

STRONGER - Fasting in Daniel

Daniel 10

1. **WHEN I FAST... THINGS CHANGE IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD**
2. **WHEN I FAST... THINGS CHANGE IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD**
3. **WHEN I FAST... GOD CHANGES ME**

FASTING QUICK NOTES:

When you fast...

what is it not?

- diet
- way to look super spiritual
- taking a break from something that is sinful (you already shouldn't be doing that)
- taking a break from things that you don't do regularly

What is fasting...

- Taking a break from (mainly) food in order to seek God
- Can also be other things that you take a break from that are a regular part of your life
- Filling the time with prayer, meditation, scripture reading
- Types of fast:
 - Water fast
 - Juice Fast
 - Daniel fast
 - Partial fast
 - Intermittent fast

Concerns..

- eating disorders
- medical disabilities
- children

Good MORNING!!! Good Morning GOOD MORNING! AND WELCOME to New Life Community Church IN Albany Park... my name is Galen, I'm a pastor here... and this morning I get to talk to you about something that you ALLLLL. Are going. To Love...

- no... it's not cat videos (though those are pretty funny...)
- and NO... it's not pay day... because that is definitely something we all love...
- And no... it's not the newest spider man movie... which is apparently the greatest thing of all time (I wouldn't know personally.. but so I've heard...)

No... if you have a Bible with you go ahead and turn to **Matthew chapter 6 VERSE 16**... and you can find out for yourself WHAT IT IS... that you are gonna love talking about this morning...

Oh yes... there it is... Has anybody found it?!? What is it?!? _____

FASTING! Yes!!!! I mean who doesn't love that?!?!? fasting?!? Who doesn't love NOT eating?? C'mon... I know you all know that's your favorite thing.

- You ever gotten a medical procedure done... and the doctor told you, you could only have water for 24 hours before? I mean... who didn't love that?!?
- Or where they have to draw blood?? Where they're like... you cannot eat any food and only water for 6 hours before you come in... and all of you were like Hallelujah!!! Any excuse NOT to eat!!!
- Or when someone was messing with your phone and they put in the wrong password too many times and it ended up locking you out of your phone for 10 whole minutes... and you thought WOW!!! What a great excuse to take 10 minutes of silence...

ANYONE?!?! Does that sound like you?! No?!?!?

OF COURSE NOT!!!! Everyone HATES the idea of fasting with a passion!

- The doctors tell you that you can't eat anything for even 15 minutes before your procedure and you smuggle in cheez-its in your purse...
- Or you go to the movies... but you can't afford their \$35 dollar box of gummies... what do you do?? Uh duh!! I'm not waiting two whole hours without eating... I'm cramming my pockets with candybars and chicken wings from wall-mart...
- And God forbid someone locks you out of your phone for even two minutes... feels more like two years!!! What if someone texted me!!! Or liked my photo!!!
- And especially... if you ever pick up your Bible... and you read something about God's people FASTING... OH NO!!! Get behind me Satan... MOM!!! where's a permanent marker... I need to scribble out this verse in my Bible...

Haha! Resonate with anyone?!? Don't worry!!! I'm with you... if there's one thing that is invisible in our Bibles... it's the word FASTING. I mean.. there's a lot of words that we wish were invisible... but this one... this one our eyes just skip right over...

And it's not all your fault... no no no... it seems to be a cultural thing that seeped into the west quite a while back. It seems like all the pastors here in the US got together and said... you know what... let's just ignore all those verses in the Bible that talk about fasting... and everyone's like: I'm good with that!

Because you see.. you go over to our brothers and sisters in China... they're fasting (and not just because they don't have enough food)... or you go visit some of our family down in South America... fasting is a regular part of what they do to follow Jesus...

BUT you come here in the USA... and it is something that we just DON'T talk about!!! Am I right?! I mean... if you grew up in a church here in the US... how many of you had a pastor that regularly talked about fasting?! That regularly practiced it?! Not at ALL!!! We actually like to practice the opposite here... right?!?! And what's the opposite of fasting?!? It's called POTLUCK-ING. That's what we practice here... and whenever we read the Bible and see spots that talk about fasting we just replace that word with POTLUCK...

