

Empowerment

2026 LENT FAST GUIDE

"A SEASON OF STANDARD SETTING"

This Lent season is more than just a fast—it's a season of standard setting. A standard is the level we allow ourselves to live on emotionally, physically, financially, and spiritually—but a standard is not truly a standard unless we are willing to suffer for it.

We must be willing to sacrifice comfort, convenience, and even certain desires to rise to the level God is calling us to.

This journey is about establishing new boundaries and embracing new daily disciplines that will shape our future.

Just as athletes train their bodies, we must train our minds and spirits, refusing to live beneath the level of excellence God has designed for us. Through fasting, prayer, and intentional focus, we will remove distractions, reject compromise, and reset our lives to align with God's best.

This is not about temporary change—this is about building a lifestyle that reflects discipline, holiness, and unwavering faith.

Let this be the season you decide:

I will not lower my standard to match my comfort,
I will raise my life to match my calling.

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Family,

I'm so excited for us to embark on this season of standard setting together. This is more than just a fast—it's an intentional pursuit of God, a time to realign our lives with His will, and an opportunity to let go of distractions that pull us away from His purpose.

Fasting is not about deprivation—it's about devotion. It's not about dieting food - it's about disciplining flesh. It's a deliberate act of saying, "God, You are more important than anything else in my life." Throughout Scripture, we see that when people fasted with the right heart, God moved in powerful ways. Isaiah 58 reminds us that fasting isn't just about what we give up—it's about setting a new standard of living, breaking free from strongholds, and becoming more like Jesus.

Samson's story warns us what happens when we live without discipline. He was anointed but distracted, strong but unguarded. He lost his power because he compromised his standards.

We are setting this time aside to become to be disciplined from distractions and delivered from what holds us back. So as we begin this journey, I encourage you to press in with expectation. Ask yourself: What am I giving up to go up?

God honors the heart that seeks Him, and I believe He will move in ways you've never experienced before.

Let's commit together to raise the standard in our faith, our focus, and our obedience. I'm standing with you, praying for you, and believing that on the other side of this fast!

Let's go after Him together!
– Pastor Teddy

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We have been learning from Samson's life the danger of living without Godly standards. Samson was set apart from birth with a special vow (Judges 13:5), but he compromised that calling by giving in to distractions—most famously, Delilah's persistence (Judges 16).

Samson lacked discipline and repeatedly broke boundaries God had set for him. Ultimately, he revealed the secret of his strength and fell asleep in Delilah's lap, waking to find his hair cut and his power gone. The saddest part is in Judges 16:20:
"He did not know that the Lord had left him."

Because Samson didn't guard his heart or uphold his standards, he lost the presence and power of God in his life. His story is a sobering reminder: if we don't set and keep godly standards, distractions and temptations can derail our destiny.

Fasting, especially during Lent, is one way we raise our spiritual standard and refocus on God. Fasting is more than just abstaining from food—it's about removing distractions, breaking free from bad habits, and surrendering anything that hinders our walk with God. Whether it's turning off the TV, stepping away from social media, or refraining from negative talk, fasting means:
"Turning away from things that dull our spirits and getting alone with God."

Like Isaiah 58 teaches, fasting should lead us to repentance and compassion. It's a tool to discipline our flesh and draw closer to God.

Ask the Lord to show you what "Delilahs" might be distracting you—perhaps certain entertainment, unhealthy relationships, or lingering compromises. Decide today that you will give those up in order to go up to a new level with God. By setting new standards of holiness and focus, we open the door for God to work in us.

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This journey will focus on three critical areas of spiritual growth, using Samson's story as a cautionary tale and Jesus' life as the ultimate model:

1. **Biblical Discernment** – Strengthening the ability to recognize truth from deception.
2. **Biblical Boundaries** – Setting healthy limits that protect our calling.
3. **Principle-Centered Living** – Making decisions rooted in God's unchanging truth.

Samson's downfall wasn't just a matter of physical strength—it was a failure of spiritual discipline. He compromised his values, lacked discernment, ignored God's boundaries, and ultimately lost his God-given power.

