

# ♥ El Corazon ♥

## The Ultimate Cleanse

In an effort to grasp what it means to love the Lord with all your "heart", for the next four weeks take a leap of faith and commit to this spiritual cleanse.

## How do I start?

First, begin by making a commitment. You don't have to bite off more than you can chew. Simply commit to spending time with God each day for the next four weeks. It could be 5 or 50 minutes. Don't stress or worry about it. Take the Nike approach and JDI ... Just Do It.

Then, grab a buddy. Not to sit with you and go through Scripture or prayer with you, but to give you some firm accountability. Communicate with them each day using any of the amazing technological tools at your fingertips. You could talk by phone on a day you want to share and get feedback. You could just email or text to let them know that you held up your end of the bargain. You might even enjoy emailing and sharing with your buddy what God has been teaching you. This would be what people call "journaling". When you email it, you have it for yourself too – What a bonus!!

Next, set a time to open God's Word. You may not be a morning person, but for this exercise ... become one! Commit to getting up 15 minutes earlier than you normally would (15 minutes!!). Find a quiet spot and ask God to prepare your heart and mind for time with Him. Are you moaning or groaning at the thought of lugging your head off the pillow a few minutes earlier than normal?? This cleanse will be good for you.

If you're the type of creative person that is inspired by crafty tools – head on over to Office Depot and get yourself some note cards and rings (assuming, of course that you already have a hole punch), or a small three ring binder and paper to go in it, anything you can personalize and make cute. Tools like these are great to house verses that might have impacted you, or to journal what God has taught you – or maybe come to clean with what you've learned about yourself.

The keys to this exercise are:

- 1) Commitment
- 2) Honesty
- 3) Commitment
- 4) Accountability
- 5) Commitment
- 6) 100% openness
- 7) Commitment
- 8) Leave any guilt/judgment/pre-suppositions behind and center your gaze on what's ahead!!

This cleanse promises to change your life. Not because of any effort you might put into it, but because God promises us ...

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things." Jeremiah 33:3

By the way, He always (ALWAYS) does what He says he's going to do.

# El Corazon

...A cleanse where the heart meets God and literally changes from crusty, inefficient selfishness to healthy, vigorous God-centeredness.

## **Four Week Overview:**

These next four weeks will wean you from looking to yourself for all the answers (a product of the famous "Fall" in Genesis 3) and move you toward dependence on God and therefore independence from the ways of the world.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD." Isaiah 55:8

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

Feels better already.

Also, when you read Scripture, try to really get your eyes off yourself by reading it as God's story about himself, revealing himself to you so that you can truly experience intimacy with Him. So instead of reading something like the Ten Commandments as a list of do's and don'ts ... consider for a moment the fact that they might actually describe the essence of God. A description, of sorts, about His character traits that are never self-focused, that are always just, that never lie, cheat or lust. He is at the center of all He asks of us because it is only through Him we can truly live.

"...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live." 1 Corinthians 8:6

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Paul speaking in Philippians 4:12-13

So, this heart cleanse will focus on:

Week 1: Old Testament Tales

Week 2: Psalms

Week 3: Words from a Minor Prophet

Week 4: Words from The Savior

The days outlined each week will have a chapter of Scripture for you to read.

The "Sample Day" (next page) offers an idea of how you might "journal" your thoughts as you go through the readings. It's a good idea to keep an account of what God is showing you.

Research has shown that the more sense you use in learning, the longer you will retain the information. So even a phone call to your accountability party might be a good idea at some point. Reading (eyes), speaking (mouth/maybe taste 😊), hearing your friends response and the words out of your own mouth (ears), writing/journaling (touch) ... I'm not sure if we could get to a smell function, but 4 out of 5 isn't too shabby.

Stick to you guns. Stay the course. The hardest part will be the beginning week. So take it one day at a time. If you snooze your clock, find some time alone. The day isn't over until your head hits the pillow and your eyes are shut.

Below is a spot for your signature. (Only sign if you're committed to the cleanse.) There is also a spot for your accountability partner to sign. Feel free to sign for them, but you must get their permission.

Have fun, and get ready to understand why this book, the Bible, is living and new every morning. Stay the course and you just might be surprised at this books insatiability!

I commit my next four weeks to completing the El Corazon Clense

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Name

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Date

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Name

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Date

## Sample Day

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Begin with PRAYER.

Each day, have your Bible, pen and some type of journal. Begin any time in God's word with prayer, "Lord, open my eyes that I might see what you have to show me in your Word." (Psalm 119:18)

Contextual Questions (who, what, when, where, why):

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Read and re-read the passage being studied. Mark any ideas that are repeated, character traits exhibited, anything that sticks out to you.

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Commit to take action (I will...)

