Greater Life Church Central
"Loving and Leading People to a Greater Life"
Pastor Nate Stewart, Lead Servant

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Fasting Devotional

FINISHING STRONG: A 10-Day Fourth Quarter Fast

Dates: November 9–18, 2026
Focus Word: FOCUS

Scripture Anchor: *Philippians 3:14, KJV*
"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Objective: To close the year with focus, gratitude, and renewed commitment, preparing our spirits and ministries for a strong and fruitful transition into 2027.

How to Use This Devotional
Set aside intentional time with God in the morning, at midday, and before bed. Read each Scripture passage in its context before reading the devotion.
Complete every Journal Assignment in writing. Give each assignment at least one thoughtful paragraph unless it calls for a list or another format. Move beyond what sounds spiritual and write what is true. Name specific habits, choices, and next steps.
Your journal is a place for honesty before God. You do not have to share sensitive details with a group to complete these assignments faithfully.

DAY 1 — NOVEMBER 9

GET YOUR FOCUS BACK

Morning Reading: *Philippians 3:12–14*
Paul's determination came with an honest admission: he had not arrived. He belonged to Christ, but he still had growing to do. His response was to keep pressing toward the goal. That is where we begin this fast, with a willingness to acknowledge that there are areas of our lives that need attention.
You can be busy in church and distracted in your spirit. You can finish assignments while neglecting your relationship with God. Activity alone does not tell you whether you are moving in the right direction. These ten days are an opportunity to examine where your attention has gone and intentionally turn toward Christ again. You cannot give God your full attention while giving every distraction unrestricted access.

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Meditation: What has been receiving the attention that belongs to God?

Journal Assignment: Write an honest assessment titled "Where My Focus Has Gone." Identify your three greatest distractions, explain how each affects your relationship with God, and name the one you will address first. Write the specific boundary you will put in place today.

Midday Reading: ***Luke 10:38–42***

Martha welcomed Jesus into her home, but the responsibilities surrounding His visit pulled her attention away from Him. Her service mattered, yet she became troubled and resentful while doing it. Jesus addressed what was happening within her.

We can experience the same struggle. We start serving with joy and gradually become consumed by what others are doing, who is helping, and whether anyone notices. Our responsibilities become the loudest voice in the room. Pause today and ask whether you have been making room for Jesus within the work you do for Him. Your service needs to be nourished by time in His presence.

Meditation: Am I listening to God, or only completing tasks?

Journal Assignment: Describe one responsibility that has begun to crowd out your time with God. Explain what drives your overcommitment, fear, approval, control, obligation, or something else. Write how you will fulfill that responsibility while protecting time to listen to Him.

Night Reading: ***Psalm 139:23–24***

Inviting God to search your heart requires courage. He may bring your attention to attitudes you have defended or habits you have learned to excuse. His searching leads us toward repentance and a life shaped by His truth.

Tonight, resist the urge to make this devotion about someone else. Stay with your own heart. Consider your reactions, your thoughts, and what you reached for when you felt uncomfortable today. God already knows what is there. You can be honest with Him. Finishing strong begins when you stop protecting the things that keep pulling you away from Him.

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Meditation: What am I ready to stop defending?

Journal Assignment: Write a prayer titled "God, Here Is the Truth." Name one attitude you have excused, describe how it appeared today, and confess your responsibility without blaming anyone else. End with one practical response you will make tomorrow.

DAY 2 — NOVEMBER 10

LAY DOWN THE WEIGHT

Morning Reading: ***Hebrews 12:1–3***

The writer of Hebrews calls believers to lay aside both weight and sin as they run with endurance. Some things are clearly disobedient. Other things may seem harmless but still consume the strength and attention needed for faithful living.

A commitment can become a weight when you accept it without considering your limits. A habit can become a weight when it repeatedly leaves you distracted or depleted. This passage directs our eyes toward Jesus, whose endurance gives us perspective for our own. Examine what you are carrying. Being able to carry something does not mean you are required to keep carrying it.

