

This week you will:

- Do two or more, one-hour sessions of movement and mindfulness.
- Eat entirely plant-based foods for two days
- Prepare for next week's 16-hour fast
- Schedule a check-in



Welcome to the PraXis Wellness Challenge Week Three: ***The Spirit and the Flesh***

“Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh.” – Gal. 5:16-17

As we said last week, the ancients saw the heart as the seat of our mind-body-spirit. For the Apostle Paul the *sarks*, or “flesh” was “the seat of the Passions,” [Roman’s 8:1-3,5, Phil 3:3]. Here passion, is a term coming from Greek *pathema*, which means excessive emotional reaction to what “befalls us.” One might see Paul’s flesh and spirit discourses as a portrayal of an inner conflict: the distractions of mental and bodily cravings versus resting in the heart where the Spirit dwells, counsels and comforts.

For this reason, the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot — Romans 8:7

WEEK THREE’S THEME, SCRIPTURE, LECTIO DIVINA AND YOGA FLOWS ARE HERE

MOVEMENT

Turning away from the Body and towards the Spirit/Breath [Pneuma]

In the ancient Christian tradition the Greek word for “breath” and for “spirit” were the same: pneuma. As with last week, try and focus on your breath, in and out through the nose, as you do your movement practice. As you encounter challenging postures and stretches, turn away from mental chatter: “This is too difficult,” “I should stop,” “I need a break.” As these thoughts arise, turn your attention away from the “flesh,” and back to your breath, or “spirit.” Turning away from these thoughts may allow you to move deeper into your learning edges and challenges.

As with your silent prayer, thoughts will come and go, however, if you feel real pain, or significant discomfort, stop the movement. This type of asana-based practice should be challenging, but never painful.

You can follow along with the sessions that we do over Zoom. Or you can follow the flows outlined in the link above. Or try the free Christian Yoga videos from Caroline Williams' Christian Yoga <https://www.youtube.com/c/CarolineWilliamsYoga>

MINDFULNESS

You should strive to do at least 5-10 minutes of silent prayer [Centering Prayer, or Ceaseless Prayer] after each of your movement practices. Always remember to allow yourself a 5-minute cool-down between movement and mindfulness. This week, also try to practice your silent prayer for at least 10-20 minutes, for one or two days a week, *outside of your movement sessions*.

FASTING

8 Week Praxis Fasting Progression			
Weeks 1-3	Weeks 4-6	Week 7	Week 8
Plant Based We experiment with a whole food and plant based diet Week one onward	16 Hour Fast We experiment with the 16 hour fast - not eating at least 16 hours between dinner and your next meal Plant-based eating + 16 hours fast	1-3 Day Fast Experiment with deeper detoxification of our bodies and time away from food 1 day only water and prayer	Make it your own Take what works best for you and leave the rest (or save it for later). What helps you grow closer to God? What have you learned?

Fasting and discernment

Discerning what God wants for us often comes out of weighing our desires against common sense, scripture, the advice of our community, and prayer. Christians have often used fasting to help them become still and listen God in prayer. Fasting also brings to the surface some of our bodily cravings that hide in our blind spots. It is important for us to remember that ancient Christian ascetics did not see the body as bad, only as a distraction *during prayer*. As we begin to progress into the more rigorous parts of the challenge, we should keep in mind, that like all of Creation, our bodies are good in God's eyes. The PraXis fasting challenge is only meant for the cultivation of mindful eating and the deepening of prayer.

This week as you continue to limit your diet to plant-based meals and begin to prepare for a 16-hour fast, be mindful of how the foods you don't eat might be pulling at you. What arises within you, good and bad, as a longing for a certain food goes unfulfilled?

Meal Planning Resources: By week 3 you should be eating plant-based foods twice a week or more. Refer to these resources if you still need help with meal planning.

<https://praxiswellness.center/2021/03/10/plant-based-diets-are-christian-diets/>

Week 3 - Spirit vs Flesh

Plant based diet & prepare for 16 hr fast

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Chickpea Flour (or Tofu) Scramble Chickpea flour, turmeric, paprika, yeast with garlic and chopped vegetables of your choice (substitute tofu for chickpeas if desired)	Southwestern Black Bean Quinoa Quinoa topped with black beans, onions, zucchini, cherry tomatoes and corn seasoned with chili powder and paprika	Easy Chickpea Curry Chickpeas, spinach, tomatoes, onions, coconut milk, curry powder, coriander over rice	Try going without

Prepare for the 16-hour Fast:

Begin to make space in your schedule for next week's 16-hour fast. Plan out when you will do your 16 hours. The fast should start towards the end of the day, like 3 pm to 7 am, or 6 pm to 10 am. Take in no calories during the fast. Tea without creamer and black coffee are fine for those who might get a caffeine withdrawal headache. It is important to stay hydrated. Plan your fasting hours for a day when you can get to bed early [and wake up late if possible] and will have low energy demands. Fluctuations in blood sugar levels can cause challenges including headaches and fatigue. It's best to eat light, plant-based, low or no carb meals before you begin your fast so that you don't have a sugar crash during the fast.

Schedule time to pray during your 16-hour fast, especially towards the end of the fast.

Exagoreusis [the check in]

Reach out to Cornelius to set up a time to discuss how your challenge is going. Be prepared to give specifics on how long you did your movement sessions for, how long you sat in silence,

what days you practiced on and what you ate. Also, be prepared to discuss what came up for you physically, psychologically, and spiritually during the week. What was the most challenging and rewarding part of the practice. What did God call you to during the week?

~ Maranatha

“The practice of paying attention is the rarest of gifts because it depends upon the harshest of disciplines.” - Belden Lane

Other video resources

Intro to the Wellness Challenge

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UsycnG5WR8

Nuts and bolts of challenge

<https://youtu.be/8StW2Cy7zOo>

FASTING RESOURCES

RESOURCE LINKS

Complete Guide to the Fasting Challenge

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1AebCCEKuswZgz_6-xL6t6xAYthEsAAKVnt7aXuRwujU/edit?usp=sharing

Spreadsheet of Daniel Fast Recipes and Resources

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1jlGKA7WGmadsv5o-_rmeaeLk9iMN1Doh/edit#gid=677705405

Daniel Fast Recipe Website

<https://www.acouplecooks.com/>

Benefits of a Plant-based Diet (University of Texas)

<https://www.mdanderson.org/publications/focused-on-health/5-benefits-of-a-plant-based-diet.h20-1592991.html>