

# 2023 KIRCF SOLEMN ASSEMBLY 7-DAY DEVOTIONAL

## “RETURNING TO GOD”

### DAY 1

#### RETURNING TO GOD IN PRAYER

[Matthew 6:5-13](#)

#### INTRODUCTION

Prayer is like the National Anthem before a football game for many of us. It gets the game started but has no connection with what's happening on the field and is more courtesy. However, prayer is not to be an empty, meaningless religious formality. Prayer is relational communication with God, and He wants us to relate to Him through prayer, not just carry on a formality. When we relate to God, we connect and partner with Him to bring Heaven's provision to earth.

When we relate to God, it should be based on *who He is* (the Father) and *what He is like* (perfection). The more we know about Him, the more we can pray intelligently. God wants Heaven to manifest in history based on His word to accomplish His will. We must consider how God rules and His will regarding that rule as we pray. We ask these questions so that we can make decisions consistent with Heaven as we pray to Him about our needs on earth.

When we consider the provisions of prayer, we understand prayer recognizes God as the source for meeting our physical needs, pardoning sin and protection from Satan. He is the source for us to operate on earth while fulfilling His will from heaven. When we pray, we start with acknowledging the person of God: 'Our Father, who is in Heaven, Hallowed by Your name.' [Matt. 6:9](#) and we finish with the praise of God: 'For Yours is the kingdom and the power

#### GETTING STARTED

and the glory forever.' [Matt. 6:13](#). And in doing so, we recognize that our needs are met between the start and finish.

1. When are the times that you are most likely to pray? Are these times a routine practice for you?
2. What new principle did you learn about prayer this week? How will this knowledge affect your prayer life?

#### LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. How do you relate to the person of God? Do you see Him as your father? Do you see Him as the standard of perfection?
2. What challenges do you have with prayer and relating to the personhood of God?

3. In what ways do you fail to recognize God as your source for meeting physical life needs?

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. What steps are you taking to prioritize God's program of prayer so that His rule can manifest in your life?
2. In what areas of your life are you willing to surrender to prayer so that God may be the source of your physical life needs, pardon sin, and protection from satan?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: [2 Kings 20:1-11](#); [Matthew 18:19-20](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#); [Ephesians 6:18](#); [John 16:23-27](#); [Mark 11:20-26](#); [Luke 11:5-13](#); [Luke 7:1-10](#); [James 5:13-18](#); [Ephesians 3:13-21](#); [Luke 18:1-8](#); [Ephesians 1:15-23](#)

## RENEW YOUR MIND

***“With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be alert with perseverance and every request for all the saints.”***

[Ephesians 6:18](#)

## DAY 2

### RETURNING TO GOD THROUGH FASTING

[Isaiah 58:1-12](#)

## INTRODUCTION

Contrary to popular opinion, fasting does not revolve around one's health and fitness goals, nor is fasting merely the dieting fad it has become of late. Biblical fasting is a meaningful, spiritual practice and an act of obedience to God. Fasting can be defined as God's unique method of invading earth's needs with the solutions of heaven. When we fast, we sacrifice the physical to gain the spiritual. We are saying to God that we need His power to intervene in our earthly circumstances. For God to honor our fasting, we must be seeking to please the Lord and not ourselves. If we want our fasting to honor God, we must prioritize personal righteousness and ministry to others. Prioritizing personal righteousness means uprooting sin while also seeking a solution from God. Prioritizing ministry to others causes us to allow God to use us as conduits to bless others without expecting anything in return.

Although we should not fast for our own gain, we reap numerous benefits from fasting. Taking the focus off our own problems and choosing to help others will lead to divine blessings in our lives. Fasting shows others how God is at work in our circumstances. We will witness repairs in our relationships as a result of God repairing our hearts. Even our communities can be restored through fasting because this vital spiritual discipline gets the people of God back in touch with Him. Fasting and prayer go hand in hand. We cannot and should not have one without the other. Fasting provides the opportunity for our prayers to be free from distractions

and full of honest confessions. Fasting gives us the chance to push the clutter of life out of the way and focus our hearts and minds on the only One worthy of our complete devotion.

