

 PETRA CHURCH

CHURCH-WIDE FAST

Create in Me
A CLEAN HEART

EZEKIEL 36:25-27



2022 THEME

Create in Me a Clean Heart

Dear Petra Family,

Revival is in the air! Followers of Jesus around the world are praying for a move of God. We are praying for revival to change the culture and to change the world. Revival begins in the heart of individuals. However, the loud noises of culture and worldly evil can make it difficult to focus on God's goodness in our midst.

This year's fast is just what we need to hear God's heart for us, individually and corporately! The 2022 theme and verse are timely words from God. Ezekiel 36:25-27 shows us God's heart of love for his people despite the distractions of this world.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

The daily devotions that follow are like a step-by-step process, guided by the Holy Spirit, of how God creates a clean heart in us. We encourage you to open your heart and mind to God's love. Allow God to move your heart through each step in the process. Allow yourself to receive love, healing, and hope from the One who made you.

Pastors Brian and Tracy Coles

PRAYER FOCUS

Church-Wide Fasting and Prayer | January 17-23, 2022

Fasting Week Events

The Sanctuary will be open Monday through Friday from
6 AM - 8:30 PM for personal prayer.

Lunchtime Prayer with Petra Staff

Monday - Thursday | Sanctuary, 12-1 PM

EDGE 78

Prayer Focus

Monday, January 17 | Oasis, 7 PM

Family Prayer Night

with Prayer Stations

Tuesday, January 18 | Sanctuary, 6-8 PM

High School Ministry

Prayer Focus

Wednesday, January 19 | Oasis, 7 PM

Deeper Night

Friday, January 21 | Sanctuary, 7 PM

Childcare provided for babies through Pre-K

Saturday Night Prayer Service

Saturday, January 22 | Sanctuary, 7-8 PM

In-person only

Morning Communion

Sunday, January 23 | Sanctuary, 9 & 11 AM

ADULT DEVOTIONS

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KIDS' DEVOTIONS

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*All materials for the children's daily activity
can be picked up at the Kids' Hub.*

FAST DEDICATION PRAYER

Holy Spirit, we invite your ministry and guidance during this week of fasting and prayer. We dedicate and set aside focused time for you and your purposes. Reveal to us the Father's heart and intentions for Petra Church, for us as individuals, and his heart for the unsaved. We want to pray according to the will of a loving God. We pray for revival in the hearts of each of us as we seek revival for our congregation, our region, and the world. Lord, may this unified time of prayer produce a passion for the lost, a spirit of truth and love within us, and the courage to be obedient to your voice.

In Jesus' Name,
AMEN!

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. . . . Therefore I want men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-6A; 8

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

MATTHEW 6:9-13

Daily Prayer Focus

Along with the daily devotion, we are providing some prayer points for each day. This is a way for our congregation to agree together in prayer during the fast. This list is just a guide; please listen to God's heart when you take time to pray each day!

MONDAY | Pray for a Fresh Wave of Holy Spirit Power

- Calling to the unsaved
- Over our community
- Healing - physical, emotional, and spiritual

TUESDAY | Cleansing from Impurities and Sin

- Families
- Marriages
- Government
- Body of Christ

WEDNESDAY | Cleansing from Idols

- Things we consider more important than God
- Distractions we value more than a relationship with God
- Earthly temptations

THURSDAY | Transforming Our Hearts

- Inner transformation to godly character
- Godly transformation of our government officials
- Transformation of our culture

FRIDAY | Removing Our Hearts of Stone

- Replace with grace, mercy, and compassion
- Replace with a servant's heart and unconditional love

SATURDAY | Obedient Hearts

- Courage for our missionaries (see page 48)
- Courage to obey God at any time
- Obedience despite cultural norms

SUNDAY | Showing God's Love

- As living examples of Jesus
- With actions speaking louder than words
- Projecting light into darkness



Adult Devotions

DAY ONE

CLEANSE ME

■ ALICIA MARTIN

It is no coincidence that our church-wide week of fasting is held at the beginning of the year. After the holidays and time spent with family and friends, the New Year prompts us to think about our priorities in life—where we spent our time last year and how we want to spend our time this upcoming year. It is a time of reflection, and God encourages us to do this to grow in wisdom and understanding (Proverbs 20:5).

