

A dark, atmospheric painting of a forest. The scene is dominated by tall, slender trees with dark trunks and sparse, light-colored foliage. The ground is dark and textured. In the lower-left foreground, a person is kneeling in prayer, their head bowed and hands clasped. The overall mood is somber and contemplative. The word "LENT" is written in large, bold, yellow, distressed letters across the center of the image.

LENT

A MIDTOWN FELLOWSHIP GUIDE

LENT

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A Midtown Fellowship Guide to Lent

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control

1 Corinthians 9:25-27

Following Jesus is a way of life, learning to do the things that He did and becoming more like Him. This way of life doesn't come naturally, but, as mentioned in the passage above, requires a life of discipline and self-control. This process is known as spiritual formation.

In addition to practicing personal spiritual formation for thousands of years, the church has also integrated annual corporate spiritual formation tools as a way to remind us that we are not alone in our faith; we are a people who follow Jesus together.

One such corporate practice in following Jesus together is the season of Lent.

Advent prepares our hearts for hopeful anticipation of Jesus' birth whereas Lent prepares us for Jesus' death and resurrection.

During Lent, we recognize special days which commemorate Jesus' life and ministry. For example, the 40 days of Lent point back to Jesus' testing in the wilderness for 40 days. Holy Week (the final week of Lent) remembers Jesus' final week of ministry before His crucifixion and resurrection.¹

Though there's no biblical mandate to observe Lent, church traditions have found this season helpful to remind us of Jesus' work on the cross as we press more into our spiritual formation.

Our goal for this season and this guide is to do just that - to intentionally pursue both the personal and corporate spiritual practices that at the end of this season, these practices will become sustainable habits.

¹ Other special days in Lent include Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. To get a breakdown of these days and how we will commemorate them, go to p. 2.

SPECIAL DAYS IN LENT

ASH WEDNESDAY

Traditionally, Ash Wednesday is the day Christians gather to receive ashes marked on their forehead. Ashes represent lamenting, whether over one's sin or sin done to them. (Gen 18:27, Job 30:19, Job 42:6, Isaiah 61:3).

This day is in no way about *condemnation*. It's a time in which we can be honest with God, with ourselves, and with each other. With the terror of judgment removed through Jesus, we can acknowledge the reality of sin in and around us.

Ashes also remind us that we are made from dust and will one day return to our maker. (Genesis 3:19)

We will celebrate Ash Wednesday with two identical services at 7am and 7pm on Wednesday, February 26, at 1800 Blanding St. For more information go to midtowndowntown.com/events

MAUNDY THURSDAY

'Maundy' is derived from the latin 'mandatum' which means "commandment."

Thursday night of Holy Week corresponds to the Last Supper; it includes Jesus saying, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you." In other words, it is New Commandment Thursday.

Maundy Thursday services traditionally include a focus on the Last Supper, not only as the beginning of the Triduum, but also as the institution of Communion.

This year, we're celebrating Maundy Thursday to remind ourselves that through Jesus' body broken and blood shed for us, we can be made right with God and one another.

We'll celebrate Maundy Thursday with a service at 7pm on Thursday, April 9, at 1800 Blanding St. For more information go to midtowndowntown.com/events

GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday is the day we remember the crucifixion of Jesus. The day is called “good” not because we are celebrating Jesus’ death, but we recognize Jesus has paid for our sin and that His resurrection is coming.

Every year we celebrate Good Friday to remind us that Jesus, in giving up his life, shows us how sinful we are and, at the same time, how deeply loved we are.

We’ll celebrate Good Friday with a service at 7pm on Friday, April 10, at 1800 Blanding St. For more information go to midtowndowntown.com/events

WEEKLY PRACTICES

This book contains many parts, all with this goal in mind: to *detach* ourselves from what distracts so we can *attach* ourselves to what matters most.

The spiritual disciplines are not simply mental exercises to be with Jesus - they involve both our mind and body to remind us that God has created us with both body and soul. One is no less than the other, both are interconnected with one another, and God means to redeem them both.

As we press into spiritual practices that integrate body and soul, we are reminded that Jesus will one day fully and completely restore both aspects of our being. We won't be unembodied souls in heaven, we will be in our resurrected bodies free from sin in the life to come.

CHURCH-WIDE FASTING

Fasting is one such spiritual practice that engages both mind and body through the process of detaching ourselves for the expressed purpose of attaching ourselves to what matters most.

Fasting is not about self-denial solely for self-denial's sake, but by saying "no" to things we create more margin in our lives to say "yes" to the things of Jesus.

Fasting is not feeling guilt about the things you do, we have freedom and life in Christ; fasting helps us experience our life in Christ in a tangible way by pressing into our spiritual formation.

