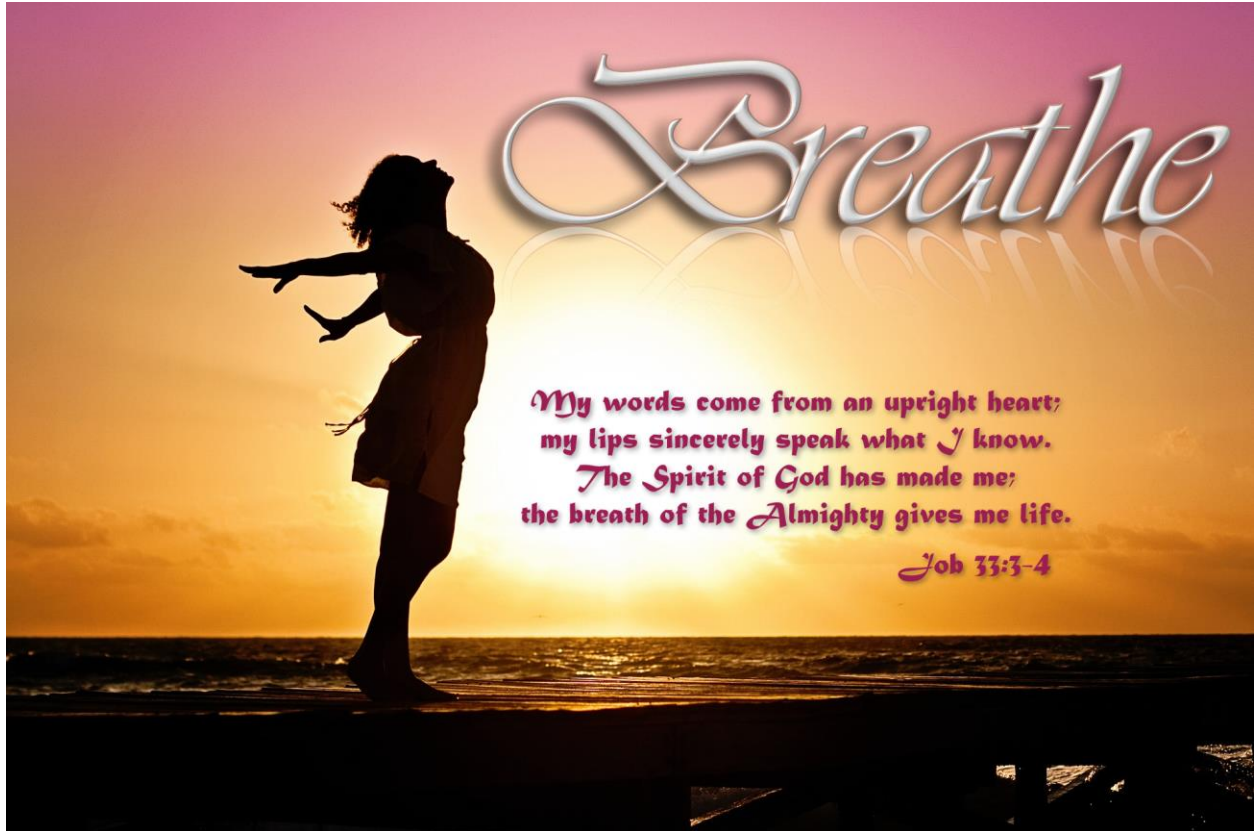


# Spiritual Essentials



## Scripture:

**Job 33:3-4** My words come from an upright heart;  
my lips sincerely speak what I know.  
The Spirit of God has made me;  
the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

## Special Music:

Breathe – Jonny Diaz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnjeMwxFuBA>

**Scientists agree that there are four basic elements that a person needs to survive. Without these things, a person is doomed. These things are:**

- 1. Air**
- 2. Water**
- 3. Food**
- 4. Shelter**

**An argument can be made that there is a fifth necessity and I have a tendency to agree with them. That fifth element is:**

- 5. Rest**

**It is said that the human body can go without food for approximately 40 days. Isn't that coincidental with Jesus fasting in the wilderness for 40 days?**

**The amount of time one can go without shelter is dependent on the weather conditions and the native wildlife but at some point, a person needs to find shelter for protection from the elements and animals.**

**The longest recorded period that a person has gone without sleep is 11 consecutive days.**

**The human body can go without water for three to four days depending on the environment and the amount of exertion.**

**A person can only go without breathing 2-3 minutes and for most of us, 30 – 60 seconds.**

**On the survival scale, breathing ranks right there at the top of important things to needed for life. We need constant air to feed oxygen to our brain and our organs. Without air, our bodies shut down very quickly. We can go for about 6 minutes without CPR before our brains begin to die. As we breathe in, our lungs oxygenate our blood which then carries that oxygen to all parts of our bodies. Carbon dioxide is collected and returned to the lungs to be exhaled. It is truly an amazing system.**

**Most of the time, we don't think about our breathing. It comes naturally, like our heartbeat. But we are very quick to notice when we can't breathe. When we become anxious or over-excited, we are told to... breathe. By focusing on our breathing, we bring the systems of our body back into a natural rhythm. When we can't breathe, we panic. We panic because we know that breathing is essential to our earthly existence. We panic because our survival instinct kicks in telling us that if we can't find a way to breathe, then we are probably going to die.**

**When we are in an airplane and the oxygen mask drops, we are told to put our mask on first before we try to help anyone else. Why is that? It's really pretty**

simple. If we don't manage to get our mask on within a timely manner, we won't be able to help anyone else and we will become a burden to those around us.