This Lent, let's commit to breaking patterns of deception, guarding our destiny with healthy boundaries, and living by God's principles.

- What distraction(s) will you remove that cloud your spiritual discernment (e.g., excessive social media, negative conversations, unnecessary entertainment)?
- What food(s) will you fast from food in a way that reminds you of your dependence on God (e.g., Daniel Fast, one meal a day, or another form of fasting)?
- What boundaries will you establish by cutting out activities or relationships that weaken your faith?
- Will you commit to focusing on renewing your mind through Scripture, prayer, and journaling?
- Will you commit to sacrificing personal comforts to serve others and live selflessly like Jesus?
- Will you commit to reflecting on what you've learned and create a plan to continue living in discernment, boundaries, and principles beyond Lent?

Suggestions of Things to Give Up, So You Can Go Up *Habits, distractions, and behaviors to surrender in order to grow spiritually.*

- **Pride and self-centeredness** – Let go of pride by embracing humility. Remember that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6), so surrender self-importance and seek to exalt God and others.
- **Unforgiveness and bitterness** – Give up grudges and choose to forgive others. Jesus taught that when we stand praying we should forgive anyone we hold anything against, so that our Father will also forgive us (Mark 11:25). Releasing bitterness opens your heart for God’s love to heal and uplift you.
- **Negative speech (complaining, gossip, criticism)** – Cut out unwholesome talk and constant complaining. Scripture says, “Do everything without complaining or arguing” so that we may be blameless and shine for God (Philippians 2:14-15). Instead, speak words that build others up (Ephesians 4:29)
- **Worry and anxiety** – Give up continual worry by entrusting your cares to God. The Bible urges us to “cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Release anxious thoughts in prayer and embrace the peace that comes from trusting God one day at a time (Matthew 6:34).
- **Materialism and love of money** – Surrender greed and the pursuit of worldly wealth. Jesus warned that we cannot serve two masters and that we “cannot serve God and money” (Matthew 6:24). Choose to value eternal treasures over earthly possessions, practicing contentment and generosity.

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- **Distracting idols (entertainment, social media, etc.)** – Lay aside any distraction or “weight” that hinders your walk with God. Pray like the psalmist: “Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways” (Psalm 119:37). By giving up or limiting things like excessive screen time or trivial entertainments, you free up time and focus for God.
- **Anger and quick temper** – Let go of rage, constant anger, and irritability. Scripture says, “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger...along with every form of malice” (Ephesians 4:31). Release your anger to God and allow Him to replace it with patience, understanding, and compassion.
- **Envy and comparison** – Give up measuring yourself against others. Envy only stunts spiritual growth. Instead, practice gratitude and love. The Bible urges us to avoid envy and boastfulness, and to rejoice with those who rejoice (Galatians 5:26, Romans 12:15 – implied). Surrendering envy leads to contentment in God’s unique plan for you.
- **Laziness and spiritual apathy** – Surrender a complacent, “lazy” approach to your faith. The Bible encourages, “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11). Trade idle procrastination for disciplined prayer, Bible reading, and active service, trusting God to reward your diligence.
- **Self-reliance (independence from God)** – Give up the habit of going it alone without prayer. Jesus said, “Apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5 – implied). Humble yourself to acknowledge your need for God in every decision. Surrendering self-reliance means praying first, seeking God’s will, and depending on the Holy Spirit’s strength instead of your own.

Suggestions Of Things to Believe God to Burn Up

Strongholds, burdens, and patterns to ask God to eliminate completely.