- The disciples couldn't cast out the demons from this person... Jesus tells them: this kind only comes out through prayer and potlucking...

In america we LOVE to eat. And what is more un-american then fasting?!? C'mon.

So somehow that's bled into our churches too (not unlike most things of American culture have bled into our churches...)... and most of us don't talk about fasting... don't practice Biblical fasting... and really don't even know what fasting means!?

So I aim to help today... and I want to start off with that verse right here in **Matthew chapter 6 (v16)**... this is Jesus talking... and let's read this together now...

- **“When you fast... STOP**

What did that just say...?!? Read it again with me...

- **“When you fast...**

Did everyone just read that with me??

Wait a second... let me check if this is a translation thing...

- “When you fast NIV
- “And when you fast NLT
- “And when you fast ESV
- When you fast BSB
- Moreover when ye fast KJV

Okay okay... sounds like that's the right wording... does anyone hear an “IF YOU FAST” in there?!?

NO!!!!

What does the Bible say?!?! And by the way—this is JESUS talking!!! What does Jesus say?!?!

WHEN YOU FAST!!!!

What does that imply?! _____ That you're doing it.

- It doesn't say... if you happen to be fasting...

- It doesn't say... when the really spiritual person decides to fast...
- It doesn't say... ONLY IF you really want to...

Get this... Jesus doesn't give an option!! He ASSUMES that it is something that we—THE CHURCH—CHRISTIANS—are already doing!!!!!!?... When you fast... as in.. WHEN YOU DO THIS.. let me give you some instructions... So that's what I want to blow your minds open first... Jesus expected YOU to fast.

and in case you think this is something specific to the audience that Jesus was talking to... Fasting is all throughout the Bible...

- The early Jewish people would fast whenever something horrible was happening... a huge sickness had come over their people... or an invading kingdom had come to destroy them... or they had gone far from God...
- Moses fasted for 40 days in order to seek God...
- Jesus fasted for 40 days before going into his ministry...
- The early apostles and the church fasted regularly...

And then after the Bible...

- The fathers and mothers of the church in the first few centuries had fasting as a regular part of what they did to seek God...
- The church throughout history even up to this day has practiced this command regularly...

You see, the people of God throughout history have understood that FASTING is a normal way that we seek God. It's a regular way that God has—get this—created YOU to be able to seek HIM!

You hearing me? God created you to NEED to fast in order to experience more of Him.

- The same way He created you to need air in order to breathe...
- The same way He created you to need relationships in order to function...
- The same way He created you to need prayer in order to be spiritually alive...

Fasting is not an optional add on. Like, ONLY if you're super spiritual... then you do the fasting...

NOOOO!!! This is an expectation that GOD HAS ON YOU!!! YOU... hear me... YOU!

You may hate it... you may not like it... but that doesn't change the reality...

Now if Jesus expected us to be fasting... let's start simple... what is it?? What is fasting??

Here's a great definition that I heard another pastor say...

- FASTING: Giving up something that you love, because you love Jesus more

Fasting is deciding to abstain... to go without... SO THAT you can fill that time and energy with Jesus instead.

It's saying NO to our flesh... the part of us that always gets what it wants... that always wants wants wants... FASTING IS saying NO!!! I'm not letting my FLESH control me... AND INSTEAD I'm going to let the SPIRIT OF GOD tell me what is good for me.

- FASTING: Giving up something that you love, because you love Jesus more

And here's the thing... when we think of fasting... we USUALLY think of abstaining from food, right?! Well I got some good news for you. That is exactly what fasting is. Ha HA! (You wanted me to say that it was something different)

Fasting—BIBLICALLY—throughout the entire Bible 99% of the time means abstaining from food. That is the most common meaning of fasting.

Now, can you fast from something other than food?? Of course! For some of us, fasting from social media would be more painful than giving up breakfast. You're all like... I'd rather starve thanks...

And fasting from social media, television, going out... whatever it is... that's a great option... especially if you have a medical reason why you can't abstain from food. You need to take your medicine with food every day, definitely okay to fast from something other than food. (Please talk to your doctor if you're unsure...) Or young kids, it's not exactly healthy to abstain from food at a real young age, so doing another type of fast would be great (no media, no sugar, no video games... yikes..).