Fasting helps us step back from specific things for a season and assess their grip on our lives.

During this season, for one week at a time, we're going to fast from one thing together as we prepare our hearts for Jesus' resurrection. We want to take time specifically fasting from good things - things that aren't bad in and of themselves - to remind ourselves that they aren't where we find our ultimate good.

Below you'll find what our church family will be fasting from corporately. It's our goal that through these practices of intentional detaching and attaching, we can develop sustainable habits to ongoingly fix our minds on Jesus once Lent is over.

WEEK 1 - NO FASTING (FEB 26-29)

**WEEK 2 - BACKGROUND NOISE - MUSIC/RADIO/
PODCASTS (MARCH 2-7)**

WEEK 3 - TV/MOVIES/VIDEO GAMES (MARCH 9-14)

**WEEK 4 - NON-ESSENTIAL PHONE AND INTERNET
USAGE (MARCH 16-21)**

**WEEK 5 - NON-ESSENTIAL SHOPPING (MARCH 23-
28)**

**WEEK 6 - CAFFEINE, ALCOHOL, SWEETS AND
DESSERTS (MARCH 30-APRIL 4)**

**WEEK 7 - FASTING FROM FOOD WITH YOUR
LIFEGROUP ONE DAY THAT WEEK (APRIL 6-11)**

Every Sunday we will break from these fasts together. Traditionally, Sundays are a time for rest, celebration, and feasting as we remember Jesus conquering death on Easter Sunday 2,000 years ago.

DAILY PRACTICES

*Blessed is the one...whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law **day and night**.*

-Psalm 1:1-2

Each day of Lent we will walk through daily devotions containing two practices - the first, meditative reading, is to be practiced in the morning. The second, reflective prayer, is to be practiced in the evening. It's our goal that through these two daily rhythms, we can develop sustainable habits to ongoingly abide with Jesus once the Lent season is over.

*For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.*

Psalm 62:1

...Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 5:16

A crucial component of these practices requires silence, solitude, and stillness. In the two passages above, we see a parallel between the internal quiet of our soul and the external quiet of our surroundings. Oftentimes, to get into that place of inner quiet, it requires placing ourselves in quiet environments so we can more clearly hear from the Lord and experience whatever He has to say to us.

As we are reading our Bibles and praying, we want to create space to be in a posture of "unhurry" so we can slow down and rest in His presence.

As you do these practices, this will probably mean finding a quiet physical space, free from distraction. So as you prepare for your morning reading and evening prayer, find a place free from screens. Choose times that you are likely to not be interrupted and when you are most alert. Put your phone on 'Do not disturb' or 'Airplane Mode' or leave your phone in

another room. If you have kids, take turns with your spouse so each of you can get away to be with the Lord for a time. This may even require setting alarms so that you can go to bed at a reasonable hour to wake up early and be with the Lord.

Integrating these practices, like any of the spiritual practices - will be challenging at first. Remember, our end goal is that we eventually assimilate these practices together as a church family and in the process, look more and more like Jesus. If you find yourself overwhelmed by these practices, then you have the freedom to scale back, start slow, and take gradual steps to make these habits doable for your season of life.

As we begin to work through these practices, stick with it. Consistency is key. You may find yourself the first week in with lots of obstacles and distractions getting in the way - tell others in your LifeGroup the challenges you're experiencing - they're probably experiencing it too!

And lastly, remember we are marked not by our performance, we are marked by grace. It's grace that picks us up when we fail, and it's that same grace that fuels us and shapes us to be with Jesus and look more Him.

MEDITATIVE READING

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.*

Psalm 119:105

For the first 1,500 years of church history, meditative reading (also called *lectio divina* or “divine reading”), was the primary spiritual practice people used to be with Jesus. Since most people were illiterate, the reading of Scripture in the church Gathering each week was vital for spiritual growth with a focus on attentiveness to God’s Word.

This practice is different than an inductive Bible study - meditative reading is not an exercise in exegeting a text. Rather, this practice trains us to be attentive to God’s Word and sit in His presence. (For more inductive Bible study tools go to **[FollowingJesusTogether.com/abide](https://www.followingjesustgether.com/abide)**)

While this practice can be mishandled to emphasize subjective feelings, we recognize that the Bible has the ultimate authority in our lives. Meditative reading helps us reorient ourselves back to the reality of who God is and who we are.

To practice this, walk through the following steps (or movements) in order.

RELAX

This requires a quiet preparation of the heart. Turn off your phone, get away from distraction, slow down, and take a deep breath. We want to unbusy our minds so we can make room to hear the voice of God.

