



GREAT FAITH

AGES 10 & UP

MIDYEAR PRAYER AND FASTING
JULY 2-4, 2019



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VICTORY

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FASTING 101

Connect

All of us have needs and wants. Needs are things that we cannot live without. Wants are things we would like to have. What are some of your needs? What are some of your wants?

There are many things we need and want. But sometimes, we focus so much on our needs and wants that we put aside our relationship with God. Fasting lets us focus more on God by setting aside our needs and wants.

What is fasting?

Fasting is stopping an activity (usually eating) for a period of time to focus more on God. We replace eating or using our gadgets with more time with God. This means praying, worshiping, and reading the Bible. These activities build our relationship with God.

When our parents speak to us, we should pay attention and listen to them. Fasting helps us pay attention and listen to God. It helps us put aside distractions. We say to God, "I am going to listen to You because You are my Father. I trust You!"

Jesus gave us an example of fasting in Matthew 4. Jesus knew that He would need strength and power for His ministry. He prepared by fasting for forty days in the desert. During this time, He was tempted by Satan. His response to that temptation is the truth we can hold on to for strength when we fast:

... *“People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”* **MATTHEW 4:4**

Fasting is usually keeping yourself from eating and drinking as you devote more time for God. But you can also fast from different media (TV, video games) and technology (gadgets, Internet) if you cannot fast from food. The important thing is to keep your focus away from the things the world offers to spend more time with God.

Before Fasting

1. Pray

Spend time reading the Bible before the fast. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in your prayers. Write down your specific prayer requests for your family, friends, church, and nation.

2. Commit

Pray about the kind of fast that you will do and commit to it ahead of time. Ask God for grace to help you follow through with your decision. Also, ask your parents and maybe even your doctor if you are allowed to do a specific type of food fast.

3. Act

If you will be fasting from food, start eating smaller portions a few days before you fast. Avoid sugary and fatty foods. Ask someone to be your prayer partner throughout the fast.

While Fasting

1. Focus

Set aside time to read God's Word and pray. This devotional will help you go through your fast. Just be ready to listen to God's voice and do what the Holy Spirit is telling you.

2. Pray

If you can, join at least one prayer meeting in your church. Pray for your family, church, pastors, nation, campuses, and missions throughout the fast.

3. Fill up

During mealtimes, if you're fasting from food, read the Bible and pray instead. Drink plenty of water and rest as much as you can. Keep in mind that you may find yourself becoming physically weak, tired, impatient, or irritated. If you're doing a different type of fast, read the Bible and pray during the time you would normally do what you are fasting from (for example, browsing through social media or playing video games).

After Fasting

1. Eat

If you fasted from food, reintroduce solid food slowly. Your body will need time to adjust to a normal diet. Start with fruits, juices, and salad, then add more vegetables. Eat small portions throughout the day. It may be tempting, but try not to eat junk food and sweets right away. If you've finished a different type of fast, remember what God revealed to you as you spent time with Him. Take what you learned from the fast into your everyday life.

2. Pray

Don't stop praying! Trust that God will keep His promises and knows what He's doing. Don't stop believing in and listening to God all year. Be in faith and expect God to answer your prayers!

FASTING COMMITMENTS

Day 1

Fasting Options:

- Social media fast
- Gadget fast
- Skip one meal
- Other

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

Day 2

Fasting Options:

- Social media fast
- Gadget fast
- Skip one meal
- Other

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

Day 3

Fasting Options:

- Social media fast
- Gadget fast
- Skip one meal
- Other

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

I AM THANKFUL TO GOD FOR . . .

How did God answer your prayers so far this year?

**FOR THE REST OF 2019,
I WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE GREAT FAITH FOR . . .**

What are your prayer requests for the rest of this year?

Myself (e.g., to be closer to God)

My Family (e.g., good health for parents)

My School (e.g., good grades)

My Friends (e.g., for friends to know Jesus)

Others (e.g., for more people to know Christ)

My prayer partner is _____ .



GREAT FAITH

When the year started, we dedicated a week for prayer. We stopped doing some things (like watching TV or playing games) or stopped eating meals (including our favorite snacks!) to hear God and know what He wants us to do this year. Remember the men and women who had great faith? We can follow their example so that we can also have great faith.

