would spend eating to study God's Word.
- Stay hydrated (unless doing an absolute fast).
- Avoid announcing your fast to everyone (Matthew 6:16-18). Keep it between you and God.
- Journal what God reveals to you during this time.

After the Fast:

- **Break your fast gently.** Start with light foods — soup, fruit, or crackers. Don't eat a heavy meal immediately.
- Review your journal. What did God speak to you? What scriptures stood out?
- Give God thanks for the strength to complete the fast.
- Continue the spiritual habits you built during the fast.

Key Scriptures:

Matthew 4:1-4 — *"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry... He answered, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

Jesus Himself fasted. If the Son of God needed to fast, how much more do we? Notice that after His fast, He defeated temptation with Scripture.

Ezra 8:23 — *"So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer."*

Daniel 10:3 — *"I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."*

Psalms 69:10 — *"When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach."*

Fasting is real — it can be uncomfortable, and sometimes people won't understand. But it moves the heart of God.

MODULE 5: HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

Approaching the Bible

The Bible can feel overwhelming — it's 66 books written over thousands of years by over 40 authors. But here's the good news: **you don't have to understand everything at once**. The Bible is meant to be explored over a lifetime. Every time you read it, God reveals something new.

Think of the Bible as God's personal letter to you. It contains His instructions, His promises, His warnings, and His love story with humanity.

Key Scriptures:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 — "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Every part of the Bible is useful. It teaches us, corrects us, and prepares us for life.

Psalms 119:105 — "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Life is full of confusing decisions. The Bible provides light and direction when everything else feels unclear.

Hebrews 4:12 — "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The Bible isn't an old, dusty book — it is **alive**. It speaks to your exact situation today.

Joshua 1:8 — "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

God ties success and prosperity directly to meditating on His Word. This isn't about getting rich — it's about living a life aligned with God's purpose.

Step-by-Step: How to Read the Bible

Step 1: Pray before you read. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and help you understand (Psalm 119:18).

Step 2: Start with the New Testament. If you're new, begin with the Gospel of John — it's an easy-to-follow account of Jesus' life.

Step 3: Read a chapter a day. Don't rush. Quality matters more than quantity. One chapter, understood, is better than five chapters skimmed.

Step 4: Ask three questions: (1) What does this passage say? (2) What does it mean? (3) How does it apply to my life today?

Step 5: Write down what stands out. Keep a notebook or journal next to your Bible. Record verses, questions, and insights.

Step 6: Use a Bible app or study Bible. Tools like YouVersion, Blue Letter Bible, or a study Bible with notes can help explain difficult passages.

Step 7: Be consistent. Set a daily time — even 10-15 minutes. Consistency builds understanding over time.

Bible Study Methods

- **S.O.A.P. Method:** **S**cripture (write it out), **O**bservation (what do you notice?), **A**pplication (how does it apply?), **P**ray (pray about what you read).
- **Topical Study:** Pick a topic (love, faith, forgiveness) and look up all related verses.
- **Character Study:** Study the life of a Bible character — David, Ruth, Paul — and learn from their journey.
- **Book Study:** Read one book of the Bible from start to finish, taking notes on themes and key lessons.

MODULE 6: THE IMPORTANCE OF SCRIPTURE

Why the Bible Matters to the Everyday Believer

The Bible is not just a book for pastors and theologians. It is for **every single believer** — the student studying for exams, the athlete before the big game, the teenager navigating friendships, and the adult facing tough decisions at work. God's Word is your **spiritual food**. Just as your body can't function without eating, your spirit can't thrive without Scripture.

Key Scriptures:

***Matthew 4:4** — "But He answered and said, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

Jesus quoted this during His time of fasting and temptation. He used Scripture as His weapon — and so should we.

***Romans 10:17** — "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*

Want stronger faith? Read more of God's Word. Faith literally grows as you consume Scripture.

***Psalms 1:1-3** — "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly... But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season."*

The person who meditates on Scripture is compared to a deeply-rooted tree — stable, fruitful, and thriving no matter the season.

***James 1:22** — "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*

Reading the Bible is the first step. But God expects us to **apply** what we read. Don't just highlight verses — live them out.

Scripture in Daily Life

- **Decision Making:** When you face a choice, ask "What does the Bible say about this?"
- **Emotional Health:** Feeling anxious? Read Philippians 4:6-7. Feeling hopeless? Read Jeremiah 29:11. Feeling alone? Read Deuteronomy 31:6.
- **Temptation:** Jesus fought temptation by quoting Scripture. Memorize key verses for moments of weakness.

- **Relationships:** The Bible gives wisdom for friendships, dating, family, and conflict resolution.
 - **Identity:** In a world that tells you who to be, the Bible tells you who you *already are* in Christ.
-

Memorizing & Meditating on Scripture

Meditation in the Bible doesn't mean emptying your mind — it means **filling your mind** with God's Word and thinking deeply about it.

- Write a verse on a sticky note and put it on your mirror or desk.
- Read a verse 5 times slowly, emphasizing a different word each time.
- Set a verse as your phone wallpaper.
- Memorize one verse per week — by the end of the year, you'll know 52 verses!
- Discuss what you're reading with a friend, mentor, or small group.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

You don't have to be perfect to pray, fast, or read the Bible. God is not looking for perfection — He is looking for a **willing heart**. Start where you are. Start small. But start *today*. Every great man and woman of God you admire built their faith one prayer, one fast, and one scripture at a time. You can too.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11