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Spend time in PRAYER specifically in consideration of the passage you have been studying. An easy template to follow is the acronym ACTS (**A**doration – Start by praising His Holy name; **C**onfession –honestly coming before Him, confessing any hidden or open sins so that you can be open to seeing and hearing truth; **T**hanksgiving – Thanking God specifically for what He has done in your life; **S**upplication – Requests)

*Write down any specific Scripture passage on a note card and think about it throughout the day.*

It is a good idea to begin *and end* your day with prayer. Even better to bookend your day with not only prayer, but also time in God's Word. At the very least, try to make sure you take time to recall the passage studied earlier and to pause long enough to think through your day in respect to God. Anchoring a day in God puts everything in perspective.

# El Corazon - Week 1, Old Testament Tales

Don't be afraid to spend time in the Old Testament. Not only is it full of engaging stories, the Lord God Almighty skillfully and purposefully uses it to reveal his love, his glory, his justice, his commitment to his people, his patience, his faithfulness ... this list could (and does) go on for eternity.

If you've never read the Bible cover to cover, Genesis is a great place to start. Maybe even consider a One-Year Bible. But for this exercise, we'll bit off a small piece. Abraham's story ... and only a bite.

***Begin any time you open God's Word with a simple prayer,  
"Lord, open my eyes and ears to your Word today so that I might be used to bring  
glory and honor to your name."  
... or something like that. Namely, get your eyes off yourself and ask Him to reveal Himself  
to you.***

**Day 1:** Read Genesis 12.

Consider what you learn about God in this chapter, what you learn about Abraham, what you learn about obedience. Ask the the 5-W questions, "Who, What, When, Where & Why"

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 2:** Read Genesis 13.

Consider what you learn about God, Abraham, faith, conflict resolution, and yourself in this chapter.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 3:** Read Genesis 14.

Consider what you learn about God (how He rescues *us*), Abraham, Lot and yourself in this chapter.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 4:** Read Genesis 15.

Consider what you learn about God, His promises (how they relate to us, the role we play), Abraham and yourself in this chapter.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 5:** Read Genesis 16.

Consider what you learn about God, Abraham, Sarai, Hagar and yourself in this chapter.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 6:** Read Genesis 17.

Consider what you learn about God, circumcision, Abraham, obedience, and yourself in this chapter. As you consider these things, jump forward to Jesus and the “circumcision” of our hearts available through Him.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 7:** Read Genesis 18.

Consider what you learn about God, Abraham, Sarah and yourself in this very interesting chapter. What do you think about Abraham’s interaction with God in verses 16-33?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.



Take time on Day 7 to reflect upon what you’ve learned about God during the week. Also consider His role in your life, any areas in your life you need change, any areas of forgiveness, any areas where you can trust him more fully.

Here’s just a taste of what you might learn about God through these Old Testament stories:

- He sees all (Cain & Abel)
- He clothes us (Adam & Eve)
- He pursues us (Cain)
- He is just (Cain)
- He is worthy of honor (Cain & Abel)
- He desires relationship with his creation (Enoch)
- He hates evil (Noah)
- He provides (Noah, Abraham)
- He keeps his promises (Abraham)
- He listens to and considers our requests (Abraham)
- He knows the plan for our lives (Abraham)
- He is the giver of blessings (Isaac & Jacob)
- He knows the past, present and future (Joseph)
- He sets apart from the beginning (Moses’ parents)
- He offers salvation (Moses)
- He has power of every earthly power (Moses)
- He has authority over life and death (Moses)
- He has complete control over nature (Israelites)
- He is the victor, a mighty warrior (Joshua)
- His name/reputation is known throughout the nations (Rahab)
- He works through broken people (Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, Samson, David)
- He is in control (all)
- He calls those who listen (Samuel)

- He shares his plans before they happen (Samuel and the prophets)
- He loves his people (Samuel)
- His ways are not our ways (all)
- He is TRUTH (all)

The list goes on...

CONGRATULATIONS!!! You've just spent an entire week putting God's time ahead of your own!! Don't think your effort is small. It will grow and grow and you continue to pursue Him. And... you'll be surprised at the result!

Did you miss a day this week?? No worries. Shrug it off and begin the next day fresh and free of guilt. This exercise is to build your relationship with God – eyes on Him and off you. If you spend time heaping guilt on your head for lack of effort/commitment consider for a moment where your eyes are resting when guiltng yourself.



Once you're done with El Corazone, come back to Abraham's story and let God reveal wonderful secrets about himself, especially as you consider Abraham & Isaac's walk to Mt. Moriah as compared to God & Jesus and their walk to Golgatha. (The ending is a little different ... There was no ram as a rescue from the ultimate sacrifice.)

## El Corazon - Week 2: Aaaa, The Psalms

How's morning working for you?? Maybe sitting outside one day, or tuning in a little classical background music... you could enjoy his creation *while* spending time in His Word.