As we continue to believe for great things, we will look at other characters in the Bible who showed great faith in Jesus. Their stories are written in the Gospels, or the books that tell the story of the birth, life, and death of Jesus. Because of their faith, they received what they asked for from Jesus, and more. Jesus even acknowledged two of these situations as moments of great faith. Let's look at these moments and see how we can also live our lives with great faith in God.

Preparation for the Fast

THE CANAANITE WOMAN'S GREAT FAITH



Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30

Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! You will be given what you are asking for." And her daughter was healed at that moment. MATTHEW 15:28

In the Bible, a Canaanite woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter. She went to Jesus because she trusted that He was good and that He was the only one with the ability to heal her daughter. At first, Jesus did not give the answer she was hoping for. He was testing her faith. The woman stayed humble, did not get angry, and admitted that she did not deserve to receive her miracle.

The Canaanite woman knew that she should not receive anything from Jesus, but she kept asking anyway. The good news is that God gives grace to everyone, especially those who are humble enough to ask for it.

Let us be like the Canaanite woman. Let us go to God and keep on asking Him for grace, trusting and knowing that the grace He wants to give us is more than we need. But we should always be humble and admit that there is nothing we can give to Jesus in exchange for what He gives us.



Great faith runs to Jesus and understands that He is our hope.



During the times you feel hopeless, how do you show your faith? Where (or in whom) do you put your hope and faith?

Do you have prayers that are still unanswered today? How will you go to Jesus as you ask for your miracle?





Lord, thank You that You hear my prayers. You know what I am going through. I trust that you have good things in store for me.

I put my faith in Jesus. I do not doubt in my heart. Thank You that You hear whatever I ask in the name of Jesus. Because of this, I can have what I ask. I will not be ashamed. I believe in You. You are my Lord.



¹⁴Here is what we can be sure of when we come to God in prayer. If we ask anything in keeping with what he wants, he hears us. ¹⁵If we know that God hears what we ask for, we know that we have it. 1 JOHN 5:14,15

Day 1

BARTIMAEUS'S GREAT FAITH



Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43

*“Go,” said Jesus. “Your faith has healed you.” Right away he could see. And he followed Jesus along the road. **MARK 10:52***

Do you remember as a young child when you wanted to reach for toys or food on top of shelves and you couldn't reach them because they were too high? You would give your best effort anyway, only to end up frustrated.

Hopeless because you didn't get what you wanted, you would cry or run to your parents. Only then would you ask them for help.

In the Bible, there was a blind man named Bartimaeus. Hearing that Jesus was passing by, he shouted with all his might so that Jesus would hear him. When he was shushed by the crowd, he shouted even louder. Jesus stopped and asked him what he wanted.

Just like our parents, Jesus wants to help us. In the same way that He wanted Bartimaeus to say what was in his heart, Jesus wants us to tell Him what's in our heart.

Maybe there are things buried deep in our hearts that we think are impossible to say to God. He is never too busy to listen to our prayers. He wants us to share these things to Him. He is excited to hear us talk about what's important to us, especially those that we think are impossible! When we cry out to God, we speak to One who is greater than what we see or feel.

In the same way, there may be things in our lives that seem impossible. We should be like Bartimaeus who recognized that Jesus can perform miracles and help him see. We should have strong faith in Jesus. We can show faith by looking not at the impossible, but at a great God who is able to make all things possible.