BUTTTTT for the majority of us... food is the best option and I would definitely encourage you to fast from food EVEN IF you're going to fast from something else... WHY?!?! BECAUSE that's what the Bible intends by fasting. When Jesus says: WHEN YOU FAST (He is meaning food fasts)... So I think that's a great reason in itself. Whether we like it or not, there's something intrinsically connected to us giving up FOOD as humans and our connection to God.

And you may at this moment be TERRIFIED because you're thinking... THERE IS NO WAY I can go without food for 21 Days... And I want to set you at ease and let you know that this fast is spread out over 21 days... but it looks completely different for each one of us...

- Some of you may choose to do a water fast for 1 day a week for the next 3 weeks...
- Some of you may choose to do a juice fast for every lunch...
- Some of you may choose to do what's called a Daniel fast... and over the 21 days you only eat grains, fruits, and vegetables...
- You can skip one meal a day or all three...
- You can do from sunup to sundown OR do a whole 24 hours...
- You can do 3 days a week OR 5 Days a week...
- You can fast from coffee and caffeine for the whole 21 days... (WOOOH!!! Talk about some pain...)

Are you getting the picture??!

And if you're having trouble deciding... here's what I tell everyone... if you're comfortable with it... like if the fast that you are choosing feels easy... then you should go a step further.

It should feel uncomfortable. Go a step beyond your comfort. Not to harm yourself (that's never the goal), but it should feel uncomfortable.

- And that goes with fasting from other things besides food too. I would actually encourage you to do other things as well as some sort of food fast
- Maybe don't watch TV or movies for these 21 Days
- OR log out of all your social media apps for 21 days

I want you to think about what you would commit to during this time... and remember that your fast doesn't have to look like whatever anyone else is doing. We don't judge anyone because their fast looks different than ours...

AND as you decide on all this... here's the important thing... FASTING isn't just GIVING UP... it's then filling and overflowing that time and energy and money with EXTRA Jesus.

- So you take that 30 minutes that you would have normally eaten lunch... and instead you go for a walk and pray
- You take that morning time that you would have been cooking and eating breakfast, and you read EXTRA scriptures. Not just the normal amount that you would read... but you do more.
- You take that money that you would have spent on eating at that restaurant... and instead you give that money to someone who needs it...
- You take that time that you would have watched an episode on Netflix, and instead you spend that time singing worship songs...

Remember, Fasting is: GIVING UP SOMETHING YOU LOVE BECAUSE YOU LOVE JESUS MORE

Fasting is NOT...

- a diet... it's not your super quick shake meal so that you can get a few pounds off for the summer...
- It's not a way to look super spiritual... It's not your way to prove to everyone around you that you're the most on fire Christian... no no no. (Which by the way is gonna backfire when you get all hangry and start cussing at people...)
- Fasting is NOT harming yourself in order to earn God's favor. And this is where fasting is a lot different than a lot of other religions... we're not trying to appease God by doing this. He already loves you. But instead... fasting starts to change us so that we can see Him better. (remember: fasting is not harming your body... it's feeling uncomfortable)
- Fasting is NOT taking a break from something that is sinful (Hey God... I think I'm gonna fast from stealing for these 21 days. NOOO! you already shouldn't be doing that. That's not a fast)
- And FINALLY... Fasting is NOT... taking a break from things that you don't do regularly anyways... (I'm not going to go running for 21 days... Jared, you haven't gone running for years...? YEAH! But I'm fasting from it now! OR I'm gonna fast from coffee... huh? You don't drink coffee?! EXACTLY!) NO! Fasting is giving up something that you LOVE for something BETTER!

And let me tell you... God is gonna ANSWER THAT DESIRE!!!! You all hear me on this... IF YOU DO THAT... IF YOU SAY NO TO YOUR FLESH AND FILL IT WITH MORE TIME WITH

JESUS... JESUS IS GOING TO DRAW CLOSE TO YOU. Or even better... YOU ARE GOING TO DRAW CLOSE TO JESUS.