## GETTING STARTED

1. What does fasting bring to your mind? What kinds of things do people typically fast from?
2. Some people use fasting as a way to be healthier and lose weight. What other spiritual things do people twist into being a way to meet their physical needs or wants?

## LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. Share about a time you fasted and how that opened your spiritual eyes. How do you think fasting would change your spiritual life if you have never fasted?
2. Have you ever been fully engaged in sin but were still seeking a solution from God at the same time? How did you resolve this conflict? How did God lead you, convict you, or invite you into fellowship with Him?
3. In what areas of your life do you need the repair and restoration that fasting and prayer bring?

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. In light of this message, how will you approach fasting and prayer differently?
2. How can you begin to prioritize ministering to others?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: [Isaiah 58:1-12](#); [Zechariah 7:5-6](#); [Matthew 17:14-21](#); [Nehemiah 1:1-11](#); [Esther 4:8-16](#); [1 Kings 17:8-16](#); [Genesis 24:32-49](#); [Ezra 8:21-23](#); [Joel 2:12-25](#); [Acts 13:1-5](#); [Luke 2:34-38](#); [Luke 4:1-13](#); [Matthew 6:16-18](#); [Matthew 9:14-15](#).

## RENEW YOUR MIND

***“And the LORD will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.” [Isaiah 58:11](#)***

## DAY 3

### RETURNING TO GOD WITH COMMUNION

#### 1 Corinthians 11:23-34

#### INTRODUCTION

Before an NBA game, the team and staff always have a pregame meal. They usually have a feast and the team sits, eats, and fellowships. This pregame meal provides the nutritional value they need in order to wage war on the court against their opponents. When you come to the communion table on Sunday and eat the bread and drink the cup, it gives you the power you need to fight your spiritual opponent. Communion is designed to help you enter the world differently because you enter it with the power from on high.

Many people are not getting the full benefit of following Christ. We are skipping our spiritual meals and missing out on valuable nutrients. We have missed not connecting with the next level of the covenant. We are not coming under His rule and connecting with the spiritual realm, thus missing out on the power of God in our lives.

Most of us are singularly focused on baptism, forgetting that communion is the continuation of baptism. Baptism says I want to follow Christ. Communion is renewing that commitment on a regular basis. When you understand the principle of communion, you know that communion connects you with the person of Christ, the cross of Christ, and the communication of Christ. When you connect with His person, you remember what the cross has accomplished. Then, you are able to proclaim victory in your life and power over sin and Satan because of the cross.

Understanding the principle of communion unlocks the purpose of communion, which provides special connection, special access, and special authority to the spiritual realm. Access to the spiritual realm affords you the spiritual, physical, and relational wellbeing you need to “power up” and be renewed for battle. The more you have communion, the more you take advantage of this extraordinary opportunity to connect and follow Christ, therefore receiving all of the powerful benefits.

#### GETTING STARTED

1. What do you do regularly to recharge yourself spiritually, mentally, and physically?
2. Have you ever considered communion as a spiritual recharge? If not, what do you think of communion in light of this message?

#### LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. What comes to mind when you reflect on the person of Christ and what He did on the cross?

2. Have you ever experienced special access, authority, or connection when coming under the rule of God through communion? What did that feel like? What scriptures affirmed your renewal in the spirit through communion?
3. What is keeping you from the power of the cross? What can the power of communion do to restore your relational connections?