Meditation: What is making faithful obedience harder than it needs to be?

Journal Assignment: Create two columns: "Responsibilities to Carry" and "Weights to Release." List specific examples in each. Choose one weight and write why you have held on to it, what releasing it would require, and your first step.

Midday Reading: ***1 Corinthians 6:12***

Paul refuses to be mastered by anything. That challenges us to examine the things we believe we control. A habit may feel small until we try to interrupt it. Constant scrolling, the need for approval, or the urge to check every conversation can quietly begin directing our choices.

This fast provides an opportunity to notice those patterns. Pay attention to what you reach for when you are bored, frustrated, or overlooked. What promises relief but leaves you more restless? Freedom includes being able to say no to something that repeatedly takes you away from what matters.

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Meditation: What do I keep calling a preference that has become a controlling habit?

Journal Assignment: Identify one habit you struggle to interrupt. Describe its triggers, the relief you expect from it, and what it actually produces. Write a replacement response you can practice the next time that urge appears.

Night Reading: ***1 Peter 5:6–7***
Casting your cares on God begins with acknowledging that you have them. You do not have to pretend you are unaffected by pressure. The invitation to trust Him rests on His care for you.
Some burdens remain heavy because we keep trying to control outcomes beyond our reach. You can act responsibly without assuming responsibility for everything. Tonight, distinguish between what you need to do and what you cannot determine. Bring both before God. Trust may need to be practiced repeatedly as worry returns. Each time, you can turn toward Him again.

Meditation: Where am I carrying responsibility for an outcome I cannot control?

Journal Assignment: Write a letter to God about your heaviest concern. Separate what is within your responsibility from what is beyond your control. End by naming one faithful action you will take and one outcome you will entrust to Him.

DAY 3 — NOVEMBER 11

GUARD YOUR ATTENTION

Morning Reading: ***Proverbs 4:20–27***
This passage connects our attention, heart, speech, eyes, and steps. What we repeatedly take in affects how we live. Guarding your heart requires paying attention to the influences shaping it.
Every conversation does not deserve unlimited access. Every notification does not require an immediate response. Every opinion does not need a permanent place in your thoughts. Consider what you have been allowing to occupy your mind. Does it encourage wisdom, honesty, and faithfulness? Or does it continually feed resentment,

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comparison, and suspicion? Protecting your attention is part of taking responsibility for your direction.

Meditation: What have I allowed in that is shaping how I respond?

Journal Assignment: Review your recent conversations, entertainment, and social media habits. Identify two influences that consistently leave you distracted or unsettled. Explain their effects and write a realistic boundary for each.

Midday Reading: ***Nehemiah 6:1–4***

Nehemiah faced repeated invitations to leave the work of rebuilding. He recognized the danger and refused to be pulled away. His response came from clarity about the responsibility before him.

Our circumstances may differ, but the need for discernment remains. Some interruptions require compassion and attention. Others repeatedly derail what we have already committed to do. You need wisdom to recognize the difference. Do not label every inconvenience an attack, but do not surrender your priorities to every demand either. Faithfulness sometimes requires a respectful, consistent no.

Meditation: Which repeated interruption needs a clear boundary?

Journal Assignment: Describe one recurring request, conversation, or habit that pulls you away from an important responsibility. Explain why you keep allowing it. Draft the respectful response or personal boundary you will use next time.

Night Reading: ***Philippians 4:8–9***

Paul directs believers toward thoughts that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise. He also calls them to practice what they have learned. Our thought life and our daily conduct belong together.

You cannot always prevent an unwanted thought from appearing, but you can examine whether it deserves your agreement. Tonight, consider a thought that dominated your attention. Was it grounded in truth, or did you fill gaps with fear and assumption? Bring

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it under the light of Scripture. Peaceful thinking grows through repeated practice, including choosing what you will stop rehearsing.

Meditation: What thought have I treated as truth without examining it?

Journal Assignment: Write one recurring thought that distracted you today. Separate the facts from your assumptions. Then write a truthful, Scripture-informed response and one action that agrees with that response.