This year's theme, "Create in Me a Clean Heart," comes from Ezekiel 36:25-27. These verses start with *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean . . .* Oftentimes, clean or living water is symbolic of the Holy Spirit, so it is the Holy Spirit who makes us clean. However, anyone who has ever had dirty hands knows it's not enough to quickly run your hands under the faucet to get them clean. We have to scrub; we have to put effort into becoming clean. It would be impossible to become clean without the water that removes our dirt, but unless we allow the water into *all* of the crevices, dirt will remain. So we partner with the water to become clean.

Similarly, we have to partner with the Holy Spirit if we want him to cleanse us from our sins. After all, Christ is preparing the church to be his pure and spotless bride—one worthy of his lavish love, grace, and mercy. However, an unfortunate reality is that many of us have become complacent. We live in a dirty world, but we've stopped looking for dirt on ourselves. Without regular cleansing, the dirt will build back up. So we need regular interactions with the Holy Spirit that allow him to transform us into Christ's spotless bride. One of the first steps in partnering with the Holy Spirit is developing an awareness of whether our actions and motivations glorify God or glorify ourselves.

The prophet Elijah knew God well. He prayed and fire fell from heaven. He prayed and rain fell, ending a three-year drought. So when God told Elijah to go stand on a mountain because his Presence was about to pass by, Elijah did it.

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

1 KINGS 19:11-13

This past year was a very stressful and politically-charged year for everyone, which created many emotions that were loud and hard to ignore. The reality is that 2022 will likely be the same. It would have been easy for Elijah to think God was in the wind or the fire. They were happening all around him—loud and hard to ignore—and it would have been easy for him to respond to his circumstances. But Elijah waited because the Lord was not in them. As we enter this new year, let us enter with the vigilance of Elijah—looking for the Lord so that we may glorify him with our words and all that we do.

Prayer Points

- Show me where I have become blind to my dirt and how I can partner with you to remove it.
- Give me the discernment to know when my actions, thoughts, and words glorify myself instead of you.
- Create and grow humility in me.

DAY TWO

CLEANSE ME FROM IMPURITIES

■ **NACHO BARRERA**

Genesis 1 says that after God created man and everything else on earth, God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

We know that the enemy then came to steal, kill, and destroy the beautiful, perfect creation of God. God created us in HIS image, but the enemy brought stain onto our image, dislocating our identity. He tempted us, and through our sin, filled us with impurities that separated us from the master builder, our Father.

For a long time, I struggled with trying to figure out who I was and what I was here on earth for. It was hard to see myself through the clouded lenses of shame and guilt. I felt worthless because of the sin that had taken ahold of my life. It has been a process to cleanse my life of impurities, and to find freedom. But when I came to a place of full surrender, Jesus did it for me. I know that Jesus came to earth, became flesh like me, and died on the cross for my sins and shame. Because of his victory over the grave, guilt has no hold on me anymore, but has been thrown into the sea. Praise God!

He will again have compassion on us; He will crush our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

MICAH 7:19

As we fast this week, bring the impurities in your life before the Lord. Our Father is still at work, and he is willing to transform our lives. Why? Because our Creator wants to impart his life to us to enable us to experience deeper relationship with him. He knows who we truly are, and is ready to make us clean.

*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

PSALM 51:7

He loves us so much that he was willing to sacrifice himself so that through the blood of Jesus we are cleansed and our sins washed away. When I realized that I could bring all my heavy burdens—my shame and guilt—unto him, and that he accepted me, I have never felt so free in my life. Since my eyes were opened to see the Father, shame and guilt can no longer direct my life. Now I can go to the Father because Jesus has cleansed me from impurities.

Don't let the enemy's lie that you are unworthy or unclean convince you that you can't be loved by God. Be assured that he loves you and longs to transform your life, once and for all.