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. In what ways can you approach communion with a renewed mindset on its importance?
2. How can you incorporate communion into your consistent practice if you are not currently receiving the sacrament at church?
3. In what ways can you incorporate communal fellowship in your life to remember Christ's sacrifice?
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: [Colossians 2:13-15](#); [1 Corinthians 10:16-21](#); [Romans 6:1-11](#); [Colossians 3:13](#); [Luke 22:14-20](#); [John 6:51-58](#); [1 Corinthians 5:7](#)

## RENEW YOUR MIND

***“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.”***

[John 6:53](#)

### DAY 4

## RETURNING TO GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE

**[2 Timothy 3:13-17](#)**

## INTRODUCTION

Imagine driving on a stormy day and trying to look out of your rear window to realize you can't see anything. Imagine that you've had this car for several years but had no idea there was a windshield wiper in the back. Even though the wiper was mentioned in the manual that came with the car, you were unaware that it existed or how to take advantage of it. The Bible is our manual of grace and is designed to show all God's provisions for every believer. However, the manual is not intended just to be available to the believer. It is intended to be used! God's Word is powerful and can tell us how to live in this world and how things work.

If we are serious about returning to God, the person, we have to return to God through His Word. God's Word is inerrant. It is an errorless revelation of Him. He has disclosed Himself and what He wants us to know about Him based on His Word. The Holy Spirit oversaw the recording of the inspired Word and ensured that the perfect revelation would be

comprehensive, complete, and sufficient. Scripture is the voice of God in print, not merely information about God, so we need to take Scripture seriously.

Scripture is the provision given to us by God to help us clearly see ourselves and our world. However, it does us no good if we don't utilize it through reading, memorizing and obeying God's truth. Scripture can operate because it is alive. It works when the hearer of Scripture is willing to receive the Word and when the enemies of Scripture are rejected. When the Word of God is believed and acted on, we will see the accomplishment of Scripture and its transformational work in our lives.

## GETTING STARTED

1. How often would you say you read your Bible in a typical week?
2. How will you approach the Bible differently in light of this message?

## LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. In what way has God's perfect revelation proved sufficient, comprehensive and complete in your life?
2. In what ways can you practice not just being a hearer of the Word but a doer?
3. How much time do you spend hiding Scripture in your heart? Does God bring Scripture to your mind when you need it? Why do you think that is?

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. What are your major challenges in believing Scripture?
2. Spend time in prayer and introspection. Ask the Lord to show you how you can be more obedient to His Word.
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: [John 17:17](#); [Psalm 119:1-176](#); [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#); [Psalm 19:7-14](#); [Hebrews 4:12-13](#); [Matthew 4:4](#); [Psalm 12:6](#); [Psalm 30:5](#); [Psalm 18:30](#); [Psalm 33:6](#); [Psalm 33:9](#); [Isaiah 55:9-11](#); [Matthew 5:18](#); [John 10:34-36](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:13](#); [2 Peter 1:19-21](#); [Luke 8:4-15](#); [James 1:19-25](#); [2 Corinthians 3:17-18](#); [John 8:31-32](#); [Isaiah 66:2](#)

## RENEW YOUR MIND

***“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”***

[John 17:17](#)

## DAY 5

### RETURNING TO GOD THROUGH SURRENDER

#### ROMANS 12:1-2

#### INTRODUCTION

Trapeze artists understand the art of surrender. A profound trust exists between the flyer and the catcher. The flyer must let go of the trapeze, hang perfectly still in the air and wait to be caught. The flyer must completely trust that the catcher will do his job and catch him. Many people struggle with the concept of surrender because they love to be in control—control of their choices, their character and their circumstances. But human beings are not in control—God is. Surrender is an acknowledgment of this truth. It involves letting go of our illusion of control and holding onto God instead. Total surrender is the key to experiencing intimacy with God and the means to having a purposeful life.

Surrender is a calling, and it comes at a cost. Not only is surrender our spiritual act of worship ([Romans 12:1](#)), but it is the appropriate response to God's mercy and how we show our gratitude. If we do not yield our hearts to God, we will not experience the joy of growing closer to Him. God wants our complete and total dedication to Him. As followers of Christ, we need to be *all in* when it comes to our relationship with God. Being a Christian is not a part-time job, hobby or something we participate in casually on weekends. It requires our full commitment.