- **Addictive habits and secret sins** – Trust God to burn up and destroy addictions (whether to substances, pornography, etc.) so they no longer have any hold on you. Jesus promises true freedom: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). Believe that His power can break every chain and purge away even deeply rooted sin.
- **Fear and a spirit of timidity** – Pray for God’s consuming fire to eliminate irrational fear, insecurity, and timidity. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). By His Spirit, ask God to burn away crippling fear and replace it with bold faith and peace.
- **Bitterness and unforgiving spirit** – Ask God to uproot any bitter root and unforgiveness that you can’t seem to shake on your own. His love can burn up resentment that has hardened over time. “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger...forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31-32). Trust God to melt your hardened heart so you can truly forgive and be free.
- **Prideful or stubborn attitude** – Believe God to refine away pride and ego through His “refiner’s fire” (Malachi 3:2-3). Pride can be a stronghold, but God can humble us in love. He may allow trials to burn up our self-exaltation, since “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6). Surrender your pride and invite God’s refining work.
- **Generational strongholds or family patterns** – Pray in faith that destructive patterns (anger, alcoholism, etc. in a family line) will be burned up by God’s power. Like the believers in Ephesus who burned their sorcery scrolls as a sign of breaking with the past, ask God to completely destroy curses or cycles that have bound your family, replacing them with a new legacy of blessing.

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- Lies and ungodly thought patterns – Believe God to demolish false beliefs you’ve held about yourself or Him. “The weapons we fight with... have divine power to demolish strongholds...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Pray for God’s truth to burn up Satan’s lies in your mind – for example, the lie that you are unloved or that you cannot change – until only His truth remains.
- Shame and guilt from the past – Ask God to completely consume the heavy burden of shame with His love and forgiveness. His Word assures us there is “now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Believe that through Jesus’ sacrifice, God’s grace will burn away the lingering guilt over past sins and failures, leaving you cleansed and free.
- Spiritual apathy and complacency – Pray for God to ignite a holy fire in your heart that burns up lukewarm faith. He can deliver you from apathy by stirring passion for Him. Jesus warned against being lukewarm in faith (Revelation 3:16 – implied). Ask God for revival in your soul, that any indifference would be consumed and replaced with zeal for His presence.
- Chains of “impossible” situations – Entrust to God the burdens or obstacles that seem humanly impossible to remove (a hardened loved one, a deep debt, an unjust situation). Remember that our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29) who can do far beyond what we ask or imagine. Believe Him to burn up those barriers completely, demonstrating that “what is impossible with man is possible with God” (Luke 18:27 – implied).

Suggestions Of Things to Fast From

Practical and spiritual elements to abstain from during the fast.

- **Certain foods or meals** – Abstain from rich foods, snacks, or even entire meals for a time, devoting that hunger to prayer. For example, Daniel ate “no delicacies, no meat or wine” for three weeks while seeking God (Daniel 10:3). By fasting from sweets, caffeine, or a meal each day, you remind yourself that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word from God” (Matthew 4:4).
- **Social media and digital entertainment** – Consider a fast from social media, video streaming, or gaming. Constant digital input can clutter our minds. Stepping away from Facebook/Instagram, YouTube, or TV for Lent creates space for scripture, prayer, and real-life relationships. As Psalm 119:37 says, “Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways” – a reminder to focus on what enriches the soul.
- **Negative words and complaining** – Try a “complaint fast,” consciously refraining from negative talk, gossip, or criticism. Commit that for this season, you will not voice grumbling or tear others down. Replace those habits with gratitude and praise. Scripture encourages us, “Do everything without complaining or arguing... so that you may become blameless and pure” (Philippians 2:14). Fasting from negativity can transform your mindset.
- **Unnecessary spending or shopping** – Fast from non-essential purchases and indulgent spending. Avoid dining out, impulse buys, or luxury expenses during this time. Redirect those funds or resources to charity or those in need, which aligns with the spirit of Isaiah 58:6-7 (true fasting involves helping the oppressed and hungry). This fast breaks the hold of materialism and teaches generosity and simplicity.