READ

Read a Scripture passage slowly. Read out loud if it helps. Consider paraphrasing the passage in your own words.

- What words caught your attention?
- What phrases stand out to you?

REFLECT

Read the Scripture slowly a second time. Reflect on how the passage/ words/phrases might apply to your life.

-
- What does this passage reveal to us about God?
 - What does the passage reveal about people?
 - Ask the Spirit for wisdom and discernment.

Is it relevant to something that you are going through? Does it bring to mind a struggle that you have been dealing with? Do certain people come to mind that God may want you to reach out to or reconcile a relationship with? Is there a strong sense of a movement or change that needs to happen?

RESPOND

Read the Scripture a third time. Scripture reminds us that we can approach His presence confidently, so make this conversational with God.

- Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling?
- Where are you resistant or want to push back?
- What do you need to pray for?

The aim of our response is obedience. If the passage prompts you about a poor relationship, go seek reconciliation. If the passage reminds you to be thankful about something specific in your life, then respond in thankfulness. If you're anxious/overwhelmed about something in your life, present it to the Lord. If the passage prompts a specific sin in your life, confess that sin to God knowing He is faithful and just to forgive you.

REST

After reading, rest and wait in His presence. Allow some time for His Word to sink into your soul. Before you're done with this practice, you might want to consider writing down what the Lord showed you as a reminder throughout the day.

It's important to remember the aim of this practice is to just "be" with God. We're not trying to "get something out of it." We want to simply sit in His presence.

Like other practices, this will seem challenging at first. Stick with it. Eventually, this will get easier as you commit to these practices.

REFLECTIVE PRAYER

*Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Psalm 139:23-24

Reflective prayer (also called examen prayer) is meant to be practiced at the end of each day, looking back and discerning God's activity with an aim to grow in deeper awareness for the next day. By practicing this regularly we're able to more quickly see God in the ordinary, live in a posture of godward gratitude, and regularly experience His presence.

This prayer can be broken down in five steps:

1. RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

Hebrews 10:19-21 reminds us that, through Jesus, we have confidence to draw near to Him. In prayer, we actively step into the presence of God not in intimidation or nonchalance but in relational communication. He delights in spending time with you. Take some time to slow your mind down, let your body relax, and as you step into His presence, ask God to give you clarity and understanding as you review your day.

2. RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today? Walk through your day from morning to evening and, as 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "give thanks in all circumstances." What did you do today? Who did you talk to? Even in the small things, give thanks - What brought delight to you today? Even if you find it difficult to give thanks, Lamentations 3:22-23 reminds us the Lord's "mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning." Ask the Lord to give you insight on how you can express gratitude in all your circumstances.

3. REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence? Where were you in step with the Spirit today? What was that like? How did that happen?

Express thankfulness for those moments and ask God to give you more opportunities to experience His presence.

When were you least aware of Jesus' presence? What did you do today out of your own power and strength? What was that like? How did that happen? Scripture reminds us that He is with you always (Matt 2:23, 28:20). Ask God into those moments.

4. REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God?

What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it?

Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

5. RESOLVE

Ask God to give you Spirit-filled guidance and power to be more aware of His presence tomorrow. You may even consider writing down specific next steps as a reminder.

Like other practices, this will be challenging at first. Stick with it. Eventually, this will get easier as you commit to this practice regularly.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 1
FEB 26-29

Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.

-NT Wright

DAY 1 ASH WEDNESDAY (FEB 26)

WEEK 1, DAY 1

No fasting this week

MORNING READING

Joel 2:1-2

Blow a trumpet in Zion;

sound an alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,

for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near,

2 a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains

a great and powerful people;

their like has never been before,

nor will be again after them

through the years of all generations.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 2 (THURSDAY, FEB 27)

WEEK 1, DAY 2

No fasting this week

MORNING READING

Luke 4:1-13

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” ⁴ And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” ⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ And Jesus answered him, “It is written,

“You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.”

⁹ And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,”

¹¹ and “On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

¹² And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ¹³ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today?

WHEN WERE YOU LEAST AWARE OF JESUS' PRESENCE TODAY?

REPENT

What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 3 (FRIDAY, FEB 28)

WEEK 1, DAY 3

No fasting this week

MORNING READING

John 11:17-27

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰ So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 4 (SATURDAY, FEB 29)**WEEK 1, DAY 4**

No fasting this week

MORNING READING**John 11:28-44**

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.”²⁹ And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him.³¹ When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.³² Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.³⁴ And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.”³⁵ Jesus wept.³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.”⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”⁴³ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.”⁴⁴ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

WEEK 1 REVIEW

After the first four days of the Lent season, what has stood out to you from these practices?