Surrendering to God also changes our perspective. The world tries to pressure us to accept its value system, but we must reject and resist that. Believing in God and digging deeply into His Word will transform our minds, causing us to think and act differently than the world around us. The world may hate us, but it hated Jesus first, and that is how we know God's love is in us ([John 15:18](#); [1 John 2:15](#)).

We experience the goodness of God's will when we surrender. Many of us may be searching endlessly for God's will, trying to find it on our own when we should be giving everything over to God. It is then that God's will can find *us*. Living a surrendered life will result in joy despite difficult circumstances and fulfillment despite our sense of incompleteness and weakness. God will accomplish everything He wants to do in us when we allow Him to be in charge. This is the essence of how to live wisely ([Ephesians 5:15-17](#)). We can get out of the driver's seat and off the throne of our lives. Through surrender, we can finally take the pressure off ourselves and discover the purpose we have been missing.

#### GETTING STARTED

1. Why do people often love to be in control? Why do people fear not being in control?
2. When can being in control be a bad thing? When could not being in control be a good thing?

#### LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. What causes you to resist surrendering to God? What areas of your life are the most difficult to surrender to God?
2. How do you view God's will for your life? Do you struggle to find it? Do you fear what it might be and therefore avoid it, or does it come easily.
3. What new truths did you learn from this message about surrender and God's will?

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. How can you be *all-in* this week in your relationship with God? What areas of your life or decisions do you need to surrender to God right away?
2. Who in your family or community needs to surrender their life to God? How can you pray for them and encourage them to take that important next step?
3. What is God's will for your life personally? Read Scripture and seek wise counsel this week to find answers to questions about God's purpose for you and how you can begin fulfilling that purpose now.
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: [Romans 12:1-2](#); [1 John 2:15-17](#); [John 15:18-19](#); [James 4:4](#); [Galatians 1:4](#); [Galatians 6:14](#); [Ephesians 5:13-17](#).

## RENEW YOUR MIND

***“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*** [Romans 12:1-2](#)

## DAY 6

### RETURNING TO GOD THROUGH SERVICE

#### MATTHEW 5:13-16

## INTRODUCTION

We have a computer network in operation on our church campus. This network only functions because of its servers. Servers enable the computers to communicate with each other so that all campus computers “can be on the same page.” Our capacity to maximize our campus productivity is enhanced because our servers are in place doing their jobs. God wants a networked campus of hearts who love Him and who love one another because they are networked by servers—men and women who give of themselves because they have received the manifold grace of God.

As believers, we are called to be a network of servants to God through our visible and verbal presence and influence in society. When we do not have influence and a Godly presence on the earth, we have become useless Christians. Believers serve God as salt. We are to preserve the earth as a repellent to the bacteria and viruses of evil that plague the earth through our presence and work on the earth. When believers are connected to the network of service for the Lord, they create spiritual thirst on earth. Unfortunately, far too many Christians are being walked on by the world rather than making a difference in the world. A Christian that has no impact on the world is useless to the kingdom.

When plugged into the network, believers are illuminated as the light of the earth. As the light, we are to help people see things more clearly because we are influencing them in the right way or the righteous way. Believers bring truth and a witness to the world to give clarity and a clear vision to God's people.

Our relationship with God should be seen as we benefit people in His name. A part of bringing God's truth and witness to His people starts with believers who don't just talk about good things but serve God through good works. When we do good works, it's different from just doing good things; good works are representative of God our Father. Our relationship should be visible as we help people in His name and that's the difference between good things and good works.

## GETTING STARTED

1. What do you do regularly to serve God through your visible and verbal presence?
2. How do you feel after serving someone else with your time, talents, or gifts?

## LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. In what ways have you squandered a gift that could be used to serve God?
2. What spheres of influence do you have access to? Do you find yourself being salt and light in these spheres? Why or Why not?
3. When was the last time you shared your testimony as a spiritual witness to the world? Was your relationship with God evident? How did this benefit those who heard your testimony?

