

Digital Fast Guidebook

See Pastor Derek introducing the digital fast at
[whoisgrace.com/digitalfast](https://www.whoisgrace.com/digitalfast)

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WHY SHOULD I TRY A DIGITAL FAST?

We live in an age where smartphones and social media have become so ingrained in our daily routines that simply leaving them at home can feel like a shock to the system. At the same time, many of us sense that in their demand for our attention, these digital devices are shaping our thoughts, controlling our time, and contributing to issues like anxiety, distraction, and shallow relationships. This guidebook invites you to pause, reflect, and explore a digital fast—an intentional step away from constant connectivity. By temporarily disengaging from social media, streaming platforms, or even online news, we are clearing space to reconnect with what truly matters: a clear focus on Jesus and rediscovering meaningful face-to-face connections with people who matter. Think of this season as a detox for the soul and a chance to reset our habits so that our devices serve us, rather than the other way around. We're excited to journey alongside you as we embrace JOMO (the Joy Of Missing Out), clean out some digital clutter, and open ourselves to a renewed sense of peace, purpose, and God's presence.

PREPARING FOR YOUR DIGITAL FAST

The goal of this fast is to declutter your digital life and experience JOMO - the JOY of missing out! Start preparing with three easy steps.

Step 1: DISCERN

What is going on in my digital life? Name the devices, programs, and apps that you use regularly.

[Tip- Check the screen time (iOS) or digital well-being (Android) setting on your cell phone.]

HOME

WORK

DOWNTIME

Which aspects of my digital life are:

PRODUCTIVE (work, finance)

BENEFICIAL (growth, learning, creativity)

DISTRACTING (social media, entertainment)

DAMAGING (anxiety, discontent, comparison)

How would I describe my digital life?

OBSESSED

ADDICTED

OUT OF CONTROL

OVERWHELMING

BALANCED

MINDLESS

SLAVERY

SATISFYING

FULL

LIMITED

DISCIPLINED

STRESSFUL

Step 2: DECIDE

What kind of digital fast will you choose for the next 40 days?

Option 1: SOCIAL MEDIA

I will detox from social media content.

Option 2: SOCIAL MEDIA + ENTERTAINMENT

I will declutter from distractions and limit myself to productive and work-related digital contact.

Option 3: SOCIAL MEDIA + ENTERTAINMENT + INFORMATION

I will eliminate all digital distractions from my personal time.



Scan this QR Code to let us know you're in on the Digital Fast. You'll be entered to win a local Erie gift card!

Step 3: DETERMINE

What will your digital life look like for the next 40 days?

Select ideas that work for you and edit/add your own.

STOP	START
Delete social media apps from phone	Connect with 3 friends for coffee
No television before 9pm or after 11pm	Try a new puzzle or a new game
Ignore clickbait news headlines	Trial subscription for 1 online news outlet
Put my phone away during meals	Listen to an audiobook
No sleeping near my phone (use an old alarm clock)	Sign up for a library card and read a paper book
Unnecessary use of phone while spending time with family and friends	Attend a class or training
Don't make my phone the first look when I wake up	Regular time with God using the MY CHAIR tool
Don't put the phone on the table	Conversation about the power of screens
Turn off notifications	Digital Sabbath- phones off for one day of the week
	Journal daily
	Start a healthy habit: take a walk!

TIPS & TRICKS FOR YOUR DIGITAL FAST

From Darren Whitehead, "The Digital Fast"

Make Your Smartphone Dumb:

- Remove distraction apps (social media, games, news, YouTube).
- Keep only utility apps (calls, texts, calendar, camera).
- Use apps on a desktop instead of your cell phone to reduce the frequency of use.

Use Grayscale Mode:

- Make your phone less visually stimulating to decrease its allure.

Replace Digital Habits:

- Fill time with Scripture, prayer, journaling, or outdoor activities.
- Engage in face-to-face conversations.