DAY 4 — NOVEMBER 12

OBEY WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

Morning Reading: *James 1:22–25*

James warns against hearing God's Word without doing it. Familiarity can create the illusion of growth. We may know the passage, appreciate the message, and still avoid the response it requires.

This fast invites us to close the distance between what we affirm and how we live. Consider the instructions you already understand. Perhaps you need to apologize, speak truthfully, stop participating in gossip, or follow through on a commitment. More information will not replace that step. The next stage of your growth may begin with obedience you have already postponed.

Meditation: What clear instruction have I continued to delay?

Journal Assignment: Identify one biblical instruction you understand but have resisted applying. Describe your excuses and the effect of your delay. Write a concrete act of obedience you can complete within the next twenty-four hours.

Midday Reading: *Luke 16:10*

Faithfulness is revealed in what we do with what is already entrusted to us. Small responsibilities expose patterns that larger opportunities will not automatically fix.

How do you handle commitments when no one follows up? Do you prepare carefully for the assignment you already have? Are you dependable when the task feels

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ordinary? These questions matter because character is developed through repeated choices. You do not need a new title to practice greater integrity. Today's seemingly small responsibility gives you a place to honor God right now.

Meditation: Where does my everyday behavior need greater consistency?

Journal Assignment: Evaluate your faithfulness in three areas: your word, your time, and your current responsibilities. Give one specific example in each. Choose the weakest area and write a measurable change you will practice for the rest of the fast.

Night Reading: ***Psalm 119:59–60***
The psalmist considers his ways and turns toward God's commands. Reflection leads to a change in direction. That is the purpose of this evening's examination.
You may discover that the hardest part of obedience was surrendering the explanation you had built around your delay. If you took the step today, thank God for the grace to respond. If you did not, acknowledge it honestly. Resist turning regret into another way to postpone action. Return to what is clear and decide what you will do next.

Meditation: Did today's reflection produce a different response?

Journal Assignment: Review the act of obedience you identified this morning. Describe what you did, what resisted change within you, and what you learned. If it remains unfinished, write the next step and the exact time you will take it.

DAY 5 — NOVEMBER 13

MAKE ROOM FOR GRATITUDE

Morning Reading: ***1 Thessalonians 5:16–18***
Giving thanks in every circumstance allows us to acknowledge God's faithfulness while being honest about difficulty. Gratitude does not require calling painful experiences good or pretending disappointment has disappeared.
It does require attention. When we are exhausted, our minds can become occupied entirely by what is missing. We may overlook the help we received, the strength that carried us, or the growth that happened quietly. Today, slow down enough to

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remember. What remains unfinished does not erase what God has already done. Let thanksgiving become a deliberate part of how you close this year.

Meditation: What blessing have I stopped noticing because it has become familiar?

Journal Assignment: Write about five specific reasons for gratitude from 2026. For each, explain what happened and why it mattered. Include one ordinary provision you often overlook and one person whose support you need to acknowledge.

Midday Reading: ***Luke 17:11–19***

Ten men were cleansed, and one returned to give thanks. His return interrupted his forward movement long enough to acknowledge the One who had shown him mercy.

We can move quickly from receiving help to pursuing the next need. The answered prayer becomes ordinary, and our attention shifts again. Returning to give thanks teaches us to remember. Pause today and consider a prayer you once prayed earnestly that you now rarely mention. Let remembrance deepen your worship. Gratitude becomes more meaningful when we name the mercy we have received.

Meditation: What answered prayer deserves fresh thanksgiving?

Journal Assignment: Describe a need you once brought repeatedly before God and what happened afterward. Write a prayer of specific thanksgiving. Then draft a message of appreciation to someone who supported you during that season.

Night Reading: ***Psalm 103:1–5***

The psalmist calls his own soul to remember the Lord's benefits. Sometimes remembrance must be intentional because disappointment is so loud.