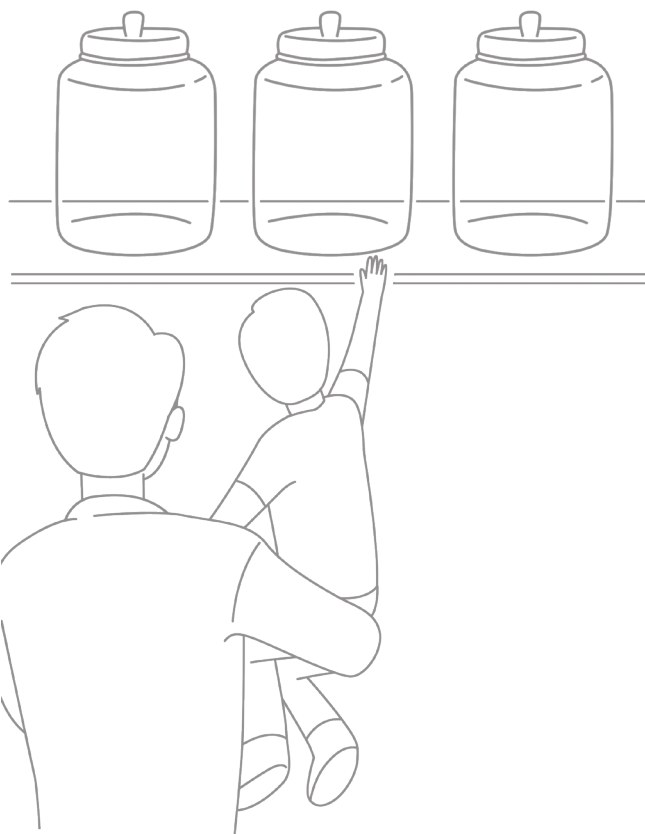


Great faith calls on Jesus and keeps on calling, even for the impossible.



What does James 1:17 say about God? Why can we believe God even for the impossible things in our lives?

Do you have prayers that you've forgotten about? Are there prayers buried deep in your heart that you haven't asked God for? Write them on the jars on the shelves and keep on praying to God about them throughout the fast. Believe that God will answer your prayers.



I know that You are the Holy One of God. I will not run to anyone else except You. I believe in Your power, and I know that You can do the impossible. You are wiser than man.

I know that by faith in You, I can receive whatever I ask for in prayer. In You, I have healing, abundance, riches, and security. There is no one like You in the whole world. You are the most faithful and great God. Because of this, I will hold on to You.



... for we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 (ESV)

Day 2

THE UNCLEAN WOMAN'S GREAT FAITH



Matthew 9:20–22; Mark 5:24–34; Luke 8:43–48

Then he said to her, “Dear woman, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.” LUKE 8:48

Often, a pill that has no healing power is used to test the effect of a new medicine. This pill is given to one patient, while the real medicine is given to another patient. The pretend pill is not supposed to have an effect, but sometimes it does because the patient believed that it was the real medicine. This is called the “placebo effect.”

Imagine two people who both have a headache taking the placebo. The one who expects and believes to be healed will more likely say that he feels better than the one who doesn't. While the medicine really has no effect, faith in the medicine improves the person's condition.

Like the placebo, believing in God brings healing. However, there is one major difference: while the placebo is powerless, God has all power to heal! Now imagine putting your faith in such a powerful God!

We can see this in one story in the Bible. There was a woman who had a sickness that was making her bleed. She had been bleeding for twelve years and she had consulted many doctors, but they couldn't heal her. Because she believed that Jesus could heal her, she was determined to come near Him so that she could touch His clothes. She thought to herself, *“I just need to touch His clothes. Then I will be healed”* (Mark 5:28). She touched the hem of Jesus' clothing, and immediately her bleeding stopped. However, a lot of people in the crowd also touched Him, but nothing happened to them. What was the difference? Her great faith in Jesus!

How about us? Do we have faith in our powerful God? While many people may know that God is strong and powerful, those who

really have faith in His power and ability are the ones most likely to experience the breakthroughs they are believing for.



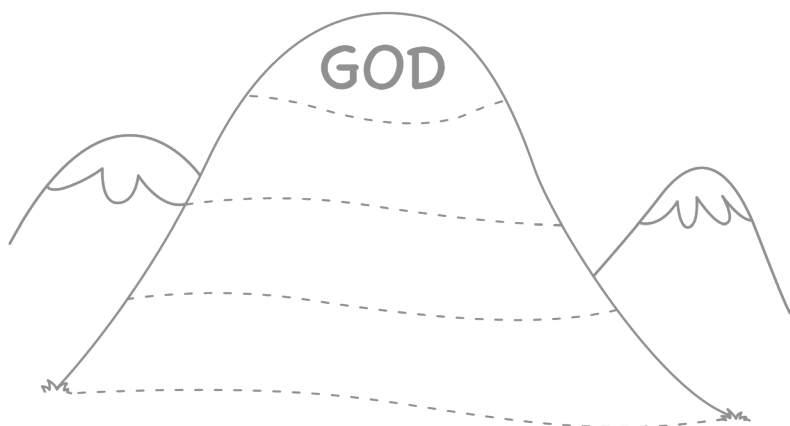
Great faith keeps on trusting and believing in Jesus and His power!