Pray

Lord, here I am. I am broken, but I believe that Jesus came and died for me. He was resurrected from the grave so I can be made clean, forgiven, and redeemed. Show me the areas of my life that I need to surrender to you. Cleanse me and make me new in you. Amen.

DAY THREE

CLEANSE ME FROM IDOLS

■ BRAD ORTENZI

Where are the idols in our lives?

My dear children, guard yourselves from idols.

1 JOHN 5:21

John is very direct in his short command. Have no idols. When we delve into the context of who he was speaking to, the believers of Ephesus, it becomes clear why he would warn his readers of idols. Ephesus was filled with ancient gods and stories of their existence. Also located in Ephesus was the Temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the ancient world. It seems as if the people of Ephesus had idols infused into their culture.

What is an idol? John is referring to anything that is a representation of the one true God. The operative word here is “representation,” or that which is taking the place of God. In the Ephesian culture, idols were in the form of trinkets, small gods, and lore.

What about our culture? What of our idols? Certainly, in our modern-day Christianity, we don't have idols infused into our culture! Or do we?

When the pandemic, civil unrest, and the slipping away of our country's stability occurred, many of us began to realize that the comfort and stability of life that we were used to was no longer attainable. Daily life became frustrating, complicated, and messy. Polarization was rampant—sometimes even between Christians. The things we relied on seemed to be drifting away. If you're like me, you may have begun to realize that the comfort and stability of daily life had become an idol. I realized that I placed some things before God.

Idols can easily creep into our lives. We need to be careful what we cling to and what we claim as security. Often, we need to cleanse ourselves of idols that inadvertently seep into our lives and take a place in our hearts belonging only to God. Common idols in our current culture could be family, wealth, career success, image, comfort, and security. Our Western culture may not have large temples of idols infused within, but we do have things that take up residence in our hearts that should belong only to God.

Cleansing our idols may sting a bit as we replace the idol with God and his promises. As we do this, we can take solace in Proverbs 3:5-6: *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.*

Pray

Jesus, we recognize that we are prone to allowing idols to become our focus, instead of you. We acknowledge that we allow idols to make us feel safe and secure in unstable times. Holy Spirit, shine your light in our hearts and search us and bring light to all things that we put before you. We declare that you are above all things and hold the security that we desperately need.

DAY FOUR

GIVE ME A NEW HEART

■ DANAE JENSEN

The condition of the human heart is inherently sinful and dead. Romans 5:12 says, *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned.* But praise God he didn't leave all of humanity in that state! Instead, he made a way to restore our hearts to new life and holiness. The process of restoring our hearts is one which can only be done by the power of God.

King David, after being confronted for committing adultery and covering it up with murder, wrote the well-known Psalm 51. He pleaded with God: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me* (vs. 10). The Hebrew verb **bara**, which is translated as the word “create” at the beginning of the verse, is also used in Genesis 1 for the creation of the heavens and the earth by God. The word describes what only God can do—create something out of nothing. (Boice) David was asking God to do nothing short of a miracle when he asked for a clean heart. (Kidner)

David also recognized he needed God's help to maintain a clean heart. He asked the Lord to renew in him a steadfast spirit: a firm spirit, firm for God, able to resist the devil, steadfast in the faith, and to abide constantly in the way that is called holy. (Trapp) His request for God to renew a steadfast spirit in him was a humble expression on his reliance upon the LORD. (Guzik) In Psalm 51, verse 6, David writes: *Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.* Although the sin nature ran deep within his heart, David had faith that God's transforming power would run even deeper.

When we come to the Lord surrendered, repentant, and seeking his forgiveness, that is the ultimate sacrifice we can offer him, and he will never reject it.

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

PSALM 51:17 (ESV)

God is eager to restore our hearts. As we approach him with humility and a surrendered spirit, we can be confident he will create clean hearts in us.

Thoughts from various authors noted in parentheses are from the Enduring Word Bible Commentary at enduringword.com.