Set Boundaries:

- Dedicate tech-free zones and times, like during meals or family gatherings.
- Remove non-essential apps (social media, games, news).
- Turn off notifications for everything except calls and texts.
- Use a basic alarm clock instead of your phone to start your day distraction-free.

- If work requires screens, establish clear boundaries (e.g., no email after 6 PM). Communicate these boundaries with colleagues.

Create Sacred Spaces:

- Dedicate tech-free zones (e.g., bedroom, dining table) and times (e.g., during meals or before bed).

Replace Tech with Tangibles:

- Use a paper Bible or a devotional book instead of apps.
- Write physical letters or journal your prayers.
- Read printed books rather than e-books.

Involve Others:

- Engage your family, friends, or LifeGroup in the fast. Share experiences and encourage each other during the process.

Grace Over Guilt:

If you slip up, don't be discouraged. Use it as a learning opportunity and refocus on your goals.

Pray Through Temptation:

Whenever you feel the urge to use a device, pause and pray. Use this as a moment to draw closer to God.

Remember: *JOMO!*

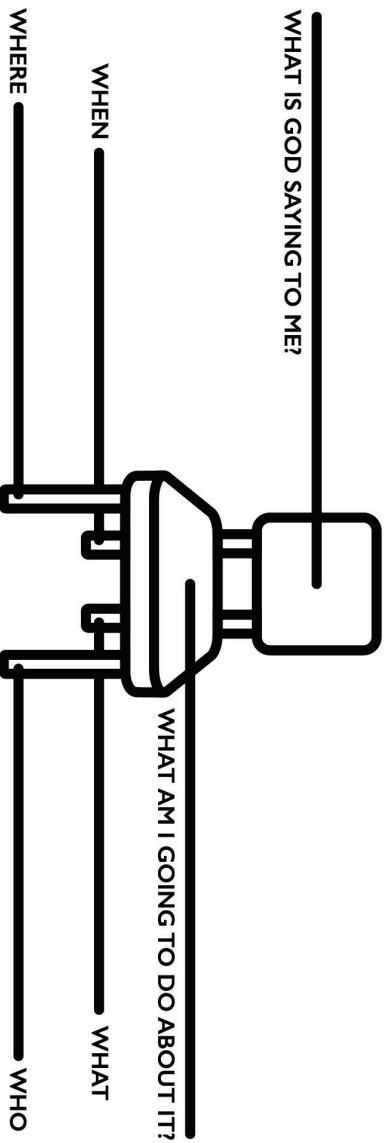
Look for the joys of missing out: Observe the effects of reduced digital engagement.

MY CHAIR TOOL

Your “Chair” is the place where you meet with God every day in His Word. Take some time to consider the four legs of the chair and make your Chair a daily commitment during this digital fast.

- **When will I spend time with God?**
- **Where is my chair?**
- **What will I read? What will I need besides this guide book?**
- **Who will I invite to hold me accountable and/or share the journey with me?**

MY CHAIR (SAVVY FOLLOWER)



MY DIGITAL FAST JOURNEY: 40 DAYS

Use these pages for Sunday sermon notes, daily MY CHAIR reflections, prayers, thoughtful doodling, or other creative expressions. Throughout the pages, you will find Scriptures, guided prayer, and quotes to prompt your heart and mind.

I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me
-John 10:14

I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me
-John 10:14

DREAM DISCIPLE PRAYER PROMPT

Compassionate Storyteller: *Confession*

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

-Psalm 51:10

It is God's good design that His Son, Jesus, is at the center of His Story and your story. How have you allowed following Jesus to slip to the sidelines of your life?

Confess your sin

Focus on Jesus:

Thank Him for the gift of your salvation

Commit to centering your life's story on Him

Tell someone what Jesus has done for you



Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

-Romans 12:2

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.

-John 8:12

Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

-Matthew 11:28-30

I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and whoever believes in Me will never thirst.

-John 6:48

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness.

