



BREAKING THE ICE

What is your strongest sense? (smell, taste, touch, hear, sight)

What is your worst sense?

MAIN CONTENT

This week our good friend, author, speaker and podcast host Annie F. Downs, opened our series, “Awaken”. We want to awaken our senses to what God is doing and wants to do through His church.

Over time, our senses can become dull. When they do, we want to act on them to reawaken them. Over time, our lives can deaden our senses because of how hard it can be.

1. What feels hard in your life right now?

When our life feels hard and our senses start to deaden, we need to reawaken them. Fasting helps awaken our senses to things God has for us. Fasting is giving up something we love for something we love more. When we fast something we love, we become more aware of our surroundings.

When we fast, we are asking God to open our eyes to see things we may not have seen before. He can open our eyes to see people as He does.

2. When is the last time you asked God to help you see people the way He does? What happened when you asked?

When God opens our eyes spiritually we become more like Him. Our opened spiritual eyes give us opportunity to physically see people differently in our world. We have more compassion, grace, mercy and love for them. We see them how Jesus sees them. We are awakened to things beyond ourselves.

3. How do you need to see people differently?

Everyone matters to God so they should matter to us.

Read Isaiah 58:6-9

In our prayer life it can be easy to focus on things for ourselves. The scripture in Isaiah is a starting point for how we can pray beyond ourselves and have our eyes opened to what God wants for this world.

It's not always comfortable to have opened eyes to others. It may require us to step out of our comfort and have conversations we may not always be willing to jump into. But obeying Him, praying for others and doing things He has asked us to do is worth it.

4. Describe a time where God has asked you to pray for someone else or do something a little uncomfortable. What happened? How did you see God move in that situation?

When we choose to pray beyond ourselves we can pray for specific things as a guide. Annie talked about these things to pray for from the scripture in Isaiah on Sunday: break the chains of injustice, rid exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts, share food with the hungry, invite homeless into your homes, clothe the ill-clad, be available to your families.

5. Out of the prayers from Isaiah above - which ones have you prayed for before? Which ones are easy to pray for? Which ones are harder?

When we get specific about these prayers God moves. When we pray for work, we can pray for those we work with by name. When we pray for the oppressed we can pray for people in other countries who aren't allowed to talk about their faith for fear of being imprisoned or even being put to death. When we put names and faces to these prayers, God is opening our eyes spiritually and physically to those around us.

6. How specific are you in your prayer time with God? How do you pray for others?

Read Matthew 5:8

When we actively pray God moves in our lives. Pastor Kevin talks about having a plan and place to pray and spend time with God. When we actively pray and seek Him, He awakens our lives. Our hearts are purified by Him and we see others like He does.

Everyone's lives are different. Our prayer times look different as well. Some people write prayers, some say them, some have notecards or even really large sticky notes on the wall as Annie demonstrated. No matter what you choose to do in your prayer time, know God is moving in your prayers and changing your heart to be more like His.

7. What's been helpful in your prayer time with God? What does your prayer time look like?

8. What do you need to be awakened to see God more clearly? What can you do in your prayer life to be awakened to some things?

CLOSING PRAYER

God, thank you for inviting us to pray and spend time with you. Will you give us the eyes to see others like you do? Will you show us to love unconditionally and awaken us to the things that have deadened in our lives? Help us know you deeply and personally. Awaken our senses to what you want us to see in our lives and the lives around us. We love you and we are thankful for you. In Jesus name, Amen.

ACTION STEP

- + This week choose 2 things from the scripture in Isaiah to pray for. Be specific in your prayers.
- + If you haven't tried fasting yet, give it a try this week. Go to www.crosspoint.tv/fast for ideas and more information.
- + Commit to pray for one other person in your group this week. Check with each other throughout the week and ask how you can specifically pray for them.