Wooh... it gets me excited even thinking about what could happen if we all get to that spot...

OKAY... so here's what I want to give you... above and beyond all the logistics... I want to answer this question...

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I FAST?

I've got three things for you. Three things that HAPPEN when you fast. Three things that CHANGE when you fast... you all ready for this?!? ALRIGHT!!!

Look with me at the book of Daniel... chapter 10... (Daniel was a prophet in Israel. A man of God who was part of a group of exiles taken captive by this powerful kingdom. And it says that while he was in captivity...)

- **In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.**

2 At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. 3 I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over. —Daniel 10:1-3

So here's Daniel... minding his own business... and he has this CRAZY vision. It's like all of a sudden he was transported into a star wars space battle. Imagine what that would do to someone's brain from 3,000 years ago?!?! Phaaaaaaa...

Right?!? He's so confused. But he knows this is from God... so what does he do?? He fasts —AND GET THIS— for 21 DAYS!!! (Alright Daniel).

And he does this in order to ask God what the meaning of this crazy star wars vision was all about. Pretty interesting right?! Daniel doesn't understand what God's trying to tell him... so he FASTS for 21 days IN ORDER TO hear... God better...

And so Daniel goes through these 21 days... doing the "Daniel Fast" (that's where we get this by the way)... And the Scriptures tell us, that at the end of his 21st day of fasting... AN ANGEL APPEARS! I mean, talk about an answer!!! Imagine if that happened at the end of

every fast?!?! You all would be wondering if you were going into a coma or something... lack of food... seeing things...

Well Daniel is obviously completely overwhelmed and terrified by this... (like we all would be...) But the angel says...

- **“Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. 14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.” –Daniel 10:12-14**

Did you catch all that...!?!?

- So Daniel doesn't understand this vision God gave him... so he enters into a 21 days fast in order to get an answer...
- And while Daniel is fasting for 21 DAYS... he doesn't know it... but there is a spiritual battle happening... IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD... Angels and demons are battling in order for this angel to get to Daniel. I'm not making this stuff up!! That's what it says...
- And this angel finally breaks through after 21 days of battling...

Daniel didn't even know that this all was happening... all he knew... was that He had to fast...

And here's the question I have for us... how many of US... How many of YOU is this true for...? You need an answer to something... you feel like life doesn't make sense... you want a break through... BUT YOU GET NOTHING!!!!

Did you know that it took 21 DAYS OF DANIEL FASTING BEFORE THE ANGEL GOT THROUGH TO GIVE HIM AN ANSWER!!!!

The angel literally tells him... since the first day you started the fast... I have been working to get to you... but 21 days this battle has kept me till I got here...

How many of YOU are not getting the answer that you need in your life BECAUSE you haven't even started the process. You haven't even started to seek God...

You see... we actually live in between a giant war that is being waged between the powers of darkness (Satan) and the powers of light (God).

AND apparently... when we fast... it actually moves things in the unseen realm... I'm not kidding...

And that's the first thing that happens when you fast...

#1 WHEN I FAST: THINGS CHANGE IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

As crazy as that sounds... it is TRUE!!!

And here's why this matters... the spiritual world is not some other place where whatever happens there doesn't matter over here... actually the SPIRITUAL and the PHYSICAL world are intimately connected... and whatever happens in the spiritual world dramatically changes things here.

ACTUALLY... the Bible seems to place even more emphasis on the spiritual world than it does on the physical world.

- Getting married is actually seen in the light of a spiritual union
- Angels and demons have more influence on this world than the most powerful earthly kingdom
- AND apparently... prayer and fasting effect this world WAY MORE than any war ever could

And when we engage in that battle... when we fast!!! The spiritual world is MOVED!!!! THINGS CHANGE!!!!

- Angels start trying to get to you...
- demonic possessions that have a hold of your family for generations are broken!!!
- temptations that have destroyed your marriage have no more power!!!!
- your neighbors who are captivated by darkness... and don't know that there is a God who loves and cares for them... are able to COME ALIVE!!!

We have to start here... we have to know that fasting changes things in the Spiritual world...