Tonight, allow yourself to acknowledge both the hard places and the mercies of this year. You may still be waiting for clarity. You may still be grieving. Yet there may also be evidence of forgiveness, support, provision, or renewed strength. Naming those gifts

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does not dismiss your pain. It gives you a fuller account of your experience. End this day by remembering that your struggles are not the only part of your story.

Meditation: Where have I experienced mercy in the middle of difficulty?

Journal Assignment: Write two paragraphs beginning "This year has been difficult because…" and "Even here, I am grateful for…" Be specific in both. End with a prayer that honestly holds your pain and gratitude together.

DAY 6 — NOVEMBER 14

LET GOD EXAMINE YOUR HEART

Morning Reading: ***Psalm 51:1–12***

David's prayer demonstrates the seriousness of owning sin before God. He appeals to God's mercy while acknowledging his need for cleansing and renewal.

Fasting should make room for that kind of honesty. It is possible to change an outward routine while continuing to protect an inward attitude. We can avoid certain foods or activities and still feed pride, dishonesty, or contempt. Today, invite God to examine what is beneath your behavior. Renewal begins where your excuses end. Bring Him the attitude you would rather explain away and ask for a heart willing to change.

Meditation: What inward attitude needs more attention than my outward appearance?

Journal Assignment: Identify one attitude you have protected. Describe how it influences your words, decisions, and relationships. Write a confession that takes responsibility and names the change you need God's help to make.

Midday Reading: ***Ephesians 4:29–32***

Paul connects the words we speak with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Our treatment of people reveals what has been growing within us.

When we have been hurt, harsh speech can feel justified. We may replay offenses until every interaction becomes an opportunity to punish. Yet forgiveness does not require pretending harm did not happen or immediately restoring trust. You can pursue wise

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boundaries while asking God to free you from bitterness and retaliation. Examine whether your speech has become a place where unresolved hurt is being passed to someone else.

Meditation: How is unresolved hurt affecting the way I speak?

Journal Assignment: Describe a hurt that still influences your responses. Write what happened without minimizing it, then identify any bitterness, harmful speech, or retaliation you need to address. Explain what forgiveness and appropriate boundaries could look like in this situation.

Night Reading: ***Psalm 141:3–4***
The psalmist asks God to guard his mouth and keep his heart from evil. This prayer recognizes that restraint and inward change belong together.
Review your words today. Where did you encourage someone? Where did frustration take over? Were you truthful without being unnecessarily harsh? Growth requires noticing these moments without excusing them or becoming trapped in shame. If your words caused harm, consider the repair that is needed. Asking God to guard your mouth also means becoming willing to pause, listen, and choose your response carefully.

Meditation: What did my words reveal about my heart today?

Journal Assignment: Write about one conversation you handled poorly or could have handled better. Record what you said, what you were feeling, and a wiser response. If an apology is needed, draft it without excuses or language that shifts blame.

DAY 7 — NOVEMBER 15

RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT

Morning Reading: Romans 12:1–2
Paul calls believers to offer their lives to God in response to His mercy. This surrender includes how we think, choose, and live. It reaches far beyond a worship service.

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Renewed commitment requires us to examine the parts of life we have kept under our own control. We may welcome God's comfort while resisting His correction. We may ask Him to bless plans we are unwilling to reconsider. Today, place your decisions before Him again. Surrender becomes visible when God's truth is allowed to change your plans. Ask where your habits need to reflect the commitment you profess.

Meditation: What part of my life have I been reluctant to surrender?

Journal Assignment: Write a prayer of surrender addressing your time, relationships, resources, and service. Identify the area you resist surrendering most. Explain your fear and name one decision that would demonstrate trust in God there.

Midday Reading: ***Colossians 3:23–24***
Working wholeheartedly for the Lord gives purpose to assignments that may receive little recognition. It also challenges the careless habits that develop when we feel overlooked.
Consider the quality of what you offer. Have you begun doing only enough to avoid correction? Has disappointment affected your preparation or dependability? Renewed commitment may require recovering care for work that has become familiar. It can also require communicating honestly when your capacity has changed. Serving wholeheartedly includes being truthful about what you can responsibly fulfill.

