

The title card features a dark grey background with stylized, light grey clouds. At the bottom, several white Easter eggs are visible, some with simple line drawings of faces. The text is centered in a large, bold, black font.

Easter Preparation Guide

Use this guide during the month of April to help prepare your heart and mind for true rejoicing on Resurrection Day.

Good Friday Service: April 19 @ 6:30 p.m.

Easter Services: Sunday, April 21 @ 9:30 and 11 a.m.

PERSONAL CLEANSING GUIDE

See the true condition of your inner and outer life more clearly. The following arenas are good indicators. Read the questions, pausing after each to allow the Holy Spirit to speak. Ask Him to help you see yourself the way He does; pray for His cleansing and renewing of your heart. List sins He brings to mind; be specific in your confession and repentance. List your key steps for obedience (see Action Steps on last page).

One suggested way is to prayerfully focus on 1 topic each day, repeating the guide until Easter. This deep look will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal a clear picture of each of these areas of your life. To help you keep track, date the line after the topic each time you complete one.

My Love for God

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. Mt. 22:37

- How have I not shown God the love He deserves? Do I really love God? Do I make it a point to learn how to love Him?
- Have I in any way cooled off spiritually because I am disappointed with God?
- Am I consistently amazed by who He is and what He does?
- Is there any apathy in my heart towards Him?
- Have I grown to love something/someone more than Jesus?
- Am I in the “driver’s seat” of my life? How have I put myself on the throne of my heart?
- What areas of my life are not surrendered to the Lord?

My Relationship with God

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Mt 6:33

- Is any of the following competing with my relationship with the Lord: career, money, entertainment, media, hobbies, gambling, shopping, another person, other?
- Do I make time for the Bible to speak to me?
- Is my life typified by prayerlessness?
- Has worship become dry and lifeless? Do I merely go through the motions?
- Am I financially faithful to God by tithing? Do I give sacrificially as He leads me to?
- Have I abused God's grace by taking sin lightly?

My Thoughts and Beliefs

The LORD knows people's thoughts. Psalm 94:11a

- Do I have patterns of envious or jealous thoughts?
- Do I have any impure or lustful thoughts?
- Do I have persistent thoughts that are angry, bitter or resentful?
- How have I not believed what God has promised in His Word? Do I show unbelief by worrying?
- How do I distrust God?
- How have I thought my way is better than God's?

My Speech

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies. Ps 34:13

- Am I guilty of any form of divisive speech?
- Do I have patterns of complaining and griping? About what?
- Am I involved in any form of gossip or negative speech?
- Do I have patterns of cursing or off-color words?
- Am I prone to exaggeration or lying?
- Have I blogged, emailed, or forwarded anything that violates Scripture or grieves the Lord?
- Have I said things when alone that would cause great shame if made public?
- Have I publically criticized a believer without first talking to them about the issue?
- Have I been insensitive to someone when speaking or writing to him or her?

Actions

Make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, at peace with Him. 2 Pet 3:14

- Am I doing anything about which I do not have perfect peace?
- Am I a slave to anything: Habits? Work? Possessions?
- Do I tolerate or even embrace things in my home that are impure, profane or evil?
- Am I engaged in any form of physical, mental, or online immorality?
- Have I compromised by viewing anything unclean via movies, television or Internet?
- Have I put away all forms of sexual immorality?
- Do I have habits that abuse or neglect my body and my health?
- Do I often confess the same sins but fail to fully forsake them?

Relationships with Others

This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35

- Do I have expectations of others?
- Do I withhold mercy from others?
- Am I superficial in my relationships? Do I withdraw emotionally?
- Am I in any way harsh or unkind to others?
- Are there any ways I negatively affect my marriage? How exactly?
- (Fathers) Am I leading and training my family spiritually?
- (Mothers) Am I sacrificially and joyfully serving my family and guiding them spiritually?
- Have I failed to give adequate attention and time to my parents?

Authority

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Hebrews 13:17

- Is there any pattern of failing to respect and support my spiritual leaders?
- Have I dishonored God and hindered His work by criticizing His servants?
- Do I regularly pray for by pastors and other spiritual leaders?
- Do I speak disrespectfully of our country's leadership?
- Have I in any way failed to honor my parents?
- Do I submit to everyone in love?
- (Wives) Do I harbor disrespect towards my husband, outwardly or in my heart?
- Do I fail to respect those over me in my workplace?