-John 10:10

DREAM DISCIPLE PRAYER PROMPT

Savvy Follower *Situational Discernment*

Ask God to help you identify a specific situation in your life where you need to discern his voice and follow his lead at the right time in the right way.

Talk to God:

Describe the Situation:

What are the challenges?

How do you feel about this situation?

What do you need from God?

Listen to God's Voice:

God, what are you saying to me through your Word and your Presence?

What do you want me to do about it?





For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.

-Ephesians 5:8-9





All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone.

-Blaise Pascal

But the LORD is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him.

-Habakkuk 2:20



DREAM DISCIPLE PRAYER PROMPT

Intentional Friend: Praying for Others

...we have not stopped praying for you... Colossians 1:9

Think about the spaces where you live, work, learn, and play. Who are the people in those spaces? Let some faces come to your mind.

Pause and pray for one or two people using the following Scriptures to prompt your prayers:

Do they need encouraged in their faith?

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,
-Colossians 1:9-11

Are they walking through something heavy?

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
-Psalm 18:2

Do they need to know Jesus is their Savior and Lord?

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
-John 14:6



The monotony and solitude of a quiet life stimulates the creative mind.

– Albert Einstein

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will surely help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

-Isaiah 41:10



In order to understand the world, one has to turn away from it on occasion.

– Albert Camus

Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

-Psalm 46:10



In solitude, we give passionate attention to our lives, to our memories, to the details around us.

-Virginia Woolf

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

-Psalm 19:1



One can be instructed in society, one is inspired only in solitude.
– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

DREAM DISCIPLE PRAYER PROMPT

Embedded Influencer: Surrender

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

-Ephesians 2:10

With open hands, surrender your life, your gifts, and your influence to God:

God, you made me...

God, you have given me gifts and talents...

God, you have prepared good work for me to do in this time
and place...



Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

-Psalm 119:105





A joy shared is a joy doubled.
-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

-John 15:5

Lined writing area with horizontal lines.



*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father
except through me.*

-John 14:6





A series of horizontal lines for writing, filling most of the page.

*I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live,
even though they die*

-John 11:25





A blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are 21 lines in total, starting from the top margin and ending just above the footer.

I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.

-John 10:9











A sheet of white paper with 20 horizontal black lines, evenly spaced, covering most of the page. The lines are intended for writing.

YOU MADE IT! NOW WHAT?

Celebrate!

DON'T binge the Lord of the Rings trilogy or scroll TikTok for an hour! But DO celebrate the Wins, big and small:

Thank God for his presence throughout your Digital Fast. Praise Him for his good work in you during this period. Share your story with family, friends, or LifeGroup.

Reflect:

From Darren Whitehead, "The Digital Fast"

Evaluate the Experience:

Reflect on what changed during the fast. Did you notice improved relationships, mental clarity, or spiritual growth?

Adopt New Habits:

Maintain some boundaries established during the fast, like tech-free meals or limited social media.

Create Regular Digital Sabbaths:

Implement weekly or monthly "digital sabbaths" to sustain the discipline of intentional disconnection.

Review your START/STOP chart from page 5. Which boundaries and habits will become permanent rhythms? Add those to the chart here:

STOP	START

EXTRAS

Lenten Reading Plans - I AM Jesus:

Week 1: I AM the Door

(John 10:1-10; Psalm 103; Romans 5:1-11)

Week 2: I AM the Good Shepherd

(John 10:1-18; Psalm 23; Luke 15:3-10)

Week 3: I AM the Light of the World

(John 8:12; Exodus 13:17-22; John 1:4-10)

Week 4: I AM the Bread of Life

(John 6:1-71; Philippians 4:11-13)

Week 5: I AM the True Vine

(John 15:1-17; Galatians 5:22-25; Isaiah 5:1-7)

Week 6: I AM the Way, Truth, Life

(John 14:1-6; Isaiah 43:15-21; 1 John 5:11-12)