Meditation: Where has my effort stopped reflecting my commitment?

Journal Assignment: Evaluate one responsibility in your home, church, or workplace. Describe the effort you currently give, what needs improvement, and whether your commitments match your capacity. Write a practical plan to improve your preparation or communicate a needed adjustment.

Night Reading: ***John 15:4–5***
Jesus teaches His disciples that fruitful living depends on abiding in Him. Lasting commitment needs an ongoing relationship with the One who gives life.

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A strong emotional moment can inspire a decision, but daily dependence helps sustain it. Make room to listen to Scripture, pray honestly, and respond obediently when the fast ends. You do not have to prove your devotion through an unsustainable schedule. Build a rhythm you can practice consistently. The purpose is to remain attentive to Christ as you move through ordinary responsibilities.

Meditation: What will help me remain connected to Christ after this fast?

Journal Assignment: Design a realistic weekly rhythm for Scripture, prayer, worship, and rest. State when and where you will practice it. Identify your most likely obstacle and write how you will respond when your routine is disrupted.

DAY 8 — NOVEMBER 16

SERVE WITH THE RIGHT SPIRIT

Morning Reading: ***Philippians 2:3–8***

Paul directs believers toward the humility of Jesus. Christ's example challenges selfish ambition and the desire to make ourselves the center of every situation.

Ministry can reveal motives we did not recognize in ourselves. We may discover that recognition matters more to us than we admitted or that another person's opportunity awakens comparison. These moments deserve honest examination. Your contribution matters, and so do the contributions of others. A servant's heart makes room for someone else to be valued. Ask God to help you serve with humility even when your name is not mentioned.

Meditation: How do I respond when someone else receives the recognition I wanted?

Journal Assignment: Describe a recent moment when you felt overlooked or compared yourself with someone else. Examine what you wanted and why. Write one way you can support that person or celebrate their contribution sincerely.

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Midday Reading: ***1 Corinthians 12:14–26***

Paul describes the church as a body with many members. Different functions belong together, and every member matters. This picture challenges both superiority and the belief that our contribution has no value.

Healthy ministry requires mutual care. We need to notice how our choices affect others: missed communication, unfulfilled commitments, or unwillingness to cooperate can make someone else's work harder. Today, consider your place in the body with gratitude and responsibility. Ask how you can strengthen the people serving beside you. Faithful participation includes valuing work you do not personally perform.

Meditation: Do my habits make it easier or harder for others to serve?

Journal Assignment: Identify three ways your participation affects other people. Include one strength and one habit that needs correction. Write a specific commitment to improve communication, dependability, or cooperation within your ministry or household.

Night Reading: ***Mark 10:42–45***

Jesus teaches that greatness among His followers takes the form of service. He gives His own life as the example of self-giving love.

This challenges the urge to use influence primarily for personal advantage. Whether you hold a title or serve quietly, you have opportunities to make someone else's burden lighter. Consider who benefited from your presence today. Did you listen carefully, help willingly, or notice someone who needed encouragement? Service often takes shape in ordinary acts that receive little attention but communicate real care.

Meditation: Whose burden became lighter because I was present?

Journal Assignment: Write about one practical need you have noticed but not addressed. Describe an act of service you can responsibly complete before the fast ends. Explain how you will do it with respect for the person's dignity and without seeking recognition.

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DAY 9 — NOVEMBER 17

PREPARE FOR WHAT IS NEXT

Morning Reading: *Proverbs 16:3, 9*

Planning and dependence on God belong together. We can make thoughtful decisions while remaining willing to have our direction corrected.

A new year does not automatically create new habits. The patterns we leave unexamined often follow us into the next season. Preparation begins with honest attention to how we are living now. What needs to become more orderly? Which commitment needs to be clarified? What have you repeatedly postponed? Prepare for 2027 by practicing faithfulness with what is already in front of you. Place your plans before God with humility and take the next responsible step.

Meditation: What needs attention now so it does not become a repeated problem next year?