This week, let's peruse a few Psalms.

There are several *types* of Psalms. In [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com), Dr. Constable provides a terrific resource when you're looking for a little background information. Here you can learn about the authors, history, context, etc. of Psalms (and other books of the Bible). Types of Psalms include: Laments, Praise, Enthronement, Pilgrim, Royal, Messianic, and Wisdom/Didactic.

(Don't forget to ask God to open your eyes and ears to what He has to teach you each day.)

**Day 1:** Read Psalm 1.

What do you think it means to "meditate" or to be "planted by streams"? What do you think the Psalmist means by saying the leaf "does not wither". How might these words encourage you today. And, most importantly, what do you learn about God in this Psalm?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 2:** Read Psalm 21.

Consider what you learn about God in this Psalm, his character, faithfulness, etc. How do you receive Him as king?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 3:** Read Psalm 22.

Consider what you learn about God in this chapter, what you learn about Abraham, what you learn about obedience.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 4:** Read Psalm 121.

Consider what you learn about God and his protection in the Psalm. Think about times in your life when you felt alone/troubled/abandoned. How might this Psalm speak to those times?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 5:** Read Psalm 51.

Take some time after reading this Psalm to confess specific sin. What do you learn about God and forgiveness/restoration in Psalm 33? How can you apply it in your life?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 6:** Read Psalm 33.

Consider what you learn about God in this Psalm. What specific descriptions noted in this Psalm can help you trust/believe in God? What can you apply in your life today? Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 7:** Read Psalm 145.

Consider what you learn about God, about man, about yourself in this Psalm. Spend some time making note of and meditating on His “glorious splendor” and “wonderful works.”

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

Make note of God’s attributes you’ve learned about this week:

Ex. Psalm 1: God’s counsel is wise  
God’s Law can be meditated on day and night  
God walks with us  
His Word is strong

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How’s your accountability buddy doing? Have you been consistent in maintaining contact. Nothing earth shattering, just a note to let him/her know you are in fact keeping up with your side of the bargain.

You’re doing GREAT!!! Keep on keepin’ on. God has so much to reveal about his unsurpassable love for you.

# El Corazon - Week 3, Words from a Minor Prophet

14 DAYS!! You've been spending time with God for two weeks straight. Have you started to realize that the more time you obediently spend with Him, the more time you WANT to spend with Him??!

This week, we'll take a peek into the section of the Bible known as the Prophets. There are the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel & Daniel) and the Minor Prophets. I'm going to consider that we all don't know too much about these guys, so here's a helpful little chart from Bible.org. (a terrific resource for tough questions and background info).

## *Their Order in the English Bible*

1. Hosea	4. Obadiah	7. Nahum	10. Haggai
2. Joel	5. Jonah	8. Habakkuk	11. Zechariah
3. Amos	6. Micah	9. Zephaniah	12. Malachi

## *Their Grouping According to the Exile and The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah*

Group	Book	Approximate Dates
<b>Pre-Exilic Prophets of Israel</b>	Jonah (preached to Nineveh)	780-850
	Amos	765-750
	Hosea	755-715
<b>Prophets of Judah</b>	Obadiah	840
	Joel	835-796
	Micah	740-690
	Nahum	630-612
	Habakkuk	606-604
	Zephaniah	625
<b>Post-Exilic Prophets of the Returned Remnant</b>	Haggai	520
	Zechariah	515
	Malachi	430

This week, we'll spend time in the book of Hosea. You're reaching the point, now, where you can come up with contextual questions yourself. Use the provided questions each day purely as a guide ... if you need one. Let God be your guide. Take notes on the concepts, revelations that you God is making known to you ... specifically and uniquely to you. Then do us all a favor and share it! We could all benefit from what the Lord is showing you.

**Day 1:** Read Hosea 1.

Today, any time you start a new book of the Bible, take time to make note of the 5 w's. (who, what, when, where, why). You can skip this part, but it might leave you wondering. Reference always helps us grasp more about a situation, thus opening your eyes to context.

Also, keep notes this week on what you learn about Hosea, his wife, God, yourself ...

Jesus. Have you noticed that even though his actual name has yet to be spoken, his story is in plain view for us all to see ... if our eyes are open.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 2:** Read Hosea 2.

What do you learn about the Israelites, about yourself, about God in this chapter?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 3:** Read Hosea 3-4.

How does the reconciliation in this chapter make you feel. How can we relate to

Gomer? How does the Israelites lifestyle relate to Gomer's. What does God teach us about Himself and us in these chapters?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 4:** Read Hosea 5.

Consider what you learn about God in this chapter, the Israelites, us in this chapter.

Maybe take some extra time to research the location and history of people and places notes.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 5:** Read Hosea 6.

What do you learn about the heart of the people. Can you relate? Where does He take us in v. 7? What do you learn about God?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 6:** Read Hosea 13.