Week 7: I AM the Resurrection and the Life

(John 11:1-57; John 17-20)

Holy Week Reading Plan:

Palm Sunday: John 12:12-36

Monday: John 13:1-38

Tuesday: John 14

Wednesday: John 15

Maundy Thursday: John 17-18

Good Friday: John 19:1-37

Holy Saturday: John 19:38-42

Easter Sunday: John 20

Suggested Books:

If you need persuading:

The Digital Fast – Darren Whitehead
Digital Minimalism, Cal Newport
The Anxious Generation, Jonathan Haidt
The Tech-Wise Family – Andy Crouch

If you want to live with more intentionality:

Liturgy of the Ordinary, Tish Harrison Warren
Ruthless Elimination of Hurry, John Mark Comer
The Deeply Formed Life – Rich Villodas
A Meal with Jesus – Tim Chester
Finding Your Third Place – Richard Kyte

If you want to slow down and think:

The Pursuit of God, A.W. Tozer
Experiencing Prayer – Henry Blackaby

If you'd like to dig deeper into Scripture:

Ten Words to Live By, Jen Wilkin
15 New Testament Words of Life, Nijay Gupta

If you want a Classic:

Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis

If you want to read about a compelling life:

King: A Life, Jonathan Eig

If you're looking for a throwback adventure story:

Hatchet, Gary Paulsen

If you're looking for something short and compelling:

The Death of Ivan Ilyich, Leo Tolstoy

From the Pastors' Bookshelves:

Derek: The Spirit of the Disciplines, Dallas Willard

Sarah: Bullies and Saints, John Dickson

Scott: The Furious Longing of God, Brennan Manning

Around Erie:

Dine Without Distractions

Put your phone on silent and savor the flavors of these locally loved restaurants:

- **Bar Ronin** - This intimate Japanese-style izakaya serves incredible ramen, small plates, and craft cocktails. It is perfect for a night of conversation and culinary adventure.
- **Flagship City Food Hall** - A downtown hotspot featuring a variety of local eateries, from tacos to barbecue, so everyone in your group can get exactly what they want!
- **Otis 12** - A must-visit for wing lovers, offering over 100 creative flavors. Challenge yourself to try a new one each time!

- **Bayhouse Oyster Bar & Restaurant** – Enjoy fresh seafood, oysters, and waterfront views in this upscale yet relaxed setting.
- **Bricks Steakhouse** – A high-end steakhouse serving perfectly cooked steaks, seafood, and fine wines for an elevated dining experience.
- **Lucero** – A hidden gem for authentic Mexican cuisine with fresh ingredients and bold flavors.
- **The Bistro** – A cozy, upscale spot with creative dishes and an intimate dining experience.
- **Roma's** – Classic Italian comfort food, including handmade pasta, pizza, and incredible desserts.
- **The Cork 1794** – A sophisticated yet inviting restaurant with gourmet dishes, craft cocktails, and an extensive wine selection.
- **El Amigo** – An affordable authentic Mexican restaurant with a warm and inviting atmosphere.
- **Casa Cafe** – Stop by for a delicious breakfast burrito, burrito bowl, or choose from a big selection of authentic Mexican pastries.

- **Lori's Wildridge** – A local, family-run restaurant with home-cooked style meals from breakfast to dinner options. You'll also love their warm, cabin-like atmosphere as you're surrounded by nature and wildlife scenery.

Get Outside & Breathe Fresh Air

Nature is the best remedy for screen fatigue. Head to these outdoor spots for a refreshing escape:

- **Asbury Woods** – Hike through scenic trails, listen to birds chirping, and explore the nature center. No notifications—just nature.
- **Presque Isle State Park** – Kayak, bike, hike, or simply relax on the beach. Whether it's summer sunshine or a winter stroll, it's Erie's best place to recharge.
- **Wintergreen Gorge** – A stunning natural area with waterfalls, scenic trails, and breathtaking views. Perfect for hiking, photography, and a peaceful nature retreat.