DAY FIVE

A HEART TRANSPLANT - THE ONLY ANSWER

■ THERESA NEWELL

Ezekiel knew of the hard, obstinate hearts of his fellow Israelites because God had warned him that he was sending him to “*a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me . . . obstinate and stubborn*” (Ezekiel 2: 3,4). The prophet had earlier spoken God’s promise to remove their hearts of stone and replace it with hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19). They would not listen to God or his prophet, perhaps the reason for the repetition.

Only one solution is possible to make such a change: God must perform a heart transplant. God, the surgeon and remover of stony hearts, would have to take the initiative and provide the solution.

The heart was understood to be the center of the moral will. Ezekiel by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit described the Israelites’ hearts as promiscuous, insincere, double-minded. They worshiped the true God and their idols simultaneously. They doubted that Yahweh alone could provide for their needs.

But God despises man's religion that compromises his majesty and proposes that false gods reeking with the stench of idolatry are his equal.

This "heart of stone" is a petrified organ—cold, insensitive, incorrigible, as lifeless as Nabal's dead heart (1 Samuel 25:37). This heart cannot be resuscitated. No amount of CPR will heal it. The only hope is for it to be surgically removed and replaced with a "heart of flesh," a heart that is pliable, soft, alive. A heart that is singularly focused on the true and living God, a heart filled with God's grace, mercy, and compassion. This new heart will be undivided in its allegiance to and love of God—what Jeremiah called "a single heart" (Jeremiah 32:39).

Jesus dealt with this "heart problem" when he disavowed the notion among the religious of his day that external, legalistic good acts could win favor with God. He said that what is in my heart is what will come out of my mouth: that we have a heart problem, not a doing-good-deeds problem. The center of my moral will, the heart, is what houses my intentions and thoughts, good or evil, Jesus said (Matthew 15: 17-20). A stony heart can act but never can it love.

Paul anguished over sinful hearts hoping to please God by clinging to legal performance and perfectionism (one of many idols):

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

ROMANS 7:24

He gives the answer to the “Who?”: Jesus Christ our Lord.

During this season of fasting and prayer, may God reveal our hearts to ourselves and give us courage by his grace to confess our need for “a heart of flesh.” Where is my heart cold, unloving, dead, insincere, or deceitful? A hard question—but such identification will help us, by his mercy, to cry out to him for the heart transplant that we desperately need and hopefully desire. Lord, I want to walk intimately with you, my Father, in the grace, compassion, and love which reflects your heart for all.

DAY SIX

AS YOU WISH

■ CALEB GUDGEON

Have you ever spent so much time with someone that you begin to act or talk like them? We all have picked up on characteristics, both good and bad, from family members, friends, spouses, coworkers, etc. This doesn't have to be a bad thing; we can become better men and women of God when we intentionally surround ourselves with those who put God first.

Our relationship with God has the same effect on us as any other relationship. As we spend more time with God, the more we act and talk like him. Jesus said, *"If you love me, keep my commands."* (John 14:15, NIV). Our relationship with God is not based on our performance, yet this scripture says to *"keep (or obey) my commands."* It is easy to fall into a performance mentality when reading that portion of scripture. But when we ask Jesus, as the tricky Pharisee did, "God, what is your greatest commandment?" Jesus answers with one of the most eye-opening revelations of scripture and the law:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

MATTHEW 22:37-40

One of my favorite movies growing up came from the \$5 bin at WalMart. My dad brought home this VHS having no idea the treasure he found—*The Princess Bride*. The opening of the movie describes the story of a young woman, Buttercup, and a young man, Westly. Westly was a working hand on the farm where Buttercup lived. Whenever she asked him to help with a chore on the farm, he would only reply with, “As you wish.” This became a normal occurrence in their relationship. The narrator explains that she later realized that when he said “As you wish” he was really saying, “I love you.” And he did what she asked of him.

Westly showed love by doing what Buttercup asked. He was not trying to prove his love, but he was just acting out of his love. This is how we can approach these scriptures: “If you love me, keep my commands” and “Love God and love your neighbor.” God is saying that when we truly love him, we will act out of love. We are called to be like God.