AND... that the Spiritual world is tied to the physical world... If you think the Spiritual World doesn't effect the Physical World... take a second read through that Bible of yours... things like...

- Healing
- Miracles
- Provision
- Guidance
- It all happens because something in the Spiritual World was moved...

Which brings me to the second thing that happens when you fast...

#2: WHEN I FAST: THINGS CHANGE IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD

Don't believe me... Look at **Acts chapter 13** with me... [YOU CAN USE ANY ACTS STORY HERE IF YOU WANT TO SAVE THIS ENTIRELY FOR NEXT WEEK]

The Church had been growing steadily. But was now facing a steady stream of persecution. A couple of the apostles had even been killed. This wasn't exactly what everyone expected. "What does God want us to do next??" So a group of the leaders of the Church got together to ask God that exact thing... So they spent some deep time in prayer, worship, and fasting... look at **V2**...

- **2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed** [apparently they finished whatever fast they had started], **they placed their hands on them and sent them off. —Acts 13:2-3**

So here the Church is wondering what to do in the face of persecution... so they fast.. they ask God.. what happens?!?! GOD SPEAKS!!! The Holy Spirit tells them to send out Saul and Barnabas!!

And you know what happens because of that?!? How about us?!?! We are here today because of that fast. Because of that answer to prayer!! Paul and Barnabas left and started planting churches and went on the first missionary trip EVER!!!! But it was just the start... and they kept planting churches and the Church kept growing and growing and growing... until here we are 2,000 years later!!! and Paul wrote these letters to these new Churches... and these letters were inspired by the Holy Spirit so that they became a part of our Bibles and we have half of the new testament today because of this fast!!!

You see how fasting changes things in the physical world?!?!

- So maybe you're sitting here this morning... and this fast is a time for you to seek God for a MIRACLE!!!!
- Maybe you need a breakthrough in your status with the government... you or your family's paperwork need a miraculous opening! Fasting can open that door!!!
- Maybe you need a new job?! The one you're at doesn't pay enough to support your needs, or the space is unhealthy, or you don't have a job... Fasting can move things!!
- Maybe you've been addicted to that drug... pornography... for so long you don't even know what life would be like without it... fasting can bring a breakthrough...
- OR you just need to know what to do with your life!!! ANYONE!?!?

FASTING CHANGES THINGS IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD!!!

Does fasting guarantee that something will happen?! Not at all. It's not like you are twisting God's arm... but as you seek into Him... we see that Prayer and Fasting actually changes things in this world. We believe that...

- And you think it ends there, with the Bible? Some of you may already know this...

- But does anyone know what New Life's Mission is? 1%!!! When New Life was just one location, the Church had been growing and had been seeing God doing amazing things in Chicago. But they were at a crossroads. Even though they were seeing God do all of these things, the pastoral team was feeling burdened and wanting God to bring them to another level, to show them what the next season would look like. So all of the Pastoral staff went on a 40 day fast. Just juice for 40 days. And during those 40 days they spent extended amounts of time in prayer to God. And they were asking God to show them what He would have New Life to do in the city of Chicago. What was He calling our church to be in the midst of a very diverse and hard to reach city. It was nearing the end of the 40 days and all of the Pastor's were looking super skinny. (except this one guy...) And for the last couple days the team went away to a hotel where they just stayed in their rooms for the last several days praying...
- Does this story seem crazy to you...? Like something out of the book of Acts right! NO! This is your pastoral team! The leaders who started this Church. And on the last day, while they were praying, Pastor Mark felt God prompt him to ask for 1% of Chicago. So he cried out to God give us 1% of Chicago. And that was instantly confirmed by God and the rest of the New Life Pastors and staff. And so out of this 40 days of fasting comes this visions: we want to be a church that reaches 1% of Chicago.
- Now everyone is partying and amazed, not only because they went through a 40 day fast to seek God, but He actually answered they're prayer and seeking. But pretty soon, someone did the math, and they're like, 1% is 30,000 people! We're going to have a church of 30,000 people here in the city? That would mean we'd have to rent out Soldier Field every week, and people would be commuting from all over the city... and then God clarified with the vision of planting locations into each neighborhood. Locations that would be united as one church but diverse and free enough to meet the needs of each community. Where New Life would be one church that meets in many locations reaching 1% of Chicago.