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. What new truth did you learn about servanthood?
2. How can you incorporate a servanthood mindset into your day-to-day life?
3. What will you do to expand your spiritual influence?

4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: [Luke 14:34-35](#); [Colossians 4:6](#); [Titus 2:7](#); [Titus 2:14](#); [Titus 3:8](#); [Titus 3:14](#); [1 Peter 2:12](#); [1 Corinthians 10:31](#); [Ephesians 5:8](#); [Ephesians 5:13](#)

## RENEW YOUR MIND

*“Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs so that they will not be unproductive.”*

[Titus 3:14](#)

## DAY 7

### RETURNING TO GOD IN GIVING

#### MALACHI 3:7-12

## INTRODUCTION

When children play together, whether they know each other or are playing together for the first time, they are often unwilling to share their toys. Their little hands may grip a toy tightly, stubbornly refusing to allow another child to play with it. It is almost as if they think they must protect what is theirs because nothing more will be provided for them. Christians who do not willingly give their resources to God are like these stubborn children. They do not recognize that everything belongs to God and not to them, and He is worthy of their trust. Giving is the tangible way committed believers demonstrate their love for and dependency on God.

Giving can easily be overlooked, but giving is crucial because it reveals whether or not we, as believers, recognize God as our source. When we do not give, we are not depending upon God as the foundation of all we possess. We are essentially stealing from God, as the people of Israel once did. To take what should go to God and use it for other purposes is theft. Many people are living with theft—stolen cars, stolen houses, stolen possessions—because they use God’s money to get those things. Giving reflects our level of spiritual commitment. If we do not give, we are not committed to God being our provider and our spiritual priority.

Giving also provides the resources for impactful ministry by building up the storehouse. In the Old Testament, the storehouse was where ministry took place regarding food provision and the ministry of the Word. It was where both physical and spiritual needs were met. In the New Testament, the storehouse is the church. When the people of God do not give, they deprive the church of the necessary resources to minister to people physically and spiritually.

Giving involves both tithes and offerings. Tithing is the biblical practice of giving ten percent of one’s income. An offering is what one gives over and beyond the tithe, simply out of gratitude for what God has done. When we withhold our tithes and offerings from God, which truly belong to Him, we lose the experience of God’s presence. Our disobedience blocks the intimacy of our relationship with God. On the other hand, when we give generously, we experience God’s blessing. The window of Heaven will be opened to us, and even the curse of blessings we have lost in the past can be reversed. God’s blessings will overflow in our lives. However, we cannot expect these blessings if we are stealing from God. He is patiently

waiting to restore our relationship with Him and pour out His blessings on us if we will simply return to Him through our generous giving.

## GETTING STARTED

1. Why is giving a difficult topic or one that many Christians overlook?
2. What does giving or a lack of giving reveal about a person's view of God?

## LET'S GET PERSONAL

1. What does your giving say about your spiritual commitment to God? What keeps you from giving?
2. How has your view of giving changed in light of this message? How will you approach giving differently?
3. How is the church affected when people do not give? What ministry opportunities are prevented by a lack of giving?

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. In what ways do you need to trust God more as your source and provider?
2. What current opportunities do you have to be generous with your tithe and offerings?
3. How has giving been a blessing in your life? How can you share your story of blessing with others?
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: [Malachi 3:7-12](#); [Luke 6:38](#); [1 Corinthians 16:2](#); [2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#); [Proverbs 3:9-10](#); [Deuteronomy 26:1-15](#); [Deuteronomy 14:23](#); [Leviticus 27:30](#); [1 Timothy 6:17-19](#); [1 Chronicles 29:9](#); [Hebrews 7:8](#); [Philippians 4:15-19](#).

## RENEW YOUR MIND

***“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.’”***

**[Malachi 3:10](#)**