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

1 PETER 1:15-16

God isn't saying, "Prove your love for me." He is simply saying we should truly love Jesus, follow in his ways, and start acting and talking more like him. It takes hard work, and it takes spending quality time with our heavenly Father. The more time we spend with him, the more we act like him, talk like him, and love like him. Let's start emulating Jesus.

DAY SEVEN

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

■ TINA MARTIN

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

MATTHEW 5:14-16

There are reminders all around us that our world is dark, hurting, confused, and so desperately in need of the light of Jesus' love and truth! But sometimes in the day-to-day, in the running here and there, and our focusing on this or that, we forget that WE carry that light, that WE are the reflection of Jesus that the world, our neighborhood, our schools, and our workplaces will see and hear.

This week we have walked through the verses from Ezekiel and seen how God desires to give us fresh anointing, to cleanse us, transform us into his image, and give us hearts that desire to follow him. What an exciting and beautiful work he is doing in

us as we surrender to him and ask him to create a clean heart in us! As we live this out, the truth of who he is and what he can do will shine brighter in our lives than ever before.

In the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5, we read Jesus' words about being a light on a hill—a light for everyone to see so that they will praise our heavenly Father! Philippians 2:14-15 says: *Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.* It's only because of the transforming power of Jesus that we can live "clean, innocent" lives that truly reflect him.

What is the world around you seeing and hearing through your life? What do they see and hear when they see your posts on social media, when they hear you talk about your child's teacher or your coworker, or when there is a need that arises in the community? When we are abiding in Christ, his Spirit WILL flow through us. Galatians 5:22-23 says that the Holy Spirit bears fruit in us so they will see and hear love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Remember, this isn't about us "striving" to attain these gifts but rather it's the work of the Holy Spirit within us. We have been created "For such a time as this," and as we walk out the gifts and callings God has placed in us, and commit to remaining fully in him, the light of Jesus will draw a dark and hurting world into his truth and freedom.

Kids' Devotions



Hello families!

I know fasting can seem like a big unknown. And I know it can sound like something only adults do. But when kids participate in fasting, it begins to give them the tools they need to practice self-discipline and to put God first. Kids like their desserts, TV shows, and video games. By actively choosing to fast in one of these areas they learn that yes, they do have the ability to make smart choices. Take time to discuss the fast with your children. Talk about what it means to fast and then let them decide what they might be willing to go without for the week. Even encourage them to ask Jesus what he wants them to give up. This makes it more personal for them—not just another thing mom or dad is telling them to do. You can even choose something as a family. This is beneficial, especially for younger children.

In this booklet we have included age-appropriate devotions and activities for children to walk through during the week. This will help them engage in what they are doing. Our theme this year is Create in Me a Clean Heart, based on Ezekiel 36: 25-27. Our devotional activities will include readings from different sections of scripture as well. We are making a heart puzzle together that represents how God can give us clean hearts when we ask and trust the Holy Spirit. You can pick up everything you need at the Kids' Hub.

We pray that, as you go through these devotions and activities together, your family will experience the love and faithfulness of God in a new way.

Andrea Kauffman
Children's Pastor

DAY 1

How's Your Heart?

■ Andrea Kauffman

When we fast, it is important to start by focusing on God. It can be easy to focus on ourselves: our wants, our needs, our problems. But when we turn our eyes to God and focus on who he is, the small things in our life can start to disappear. Our theme this week is Create in Me a Clean Heart. Our desire this week is to spend time looking at the parts of our heart that God may want to clean out. Let's read Psalm 51:10 together: Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Sometimes we make our walk with God more complicated than it needs to be. So often, all we have to do is ask for help. Like in this psalm – David is asking God to clean out his heart, to renew it. Prayers like that make God so happy! He wants to help you change and grow. That is part of fasting—growing closer to God and cleaning out the things that aren't good for us. Now take a minute to pray and ask God what he would like you to fast from this week. It could be a type of food, desserts, screens, or anything that you really enjoy and spend time doing.

During the week, when you want to watch something or have a treat, think about God's love for you instead and thank him for helping you to grow closer to him!