Have you experienced a hopeless situation where it seems like nobody could help you? Isaiah 40:31 says, “*But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.*” The next time you feel like you’re in a bad situation, what will you do?

When you are faced with difficult situations, do you run to God before running to anyone else? How can you make sure that from now on you will turn to God first before turning to someone else?

To help you think of who you can run to when you need help, here is a mountain where you can write the names of key people in your life. We already placed God at the top for you. Approach them and ask them to pray with you.



Lord, I will bless You with all my heart, soul, and strength. I will not forget You. I will not forget Your promises. Thank You for forgiving my sins and healing my diseases. I know that nothing is impossible with You. I declare it!

I know that I have been born of God. Because of this, I can overcome the world. My faith in You is the victory that overcomes the world. I can obey You and keep Your commandments because of Your love. I will live by Your Spirit. Then You will fill my life with joy, peace, and hope.



God is able to do far more than we could ever ask for or imagine. He does everything by his power that is working in us. **EPHESIANS 3:20**

Day 3

THE CENTURION'S GREAT FAITH



Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:2-10

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at the commander. Jesus turned to the crowd that was following him. He said, "I tell you, even in Israel I have not found anyone whose faith is so strong." **LUKE 7:9**

One day, a young boy asked his dad if he could visit his office. His dad said, "Sure. Just tell them who you are." After school, the boy walked to the entrance of his dad's office. There stood an unfriendly security guard who was strictly questioning and inspecting the adults who went in. The boy was scared because he did not know what to say. When it was his turn, the guard told him, "Children are not allowed here. What do you want?" The boy remembered what his father said. He said his father's name, and immediately the guard became friendly, smiled, said sorry, and brought him to his father's office.

Centurions are commanders in charge of a Roman legion with around 100 Roman soldiers. They are influential, powerful, and highly skilled when it comes to battle. In the Bible, a Roman centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant. Because he was not sure if Jesus would want to do it, the centurion even sent Jewish elders to ask Jesus, hoping that He would listen to them. He knew that he was not worthy to have Jesus come to his home because of who he was and what he had done: The Romans oppressed the Jews. Understanding that Jesus had authority and power, the centurion asked Him to heal his servant who was far away. The centurion had faith that Jesus could say just one word and his servant would be healed. Indeed he was healed!

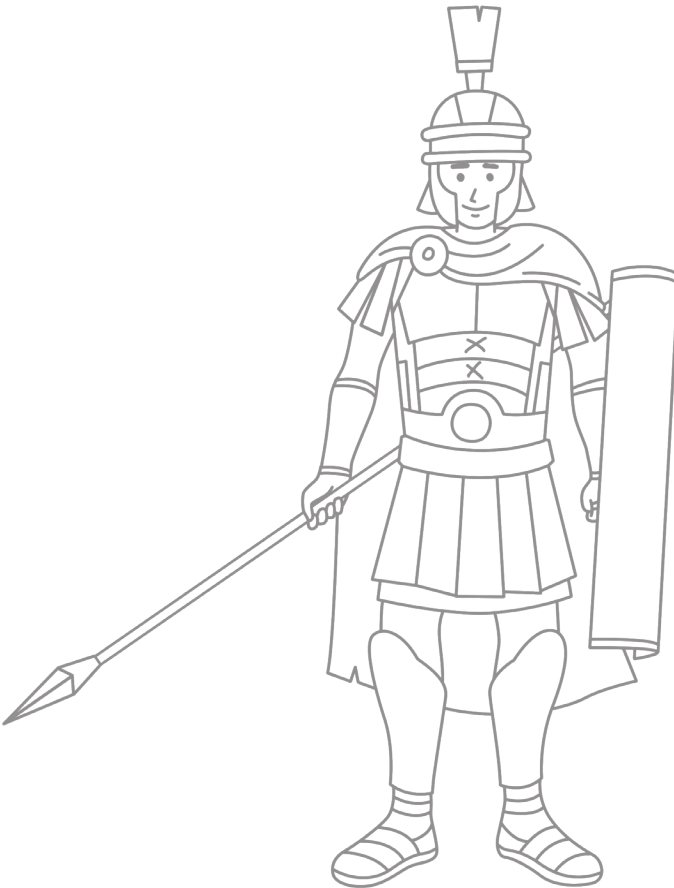
Sometimes we wonder if God wants to answer our prayers. Questions like "Is Jesus really willing to help me?" might only make us want to stop praying and seeking Him because we feel unworthy. We end up discouraged and stop hoping to receive what we are asking for. But like the child who remembered what his father said

and believed in his father's authority, our faith in God should not be based on ourselves, but on Jesus and His Word.