Journal Assignment: Identify three patterns you do not want to carry into 2027. Explain the cost of each. Choose one and write a practical plan to address it before December 31, including your first step and a review date.

Midday Reading: *Luke 14:28–33*

Jesus uses the examples of building and battle to teach the seriousness of counting the cost of discipleship. Following Him requires more than enthusiasm.

That principle challenges the casual promises we sometimes make. Growth may require time, changed priorities, difficult conversations, or the willingness to release something comfortable. Before making another declaration about next year, consider what obedience will require from you. Be honest about the cost. A thoughtful commitment gives you something concrete to return to when the initial excitement fades.

Meditation: What am I asking for that will require a change in how I live?

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Journal Assignment: Choose one spiritual or ministry goal for 2027. Explain why it matters and what it will require in time, preparation, accountability, and changed priorities. Identify what you will need to reduce or release to pursue it responsibly.

Night Reading: ***Psalm 90:12, 17***

The prayer to number our days invites us to live with wisdom. Our time is limited, and how we use it matters. The psalm also asks God to establish the work of our hands, recognizing our dependence on Him.

Tonight, consider what deserves your attention in the remaining weeks of this year. You may not be able to complete every unfinished task. You can choose wisely among them. Ask God to help you distinguish between what feels urgent and what is truly important, then respond with intention.

Meditation: What deserves my best attention before this year ends?

Journal Assignment: Write your three most important priorities for the rest of 2026. Explain why each matters, assign a next step and deadline, and identify one activity you will reduce to make room for them.

DAY 10 — NOVEMBER 18

KEEP PRESSING

Morning Reading: ***Philippians 3:12–14***

We finish where we began—with Paul pressing toward the goal. He acknowledges the work still ahead while continuing to pursue Christ. His honesty gives us a faithful way to evaluate these ten days.

You may have experienced clarity, conviction, gratitude, or resistance. Some assignments may have been difficult because they touched areas you have avoided. The purpose now is to respond to what you have recognized. The end of the fast is the beginning of practicing what you have learned. Thank God for growth, acknowledge unfinished work, and keep moving toward Christ.

Meditation: What needs to continue when this fast ends?

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Journal Assignment: Review your entries from Days 1–9. Identify three recurring themes, two changes you have begun, and one area that still needs attention. Support each observation with a specific example from your writing or behavior.

Midday Reading: ***Galatians 6:7–10***

Paul connects sowing, reaping, perseverance, and doing good. Faithful living develops through repeated choices, including choices whose results are not immediately visible. You may want this fast to produce an instant answer. Some growth will become clearer through continued obedience over time. Keep practicing what God's Word has shown you. When you stumble, return to the commitment rather than abandoning it. Let others support your perseverance. Finishing strong involves the willingness to continue doing good after the concentrated attention of these ten days has passed.

Meditation: What good practice needs patient consistency from me?

Journal Assignment: Create a thirty-day follow-through plan with one spiritual practice, one relationship action, and one service commitment. State how often you will do each, how you will review your progress, and whom you could invite to encourage your accountability.

Night Reading: ***Jude 24–25***

Jude closes by directing our attention to God's ability to keep His people. As this fast ends, give thanks for the grace that has sustained you.

Your hope rests in God's faithfulness as you continue to respond to Him. Bring Him your progress and your unfinished places. Thank Him for what you have recognized, what you have released, and the help you will still need. Enter the remaining weeks of this year with humility, gratitude, and renewed commitment. You do not need to pretend you have arrived. You need to keep walking faithfully with Him.

Meditation: How will I live differently because of these ten days?

Journal Assignment: Write a personal commitment titled "How I Will Finish Strong."

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Complete each statement with a specific explanation:

- With God's help, I will stop…
- With God's help, I will begin…
- I will protect my focus by…
- I will express gratitude through…
- I will strengthen my service by…
- When I fall short, I will…
- Before December 31, I will…

End with a written prayer surrendering the rest of 2026 and your preparation for 2027 to God.