We're skipping ahead (you can certainly read the chapters in between if you are so compelled!) What does God reveal about Himself? How does this affect you, today?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 7:** Read Hosea 14.

Hosea ends with encouragement to repent hints to the redemption at hand. What do you learn about God in this chapter? What admonition does the prophet leave us with? How does that relate to our heart?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

Make note of God's attributes you've learned about this week:

Hosea 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

keep going... (in your journal ☺)

WOW!!! **21 DAYS!!!** Did you know research has proven that it takes 21 days to form a new habit?! There you have it. You've solidified your new habit of spending time with God (as if you needed reinforcement to hang with the Almighty... your Creator, greatest ally, love, support, refuge, sanctuary ... the list goes on!)

## *El Corazon - Week 4: Time with The Savior*

Most of us probably feel the most comfortable in the New Testament, especially the Gospels. They are a known quantity and seem to be much more welcoming/loving than the sometimes confusing/harsh stories in the Old Testament.

Hopefully with our heart cleanse has shown us that the entire book is open and ready to

This week, we'll skip around the Gospels and look at a few lives as they intersect Jesus.

### **Day 1:** Read Luke 1

Consider what you can learn about and from Zechariah, Mary, and Elizabeth in this chapter? What do you learn about God and his promises? What about faith and obedience?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

### **Day 2:** Read Matthew 8.

Consider what you learn about faith as it relates to the leper, the Centurion, the sick, disciples, the demon possessed and you. What do you learn about Jesus in this chapter?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

### **Day 3:** Read Mark 7.

Consider what you learn about God in this chapter ... even from the admonition in ver, what you learn about Abraham, what you learn about obedience.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

### **Day 4:** Read John 3.

Consider what you learn about God, Jesus, Nicodemus, John and yourself through this passage? How do you let these truths affect your life?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

### **Day 5:** Read John 4.

Continuing in John, what do you learn from Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well? Can you relate to her in any way? How does she handle the information revealed to her by Christ? How should we act? What does Jesus' interaction with the Official teach us?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

### **Day 6:** Read Mark 10.

Consider what you learn about God, Jesus, the characters in this chapter? What does it teach you about faith, preconceptions, God's Law, Jesus' power, ... How can you let Truth penetrate and change the way you live life?

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

**Day 7:** Read Luke 24.

What does this prayer teach you about Jesus, about God and about us. What do you learn about God's power and His desire for us? Look at verse 45, remember his power as you approach him every day.

Spend time in prayer – asking God to make His Word come alive to you.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

You've finished the "El Corazon Cleanse"!

Don't stop here. Keep it up. Stay anchored in His Word.  
Grow deeper and deeper in intimacy with God, using Him as your guide.

*“For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”*

*Matthew 7:8*

Excerpt from a letter written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in 1936 to his brother-in-law Rudiger Schleicher.

First of all I will confess quite simply – I believe that the Bible alone is the answer to all our questions, and that we need only to ask repeatedly and a little humbly, in order to receive this answer. One cannot simply read the Bible, like other books. One must be prepared really to enquire of it. Only this will it reveal itself. Only if we expect from it the ultimate answer, shall we receive it. That is because in the Bible God speaks to us. And one cannot simply think about God in one's own strength, one has to enquire of him. Only If we seek him, will he answer us. Of course it is also possible to read the Bible like any other book, that is to say from the point of view of textual criticism, etc.; there is nothing to be said against that. Only that that is not the method which will reveal to us the heart of the Bible, but on the surface, just as we do not grasp the words of someone we love by taking them to bits, but by simply receiving them, so that for days they go on lingering in our minds, simply because they are the words of a person we love; and just as these words reveal more and more of the person who said them as we go on, like Mary, "pondering them in our heart," so it will be with the words of the Bible. Only if we will venture to enter into the words of the Bible, as though in them this God were speaking to us who loves us and does not will to leave us along with our questions, only so shall we learn to rejoice in the Bible ...

If it is I who determine where God is to be found, then I shall always find God who corresponds to me in some way, who is obliging, who is connected with my own nature. But if God determines where he is to be found, then it will be in a place which is not immediately pleasing to my nature and which is not at all congenial to me. This place is the Cross of Christ. And whoever would find him must go to the foot of the Cross, as the Sermon on the Mount commands. This is not according to our nature at all, it is entirely contrary to it. But this is the message of the Bible, not only in the New but also in the Old Testament.

And I would like to tell you now quite personally: since I have learnt to read the Bible in this way – and this has not been for so very long – it becomes every day more wonderful to me. I read it in the morning and the evening, often during the day as well, and every day I consider a text which I have chosen for the whole week, and try to sink deeply into it, so as really to hear what it is saying. I know that without this I could not live properly any longer.

(Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy by Eric Metaxas)