The very first thing that doctors and nurses do when a baby is born is to ensure that the baby takes its first breath. It is vital that that first breath happens quickly because that breath begins a process that ensures that the baby can survive outside the mother's womb.

So is it any wonder that the very first breath taken by a human being is found in **Genesis 1:7 Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.**

Man was nothing more than a lump of clay until God breathed life into him. When God breathed into man, man became something more. We cannot find any place in the scripture where God breathes into any other creature; only human beings. And yet other creatures live and breathe. We can see by this that God's breath is unique to mankind. But why? What makes man so special that God added this process to his creation? Why did God take the extra step of breathing life into His ultimate masterpiece? Let's read a little more from Genesis regarding this:

**Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals.**

**So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.**

**God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”**

**Mankind was the only creature that God created in the image of Himself and He created mankind with an actionable purpose. Mankind was created to be an intermediary and protector between God and His creation; an extension of His being. Mankind was the only creature created that could have a relationship with the Creator; a creature capable of worship, love and responsibility for something beyond himself as well as having the unique ability to create in the semblance of God, to have visions, dreams and the ability of express emotions and concepts. And yes, mankind was the only creature that was imbued with free will and with the ability to say “no” to God.**

**All of these things came when God forced that first breath into Adam’s lungs, making mankind unique among all of creation. That breath allowed for the possibility for each and every man, woman and child to have a personal relationship with the creator of the universe.**

**But it didn’t stop there. You see, just because you take that first breath, it does not mean that there will not be other moments in your life where God breathes life**

into you; those moment of trial, those moments in the wilderness, those moments when God knows you have reached the end of your rope and you need to feel His breath filling your lungs, renewing your life, enriching your purpose and giving you the strength and passion to take the next step; even when you are beyond exhaustion and joy eludes you.

Think Jesus in the wilderness, forty days without sustenance having to face temptations that threatened to destroy His earthly ministry before it began.

**Mark 1:11-13**

**And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”**

**At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted. by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.**

The Spirit of God, the breath of God, leading Jesus into wilderness; driving His purpose and giving Him the support and sustenance that He needed to face the greatest challenge any man had ever faced; a challenge that He took on as a man rather than the Son of God, to show us that we too can face our greatest trials when we understand that it is the breath of God that gives us purpose and sustenance beyond human existence. We are weak; He is strong.

Think Job, who having lost everything that mattered to him on this earth, cried out in **Job 33:3-4:**

**My words come from an upright heart;**

**my lips sincerely speak what I know.**

**The Spirit of God has made me;**

**the breath of the Almighty gives me life.**

He realized that his strength and sustenance came not from earthly resources, but from the breath of God; the habitation of the holy spirit within the confines of his mortal coil. “The spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” This not a singular moment. The spirit of God created him and the breath of God continues to give him life.

Think about Ezekiel before the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-10: **The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”**

**I said, “Sovereign LORD, you alone know.”**

**Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I**

**will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’”**

**So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.**

**Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.**

**The process of making those bones come alive is not complete until God breathes life into them. They are a mere collection of flesh and bone. They are but clay awaiting something more. The miracle of the bones coming together and the tendons and flesh giving form did not make them living beings. It took the breath of God to bring life into those bodies. There are some who say that these bones were strictly allegorical but whether it was real or just a dream, God did not consider these bones to have life until He breathed life into them.**



**So when Jesus comes to the disciples for the first time after the resurrection, He is looking to complete His purpose on earth. He has, literally, pulled together His disciples using stories, sermons, teachings, prayer, worship and practical experience but He sees them as incomplete. Just like Ezekiel's dry bones, they only lack one thing to make the change complete. They only lack one thing to make them the force that Jesus will send into the world to make disciples of all men.**

**John 20:19-22 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.**

**Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."**

**He breathes on them. He takes what is ordinary and makes it extraordinary by breathing on them. He gifts them the Holy Spirit, a guide and a source of strength and focus; the gift of the Holy Spirit to keep them aligned with His intended purpose which was making disciples of all mankind.**

**All too often we find ourselves gasping for air. The world comes crashing down around us leaving us feeling lonely and without hope. We want the world to go away and give us room to breathe! But we can't breathe because we can't let go of our obligations, or maybe because our pain is so great or our loss so traumatic that we see no space in our lives to breathe. Maybe we are rejected for who we are or what we believe. Maybe we believe our skin is the wrong color or we are possibly involved with the wrong people. Maybe we live our lives by different standards than the community around us. Maybe we aren't happy with our jobs or the people we work with.**

**All or any of that may be true. But the source of our problem is that we are fighting for breath while we fight our demons. Jesus promises us the breath of the Holy Spirit, unencumbered, free, plentiful, satisfying and available in the midst of our circumstances and problems. We just need to understand that He wants us to breathe. The Holy Spirit wants to give us guidance, strength and wisdom so that we can focus our attention on doing God's will. We have to accept the fact that God wants to breathe life back into us. He loves us so much and He hates to watch us flounder for a quick breath when the breath of life is readily available. We just need to take time... to breathe. It is the life force of the Christian experience. I challenge you this week as you go about tackling your giants and fending off discouragement that you pause and take time to breathe knowing that it will refocus your energies and provide you with the strength and joy that you need to carry out the will of God in your life.**

**Amen**

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