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- **Secular music or media that dulls your spirit** – Some choose to fast from certain music, podcasts, or reading that doesn't edify. For example, you might listen only to worship music or Christian radio during Lent instead of mainstream songs. By fasting from media that might glorify values contrary to your faith, you "set your minds on things above" (Colossians 3:2) and sharpen your focus on God's voice.
- **Idle screen time (mindless browsing/TV)** – Abstain from mindless late-night TV binges, endless news scrolling, or TikTok/YouTube rabbit holes. Instead of spending that hour on Netflix, use it to pray, read a devotional, or get needed rest. As one example, if you're used to binge-watching shows until midnight, decide that "for the next forty days, the television stays off". This fast from idle entertainment can help reset healthier habits.
- **Fast from sleep-in laziness (rise earlier for devotion)** – While not a traditional "fast," some choose to sacrifice a bit of sleep or comfort by waking up earlier for prayer. Denying the flesh's desire to hit snooze can be an offering to God. Psalm 5:3 exemplifies this: "In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you." Getting up 30 minutes earlier to seek God is a practical fast from ease that can deepen your devotion life.
- **Sweets, sugar or specific treats** – Many people give up things like desserts, soda, or coffee for Lent. If sweets or a daily latte have a strong hold on you, fasting from them is both a physical and spiritual exercise in self-control. It's a small way to share in Christ's self-denial. Every time you crave that candy bar or caffeine boost, let it prompt you to pray and remember Jesus' sacrifice.
- **Anything that has become an idol** – The guiding principle: fast from whatever occupies your heart more than God. It could be sports, your phone, fiction novels, or even a hobby. If you suspect, "I might be devoting too much attention and time to this," consider laying it down for Lent.

Suggestions of Things to Believe God For

Positive outcomes, blessings, and breakthroughs to trust God for during this fast:

- **Deeper intimacy with God & Spiritual Renewal** – Pray and believe for a closer walk with the Lord than you've ever had. James 4:8 promises, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." Expect that as you seek Him through fasting and prayer, you will experience His presence in new ways – a greater sensitivity to His voice, love for His Word, and consistency in prayer.
- **The salvation of loved ones** – Use this season to believe God for family members or friends to come to faith in Jesus. Lift their names to God daily, asking Him to soften hearts and arrange circumstances for their salvation. Remember the promise to the Philippian jailer: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household" (Acts 16:31). Have faith that God's grace will reach your household as well.
- **Healing and deliverance** – Seek God for healing (physical, emotional, or mental) for yourself and others. Jesus is still the Great Physician, and nothing is too hard for Him. Present that chronic illness, pain, or wound from the past to Him in faith. Also believe for deliverance from oppression or demonic strongholds. "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" in bringing healing (James 5:16b) – so during Lent, pray boldly for miracles.
- **Guidance, wisdom, and clarity of purpose** – If you're facing major decisions or seeking direction, trust that God will light your path. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart... and He will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6 – paraphrase). During this fasting period, ask God for wisdom (James 1:5 says He gives it generously) regarding your calling, career, or any pressing choices. Believe that by Easter, you will have clearer vision for the next steps in His plan.

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- **Greater fruit of the Spirit –** Yearn for your character to be transformed more into Christ's likeness. Pray specifically for fruits like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc., to grow in you (Galatians 5:22-23). For example, if you struggle with impatience or irritability, believe God to produce supernatural patience in you through this season. "By their fruit you will recognize them" – expect the Holy Spirit to cultivate noticeable new fruit in your life as you yield to Him.
- **Financial provision and career breakthrough –** Bring your practical needs to God, trusting Him as Provider. Whether it's a job opportunity, financial debt, or some material need, have faith that "God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Maybe you're fasting for a job promotion or direction in business – commit it to God and expect Him to open doors that no one can shut.
- **New opportunities to serve and make a difference –** Believe God to show you how He wants to use you. Perhaps during this fast He'll birth a vision for a ministry, volunteer work, or creative project to bless others. Be open as you pray, "Here I am, send me" (Isaiah 6:8). You might end up mentoring youth, starting a Bible study at work, or serving the poor – ask God for the breakthrough of discovering (or re-igniting) the good works He prepared for you to do (Ephesians 2:10).
- **Revival in your church or community –** Expand your faith to ask not just for personal change, but for corporate revival. During Lent, many believers unite in prayer – so pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on your church, that lukewarm attendees would catch fire, leaders be renewed, and new people come to Christ. 2 Chronicles 7:14 promises that if God's people humble themselves, pray, and turn from wickedness, He will heal their land.