We should trust in the authority and power of Jesus. He is both willing and able to help us. We will be surprised by how He will fulfill His promises to us in His Word, as long as we believe and have faith!



Great faith recognizes Jesus' authority over our circumstances.






Do you sometimes feel unworthy and doubt that God will answer your prayers? The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 1:20 that God has made many great promises; He says “yes” to all of them because of what Christ has done. How does this affect how we pray?

Write the promises that you have from God and your prayer requests in the left column. With the help of your parents, small group leader, or friend, write down verses from Scripture that you can use to claim the promises and requests that you wrote. Commit to visit this list every week and claim the verses for the rest of the year.

God's Promises and My Prayer Requests (e.g., healing for my dad)	Bible Verses (e.g., Exodus 15:26; 1 Peter 2:24)





Without faith, it is impossible to please You. Because I cannot please You without faith, I will move in faith every day. I will draw near to You. I believe that You exist and that You will reward me because I am seeking You.

I know that when I call for help, You hear me. You come and save me from my troubles. I hope in You because You comfort the brokenhearted and the crushed in spirit.

I will serve only You, and You will bless me. I know that even though things are impossible for man, all things are possible with You.



So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. ROMANS 10:17 (ESV)

THE FOUR MEN'S GREAT FAITH



Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12

⁵Jesus saw their faith. So he said to the man, “Son, your sins are forgiven . . .” ¹²The man got up and took his mat. Then he walked away while everyone watched. All the people were amazed. They praised God and said, “We have never seen anything like this!” **MARK 2:5,12**

In a mountainous area, there was a boy who could not walk. He learned that a certain medicine could heal him. But the medicine was in the city a long way away, and was almost gone. The boy became discouraged and lost all hope.

However, hearing the news, his older brother immediately packed their bags and carried his young brother to the city—on his back. He walked for an entire day and crossed rivers, carrying his brother and their bags all the way to the city where the medicine was.

Jesus was well-known during His time because of how He had been healing the sick. Wherever He was, crowds would gather together until there was no more room. A group of friends carrying their paralyzed friend wanted to come to Jesus. But they couldn't reach Him because there were too many people! But since they were desperate and wanted their friend to be healed, they dug a hole on the roof of the house where Jesus was and lowered their friend down to Him on a mat.

Many times, we give up when circumstances seem too hard or impossible. If we were in the boy's situation, many would choose to stop and surrender. But when there seemed to be no way, the older brother made a way.

The older brother had faith that the medicine would heal his younger brother. His faith caused him to do difficult things so that his brother could walk again. In the same way, we should not allow obstacles to stop us. We should imitate the faith of the older

brother and the paralytic man's friends. They did not let obstacles hinder them from taking their loved ones to Jesus!

We should hold on to our faith and believe that Jesus will move in our situation. We have to wait and see Him come through for us. With our eyes, it may look impossible, but with Jesus on our side, everything becomes possible!

In the story of the four friends, not only was the paralytic man healed, but people also saw the power of God in Jesus and glorified Him. When we exercise faith, not only do we get what we ask for, but more importantly, our faith allows others to see God's power and glory!



Great faith overcomes circumstances and makes a way for others to receive their breakthrough.





Who is your “older brother”? Who is believing with you in faith for what you are asking for? How has the faith of this person helped you strengthen your own faith?

Why is it important to move in faith for other people? Who is the “little brother” on your back? How are you moving in faith for him or her?