Biblical Reconciliation

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Mt 5:23-24, 6:14-15

- Is there something I have done against someone for which I need to seek forgiveness? Who exactly? What have I done? What does God think of what I have done?
- Do I have a broken relationship with anyone? Who? What is my part in restoring it?
- Do I harbor even the unforgiveness or anger toward anyone?
- Is there something my spouse has done that I need to forgive? Other family members? Friends? Work colleagues?
- Have I failed to seek full reconciliation and make restitution to anyone I have offended or in some way harmed? (Restitution means repaying something I have taken or publicly seeking to restore a reputation I have damaged.)

Restoring Broken Relationships

1. Confess sin to God and to those directly affected by it.
2. Go in person, if possible, to the one you have offended.
3. Don't apologize; rather ask forgiveness.
4. Deal only with your part of the offense; don't reflect negatively on the other person.
5. Make restitution for anything lost, damaged or injured.

Service & Witness

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Pt 4:10 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

- Am I faithfully serving the Lord?
- Do I serve out of a sense of duty? A desire to impress others or meet their expectations?
- Am I afraid to get out of my comfort zone to obey God?
- Have I neglected to discover and use my spiritual gifts?
- Am I ever ashamed of being a Christian?
- Has my life shown Jesus to the lost? Do my actions and attitudes bring Him glory?
- Am I ready and prepared to share the gospel? My testimony?

ACTION STEPS in Responding to the Holy Spirit

1. Confess by agreeing with God that your sin is wrong.
2. Repent with determination for forsake the sin.
3. Make restitution when necessary.
4. Pray for power to be committed to repentance and to resist future temptations.
5. Thank God for the forgiveness He promise to forgive when we confess.
6. Deal with "excuses": blaming, defending yourself, downplaying the offensiveness of your sin.
7. Identify the root sin.
8. Pray to despise your sin the way God does.
9. List and commit to any key steps of obedience the Lord is leading you to make.
10. Memorize related Scriptures; renew your mind with them.

FASTING GUIDE

What is Fasting?

Fasting is voluntarily abstaining from something, usually food, for spiritual purposes. Outer fasting is to lead to inner prayer, worship, and devotion. We “fast from food so we can feast on God.”

Why should I fast?

True spiritual fasting focuses on God; its primary purpose is to center our attention on God and in so doing, to glorify Him. Fasting is a biblical way to truly humble ourselves in the sight of God (Psalm 35:13; Ezra 8:21). King David said, "I humble myself through fasting."

Don't advertise that you are fasting. The only observer of your fast should be God. No one else should know that you are fasting unless it is necessary. *Also it is important to remember that we cannot use fasting as a way to impress God and earn His acceptance. We are made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

What does the Bible say about fasting?

- Jesus placed fasting on the level of giving & prayer (Matt. 6:1-18)
- Jesus said that there is a time for fasting (Matt. 9:15)
- Paul said we should, at times, pray and fast (1 Cor. 7:5)

How do I incorporate prayer?

- Center your total being (attitudes, actions, motives, desires, and words) on the Lord.
- Offer thanks and praise for His rich mercy, His unconditional love and patience; for Christ's sacrifice for our salvation.
- Ponder the sufferings of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- Examine your heart for sin.

Pray that the Lord would:

- Give unbelievers a longing to know Him and seek Him out
- Softened hearts and open spiritual eyes to respond to invitations to join us for Easter
- Prepare minds to understand, believe and accept the gospel
- Be exalted in our Easter worship services
- Impact Henderson with the Gospel through HHBC

Fasting Tips

- Use normal meal times as prayer/meditation times.
- You will probably feel some hunger pangs or discomfort. This is not real hunger – your stomach has been trained through years of conditioning to give signals of hunger at certain times.
- Don't get thirsty. Most people think the difficulty about fasting is feeling "hungry". However, avoiding thirst is more important for how you feel.

What if I can't miss a meal? Diabetics and those on regular medication should not fast from food. However, God may lead you to abstain from other things in order to be more focused on Him.

If you would like more information on Fasting, go to our website (hhbcnv.org/connect/resources) for a pdf book by church leader Elmer Towns. Or request an email copy.