Adventure & Fun Activities

Step outside your comfort zone with these thrill-filled activities:

- **Ascend Erie** – Indoor rock climbing for all skill levels! Challenge yourself to a climb instead of challenging

friends to another online game.

- **Hazard's Indoor Mini Golf** – Ditch the digital screens for glow-in-the-dark mini golf and friendly competition.
- **Stumpy's Hatchet House** – Try axe throwing with friends or family—it's a satisfying way to release stress!
- **Peak 'n Peak Resort (NY)** – Just a short drive from Erie, enjoy skiing, snowboarding, or tubing for a day of winter fun away from screens.
- **ExpERIENCE Children's Museum** – A perfect hands-on adventure for kids and families! Explore interactive exhibits that encourage creativity, discovery, and fun.
- **Splash Lagoon Indoor Water Park** – No need for a beach! Enjoy slides, wave pools, and lazy rivers at this year-round indoor water park.
- **Bowling Night** – Hit the lanes at Round 1, Eastway Lanes, Greengarden Lanes, or Rolling Meadow Lanes for some classic, screen-free fun.
- **Ice Skating** – Glide across the ice at Erie Bank Sports Park or Mercyhurst Ice Center for a great way to stay active in winter.

- **The Hagen History Center** – Discover Erie’s rich history through exhibits, historic homes, and engaging displays that transport you to another era.
- **Erie Art Museum** – Explore stunning artwork from local and international artists, participate in creative workshops, and experience rotating exhibitions that inspire.

Get Creative & Hands-On

Engage your creative side with these screen-free arts & crafts experiences:

- **Try a Pottery Class at Erie Clayspace** – Whether solo, with a partner, or in a group, learn to shape and glaze your own pottery in a fun and relaxing atmosphere.
- **Board & Brush Creative Studio** – Create custom wooden signs and home décor at this hands-on DIY workshop. Great for a date night or group activity!

Coffee Shops & Cozy Corners

Sip, relax, and dive into a good conversation or book at these locally-owned coffee shops:

- **Tipsy Bean** – A cozy coffee spot with delicious drinks, local art, and a welcoming vibe. No laptops allowed after a certain hour—just good company.

- **Brew Ha Ha** – A quirky coffeehouse with fantastic lattes, pastries, and an atmosphere perfect for working, studying, reading, or journaling.
- **Pressed Books & Coffee** – A unique combo of books and coffee—find your next read while sipping a handcrafted latte.
- **Werner Books** – Independent bookstore lovers, this one's for you! Get lost in the aisles and leave with a new favorite novel.
- **Legenderie Records & Coffee** – A hidden gem in Erie for vinyl lovers and coffee drinkers alike. Flip through records while enjoying a specialty brew.

Local Gems Beyond Erie

Explore great spots in the surrounding areas like:

- **Banksy Coffee Co. (North East, PA)** – A hidden gem with artisan coffee and a welcoming atmosphere.
- **Gingerbread Man Coffee (Edinboro, PA)** – Cozy, warm, and the perfect place to unplug with a hot drink.
- **Main Street Cakery Café (Fairview and Erie locations)** – Grab a latte and one of their signature desserts for a sweet break from tech.

- **Flip Café (Edinboro, PA)** – A locally loved café with creative breakfast dishes, fresh coffee, and a homey atmosphere perfect for relaxing.

Read, Learn & Explore

Swap doom-scrolling for page-turning at Erie County Public Libraries!

- **Grab a library card** – Check out a new book, join a book club, or explore their in-person events. Erie's libraries have something for everyone!

Bonus: Shop Local & Support Erie

Stroll through local markets & shops – Visit small businesses and farmers' markets instead of shopping online. You'll find unique treasures and support the community.

Scan this QR Code to let us know you're in on the Digital Fast. You'll be entered to win a local Erie gift card!