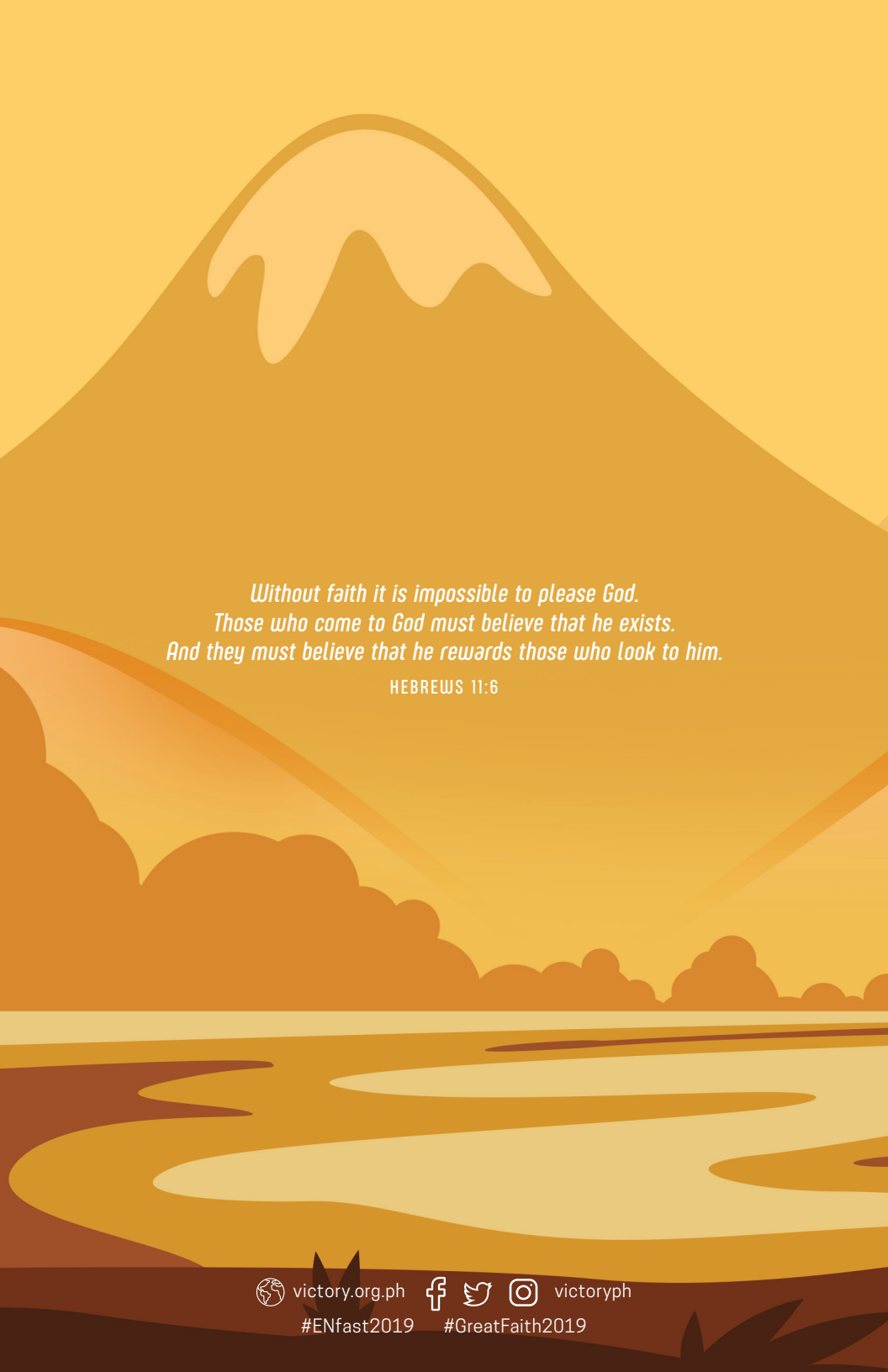


I believe that You are the Lord. You are the God of all creation. Nothing is too hard for You. I will fight the good fight of faith. I will take hold of the eternal life that You give me. My life will be a witness of Your goodness.

Because of this, I kneel to You. According to the riches of Your glory, please strengthen me with power through Your Holy Spirit in me.



And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS 4:19 (NIV)



*Without faith it is impossible to please God.
Those who come to God must believe that he exists.
And they must believe that he rewards those who look to him.*

HEBREWS 11:6



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