That's the vision that we have as a church, and we're actually here today because of it. If the pastoral team would not have fasted and prayed before God for this vision, we would still be one Church. Down in the South side somewhere and maybe some of us would be commuting down there for a service. But because they fasted and sought God, He moved and gave them a vision. And then He moved as we as a Church have continued to fast and seek Him each year. And now there are 27 locations throughout Chicagoland and Albany Park is just one of them! And last year we had close to 7,000 people meeting throughout the city!! Are we at the 1% yet?? no! But we're a lot closer, and God is continuing to move as we seek Him as a church.

When you fast... it changes things IN THIS WORLD. In the physical...

- Fasting can bring breakthroughs in our families...
- In our city...
- Bring an end to this violence...
- Bring our city to JESUS!!

The last thing I want to show you is by far the most powerful...

- Gypsy Smith (YES, that's actually his name—sounds like a movie or something) was a 19th century Revivalist. He would travel around from city to city seeking a mighty move of God in each city. Where thousands would come to Christ. But he would do something strange whenever he came to a new town. He'd stop on the outskirts and draw a circle in the dirt. Then he would stand inside that circle and say, "O God, please send a revival to this town, and let it begin inside this circle."

All these other things are powerful and true about fasting... but let me tell you the most important thing that God wants to do through getting you to fast.

#3: WHEN I FAST: GOD CHANGES ME

Let me tell you something so so so powerful...

The most important thing that God could do in your life...

- Isn't give you the most amazing job in the world...
- Isn't help your family out of that super hard situation that you're in...
- It isn't even to give you freedom from whatever you're constantly struggling with...
- Those things are all amazing...
- BUT the most IMPORTANT THING that GOD COULD DO IN YOUR LIFE...
- is have you experience MORE of Him. MORE OF HIS PRESENCE IN YOUR LIFE

And let me tell you... that is what fasting is GUARANTEED to do. When you deny yourself and replace it with Christ. Not only do you get the normal amount of interchange... but God does something powerful in the Spiritual. He takes the little effort that we are doing... and He multiplies it... and multiplies it... and multiplies it...

I'm telling you... you will start to experience some of the deepest times of God's presence that you won't want to leave.

AND GET THIS—YOU WILL BE CHANGED...

God is calling you to Himself... and He wants you to look more like Him... but it's gonna take a little bit of denial in order to get to YOU...

Look at **Joel 2:12-13**...

- **"Even now," declares the Lord,
"return to me with all your heart,
with FASTING and weeping and mourning."
13 Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the Lord your God,**

**for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity. —Joel 2:12-13**

- Do you desire a deeper walk with God?
- Do you need a breakthrough from sin?
- Do you want to see the world with Spiritual eyes?
- Fasting allows us to hear and see God

And let me tell you... the Bible has a lot of warnings about fasting for the wrong reasons... but if you go into this fast with the ultimate goal of knowing God more... He will answer that. And He will change you...

So as we close here's what I want you to do... we're going to take a couple minutes for you to pray... to ask God how He would have you fast... maybe even something specific that you're fasting for...

And we're gonna give some time... I want you to sit and pray...

And I first want you to take that sheet I gave you...

- and I want you to make a plan...
- If you have health concerns, definitely talk with your doctor...
- If you have struggled previously with an eating disorder, this may be a fast that you want to bring some help in alongside you. One of our pastoral team...
- Maybe you still have questions... this is not something that I could cover every situation with... definitely come and ask me about it! Or one of the other pastors here... we would love to help you with this...

And after you come up with a plan... we also have this other sheet in here which shows what we are praying and fasting for AT ALBANY PARK. IN OUR LOCATION. So we'd like you to pray with us over the next 21 days for these things to be changed in our church over this year.

Also, please please please... go ahead and put 3 people that you will pray for at the bottom. They can be family members... friends... neighbors across the street... just make sure it's someone within your sphere of influence here in the city...

[5 MINUTES FOR PEOPLE TO WRITE AND THINK]