Activity

Find puzzle piece #1 and cut it out. Draw or write on it what you have chosen to fast from this week. Glue it to your heart. Pray and ask God to help you as you fast and spend time focusing on him. Ask the Holy Spirit to come and show you the areas of your heart that may need some cleaning.

DAY 2

A Clean Heart

■ Emily Buck

Let's read a part of our theme verse, Ezekiel 36:25b: "*Your filth will be washed away . . .*" Some versions of the Bible use the word "impurities". That is a very big word that you may not know or see often. "Im" means the opposite of and "purities" is the plural of purity. You might know the word "pure." Some other words for pure are clean, fresh, clear, and simple. So impurities means not pure, or not clean.

Close your eyes and imagine a freshly filled, warm bathtub with lots of bubbles. Now, imagine jumping in it with mud on your feet, legs, arms, face, and hands. Yuck! The bathtub is not so clean anymore, is it? The bubbles melted away and the water is now murky and brown. The water was clean and pure, but now it has impurities in it like dirt, sand, and maybe even grass.

The Bible says that Jesus can help us get the impurities out of our lives and hearts. Ask God to reveal to you anything that

might be impure in your life.

Look up **Philippians 4:8** in your Bible and read it out loud. Paul gave us some clues in this verse of what we can fill our hearts and lives with. Can you find them? There are 8.

Finally, brothers,

whatever is _____,

whatever is _____,

whatever is _____,

whatever is _____,

whatever is _____,

whatever is _____

– if anything is

_____ or _____

– think about those things.

Activity

On puzzle piece #2, draw a bunch of bubbles to remind us to be clean and pure in Jesus. Cut it out and glue it to your big heart!

DAY 3

A Heart for God

■ Erika Sifford

“I will cleanse you . . . from all your idols.”

Ezekiel 36:25b

You might be thinking, aren't idols those golden statues from the Old Testament? Or maybe you are asking, what is an idol? In Bible times, idols were statues or other created objects that people worshipped in place of God. They were false, or fake, gods. We can see one example of this in the book of Exodus when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. They had gotten bored with waiting to hear from God and were doubting his presence. They built an idol in the shape of a golden calf because they desired something to worship. They believed this statue could lead and guide them! The idol distracted the Israelites and replaced the one true God in their lives.

How in the world does this apply to us today? We aren't

building golden calves! That may be true, but there are things in our lives that may be pulling at our attention and trying to distract us from our relationship with God. Think about your video game system, your favorite TV shows, your choice hobby, or that delicious dessert. These are examples of things that can become idols in our lives if we give them more attention or time than we give to God. As you continue to fast this week, ask God to show you what distracts you from him and ask him to help you devote more time to him. May you come to know this week that God is way better than any idol!

Spend a few minutes talking with your family about the things that you spend a lot of time doing. Are these things distracting you from your relationship with God? Pray together, asking God to refresh your desire to spend time with him above everything else!

Activity

After your prayer, color puzzle piece #3. Then cut it out and glue it on the heart.

DAY 4

A New Heart

■ Jenny Sensenig

The last two days we talked about cleansing from Impurities and Idols. When we have cleansed ourselves from our sinful nature and the things we hold higher than God, we are given a new heart! A transformation takes place. Transformation? That's a big word. What does it mean? The dictionary tells us it is "A dramatic change in form or appearance." The Bible tells us God is doing a work in us! We can't change ourselves by our own work. We need help. God is right there doing the work already. We get to partner with him. I bet you are asking, how do I do that?

Remember a time you have seen a beautiful butterfly outside. It didn't just show up like that one day. It had to go through a process of getting to that stage. God created it as a caterpillar. Its skin was a little rough, and it may have had some prickly antennae on it. This is much like when we are dealing with sin in our lives. We may have lied to our parents about something

or hurt someone's feelings. Life can feel tough when we know we have done something wrong or have wronged another person. This is where we can take the opportunity to pray and ask God to cleanse us and give us a new heart. The story of our caterpillar continues . . . it builds a cocoon around itself, and at just the right time it will come out transformed. A new creation! Just like us. When we ask God to forgive our sins, we are also new. Transformed. We have grown into something beautiful, too!

