

Foreword by CRAIG GROESCHEL

AWAKENING

A New Approach to Faith, Fasting, and Spiritual Freedom

21 Days
to
Revolutionize
your
Relationship
with
God

STOVALL
WEEMS



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DEAR READER,

I am so glad you've decided to participate in an extended time of fasting and prayer! I can assure you that this will be an experience like no other. I have found that there is no better way to reset my spiritual compass and bring about refreshing in every area of my life than through prayer and fasting.

The "Awakening 21-Day Plan" is flexibly designed so that you can participate at any level. Whether you have done a twenty-one-day season of prayer and fasting before or if this is your first time, you can start where you are and experience what God has in store for you in a powerful way.

The tools provided in this section are a practical guideline to help you navigate through your personal twenty-one-day plan. As you read over the information, consider how it applies to your personal circumstances and convictions.

Your twenty-one-day plan is designed to walk you through the daily practice of the key topics we've discussed in this book:

- experiencing surrender
- experiencing passion for God

- experiencing God’s goodness
- creating space for God to fill

Every installment of the twenty-one-day plan includes these features: devotional, “Bible Reading Plan,” “Prayer Focus,” and “The Awakening Journey” — a place for you to record your thoughts as your fast progresses. There’s also the “Optional Book Reading Plan” that will guide you through a complete reading of *Awakening* during the twenty-one days. And, finally, if you would like to gather with friends for support and fellowship during the twenty-one-day experience, I have included a three-session “Small Group Study Guide” for your use.

I assure you, this will be your best year ever if it is your best year *spiritually*. I pray that you will experience the presence and power of God in an extraordinary way as you commit yourself to Him over the next twenty-one days. May God continue to bless you and enlarge you as you seek Him first!

Stovall Weems

WHY TWENTY-ONE DAYS?

Awakening is a lifestyle, and learning how to incorporate the principles we’ve discussed into your everyday life is easy and sustainable. I’ve found that when people pray and read their Bibles for twenty-one days in a row, as with most activities done continually for that long, it becomes a habit. And when people experience the power of a twenty-one-day fast, it easily becomes a natural part of their lives.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

In addition to the tools provided in this twenty-one-day plan, you will need a Bible. Most of the Scripture references I have used in this book are from the New King James Version, but it’s important that you find a translation that

works for you. The New International Version and the New Living Translation are also great and easy to read.

In addition, I recommend the use of a personal journal, which will help you capture and record all of the incredible things God is speaking into your life. Having your personal preference of worship music readily available on a CD or on your iPod is a great idea as well. And of course, depending on the type of fast you choose to follow, some preparation is required, too. I will be discussing this in the section on fasting.

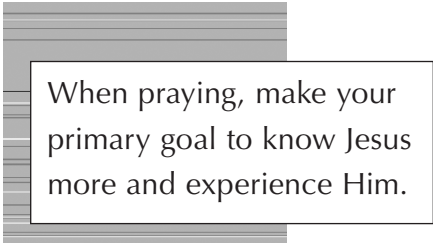
I also recommend having a scratch pad available. This is for writing down all those annoying things that will creep in while you're trying to focus on God's voice. Use the scratch pad to make a to-do list of things to accomplish later so that you can get them out of your mind during this time devoted to God.

Lastly, you need to choose a place and time. Prayer, Bible reading, and personal devotions are foundational parts of this plan. Choosing a spot and even a specific place where you will seek God every day is so important, whether this means getting up thirty minutes earlier in the morning or finding some quiet space in your car on your lunch break. If you know where and when you plan to meet God, you are more likely to show up. He will certainly be there waiting for you!

PRAYER

Your twenty-one-day plan will include prayer as a key part of your daily practice. As you prepare for the next twenty-one days, it can be tempting to start thinking of a laundry list of prayers you'd love to see answered. But I encourage you to keep this simple. Think about the top two or three things most pressing on your heart and zone in on those with God. Write these in your journal and be open to hearing what He wants to show you in those areas. Remember, the breakthroughs, miracles, and answers to your prayers will be by-products of drawing closer to Jesus.

When praying, make your primary goal to know Jesus more and experience Him. Remember to focus on the goodness, greatness, and glory of God. Pray prayers of total surrender, and aim to glorify God with your life. Focus



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first on what's right about Him and see everything else through that filter.

And most simply, make time to pray daily. Don't overcomplicate this! Just talk to God. Have that

place and time where you can seek Him every day. If you don't plan to pray, you won't. If you find it a challenge to disconnect from the busyness of your day, engaging in worship music is a great way to prepare your heart for prayer.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONS

A primary aspect of the awakening lifestyle that produces spiritual growth is spending time in God's Word. In addition to daily prayer, your twenty-one-day plan includes a daily devotional and a daily "Bible Reading Plan."

The devotional will encourage and strengthen you as you set aside time to seek God during this season. The topics of the daily devotions are focused on cultivating your spiritual hunger through prayer, fasting, and drawing near to God.

Just like prayer and fasting, reading your Bible is about connecting to God in a more powerful way. It is not about duty but about relationship. When we engage God through reading His Word, we engage the very presence of God. His Word is living and active! As we read our Bible, we are drawing closer to God and positioning ourselves to hear from Him in particular ways.

Once again, as with prayer, choose the time and the place where you are going to read your Bible and devotional every single day, and come prepared to hear what He wants to tell you.

There are three quick things I'd like to share with you about how to get the most out of your devotional time with God.



Return to Me

“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

JOEL 2:12, NIV

IF WE LOOK AT THE KIND OF FASTING that took place in the Old Testament, it would be easy to assume that the reason we fast is to prove our repentance to God in order to obtain His mercy. Under the Old Covenant, such a fast of repentance is seen time and again. But now, because of the complete work of Jesus on the cross, things have changed.

Fasting is not something we do to obtain favor or forgiveness. Under the New Covenant, every wrong we have done and will do was forgiven at the Cross, and when we accept Christ as our Savior, we get to celebrate the mercy freely given to us through our relationship with Him. Fasting is about drawing closer to God and surrendering at a deeper level.

As we walk with God, there are times that we feel far from Him or disconnected. Joel’s words resonate with us, even if we live in a context of grace: “Return to me with all your heart.” There are times we realize that though we have chosen to follow Jesus, the flame of our love for Him has grown cold.

Your time spent in prayer each day of the

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Tune In

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

—JOHN 10:27

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO TUNE IN a radio station only to be frustrated by finding static rather than music? And when you fiddled with the dial again, suddenly you heard a clear signal. The fact is that clear signal always existed on the airwaves. The difference is that now you have adjusted your tuner to the right frequency.

In our hectic lives, there are so many signals bombarding our senses that it can become difficult to distinguish God's voice from the deafening static noise of life. Fasting enables us to tune out the world's distractions and *tune in* to God. As we fast, we deny our flesh. When we deny our flesh, we become more in tune to the Holy Spirit and can hear God's voice more clearly. If you truly listen for God's voice, you will hear it. And when you hear it, your faith will increase.

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If you desire to tune out the static of life and really tune in to the voice of God, come to Him first and foremost with ears willing to listen and a heart ready to obey what He says (Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 66:2). The more we practice being in His presence, the clearer and more recognizable His voice becomes.

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