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

2 Corinthians 5:17

Activity

Today you can color your butterfly puzzle piece (#4) and remember that God has transformed your heart. He is continuing the ongoing work of molding you into the image of Jesus!

DAY 5

A Soft Heart

■ Andrea Kauffman

Sometimes it's confusing talking about our hearts as being hard and soft. If we think about our physical heart, the one that pumps blood through our body and helps us live, it's hard to imagine that heart as hard. What would happen if it were to become hard? Easy, right? The blood would stop pumping and we would die. We need our physical heart to be soft so that it can keep that blood flowing!

The heart we are talking about this week is our spiritual heart. It's the part of us that feels, cares, and loves. But it can also be hurt, especially when someone else hurts us or says something unkind. If that happens too often, we can try to protect ourselves by not letting our hearts feel anything, or letting our hearts get hard. God doesn't want us walking around with hard hearts, because then we can't do the big things he has asked us to do: love him and love people. That's not possible when you have a hard heart!

I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender responsive heart.

Ezekiel 36:26b

Think about your heart. How is it doing right now? Have you been hurt and it's feeling a little bruised? Like maybe it's starting to want to keep people out? By taking those hurts to God, sharing them with a grown-up, and forgiving those who hurt us, we can keep our hearts soft and able to do the work God has for us.

Activity

Find puzzle piece #5 and cut it out. Color a red heart in the center of it and then fill in the rest of the piece with gray or black. This represents a heart of stone becoming soft and loving. Pray and ask God to help you have a heart that is soft and close to him.

DAY 6

An Obedient Heart

■ Emily Buck

Did you know there are different ways to follow someone? You can follow them by walking right behind them in a straight line. You can also follow someone by doing the same actions as them. For instance, if your dad or mom really likes playing basketball, you will probably follow along and play with him or her, maybe even with a little basketball net.

Sometimes we follow our grown-up's words, too. You may say the same prayer around the dinner table each night or the same cheer at a sporting event. You love your grown-ups so much that you want to follow them and be like them.

Jesus wants us to follow him, too! In Deuteronomy 13:4, it says, *It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him.*

Can you think of a way we can follow Jesus this week? Maybe be kind to our siblings, obey our grown-ups, or serve around the house by cleaning up after ourselves.

Activity

On puzzle piece #6, color in the footsteps and think about a way you can follow Jesus this week. Cut it out and add it to your heart.

DAY 7

A Shining Heart

■ Erika Sifford

Imagine you are in a very dark room. The room is messy and full of furniture. You need to get across the room without bumping into or stepping on anything. What would help make that easier? LIGHT! Just a small amount of light in a dark room can help you cross it safely. Light cuts through darkness making everything easier to see.

The world tends to be full of sadness, unkindness, and fear. But we, as Christians, know God, and his spirit lives inside of us. God's love and joy fill us up and overcome the darkness in the world around us. This reminds me of a verse in Matthew.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good

deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Like this verse says, let your light shine! There are so many ways to shine the light of Jesus to the world around us. Sharing your toys, playing with a friend when they are sad, and holding the door for a stranger are just a few examples of how God's light can shine through you!

Activity

With your family, discuss some ways that you can shine God's light to your friends, neighbors, and strangers! Then on puzzle piece #7, draw a candle with a big flame to represent God's light that shines through you! Glue your last piece onto the heart. Hang up your heart somewhere to remind you of all that you learned this week! Now go and let God's light shine through you!

Petra Missionaries

Long-Term and Associate Missionaries

Mario and Jeanette Araya
Lazaro “Nacho” and Merrilee Barrera and Family
Trevor and Lead Derr and Family
JC and Lois Ebersole
Marta Estrada
Bruce and Joyce Heckman
Darryl and Joyce Henson
Nicole Hurst
Daniel and Jamie Jones and Family
Arlen and Keturah King and Family
Joe and Jeniece Kingman and Family
Randy and Bonnie Martin
Tina Moore
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