Have any of the practices been particularly challenging? Why is that?

What has the Lord been teaching you during this week?

How might you and your LifeGroup spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24) to continue these practices as we head into week 2 of Lent?

Sundays are traditionally the time during Lent to break from your fast and enjoy all of God's good gifts with a deeper appreciation and intentionality than before.

PRAY

Take some time right now to prepare your heart for week 2. Thank God for what He's teaching you so far. Ask God to use this season to make you more like Him.

LISTEN

Check out our "Songs for Lent" playlist on Spotify (user: midtowncolumbia) for the complete list of songs.

Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves... What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out, without a moment's hesitation.

- Catherine Doherty

WEEK 2
MARCH 1-7

THIS WEEK WE ARE FASTING FROM BACKGROUND NOISES SUCH AS MUSIC, PODCASTS, RADIO, OR ANYTHING YOU LISTEN TO WITHOUT ANY REAL INTENTIONALITY. BY ABSTAINING FROM THESE, WE UNBUSY OUR MINDS TO BE MORE PRESENT AND IN THE MOMENT. IN THOSE MOMENTS WHERE WE RECOGNIZE THE SILENCE, LET'S INVITE GOD INTO THAT AND MORE FULLY RECOGNIZE HIS PRESENCE.

DAY 5 (MONDAY, MARCH 2)

WEEK 2, DAY 1

Corporately fasting from background noise - music/podcast/radio

MORNING READING

Isaiah 25:6-12

*On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.*

*⁷And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.*

*⁸He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.*

*⁹It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save
us.*

*This is the Lord; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”*

*¹⁰For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain,
and Moab shall be trampled down in his place,
as straw is trampled down in a dunghill.*

*¹¹And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it
as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim,
but the Lord will lay low his pompous pride together with the skill of
his hands.*

*¹²And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down,
lay low, and cast to the ground, to the dust.*

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 6 (TUESDAY, MARCH 3)

WEEK 2, DAY 2

Corporately fasting from background noise - music/podcast/radio

MORNING READING

John 11:45-57

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, ⁴⁶ but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." ⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰ Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." ⁵¹ He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. ⁵³ So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

⁵⁴ Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 7 (WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4)

WEEK 2, DAY 3

Corporately fasting from background noise - music/podcast/radio

MORNING READING

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. ³ Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 8 (THURSDAY, MARCH 5)

WEEK 2, DAY 4

Corporately fasting from background noise - music/podcast/radio

MORNING READING

John 12:9-11

When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

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EVENING PRAYER

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RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

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REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 9 (FRIDAY, MARCH 6)

WEEK 2, DAY 5

Corporately fasting from background noise - music/podcast/radio

MORNING READING

John 12:12-19

The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" ¹⁴ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion;

behold, your king is coming,

sitting on a donkey's colt!"

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. ¹⁷ The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸ The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 10 (SATURDAY, MARCH 7) WEEK 2, DAY 6

Corporately fasting from background noise - music/podcast/radio

MORNING READING

John 12:20-26

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

WEEK 2 REVIEW

After the first full week of the Lent season, what has stood out to you from the daily practices?

Have any of the practices been particularly challenging this week? Why is that?

What has the Lord been teaching you during this week?

As we fasted from background noise this week, what did the Lord show you?

After this week, how might you be more intentional with how you use podcasts/radio/music?

How might you and your LifeGroup spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24) to continue these practices as we head into week 3 of Lent?

Sundays are traditionally the time during Lent to break from your fast and enjoy all of God's good gifts with a deeper appreciation and intentionality than before.

PRAY

Take some time right now to prepare your heart for week 3. Thank God for what He's teaching you so far. Ask God to use this season to make us more like Him.

LISTEN

Check out our "Songs for Lent" playlist on Spotify (user: midtowncolumbia) for the complete list of songs.

I imagine Lent for you and for me as a great departure from the greedy, anxious anti-neighborliness of our economy, a great departure from our exclusionary politics that fears the other, a great departure from self-indulgent consumerism that devours creation. And then an arrival in a new neighborhood, because it is a gift to be simple, it is a gift to be free; it is a gift to come down where we ought to be.

- Walter Bruggeman

WEEK 3
MARCH 8-14

THIS WEEK WE ARE FASTING FROM TV, STREAMING SERVICES, AND MOVIES. BY ABSTAINING FROM THESE, WE STEP BACK FROM THE NEED TO ALWAYS ENTERTAIN OURSELVES AND INSTEAD, WE FIX OUR MINDS ON JESUS AND PRESS MORE INTO THE RELATIONSHIPS GOD HAS PLACED AROUND US.

DAY 11 (MONDAY, MARCH 9)

WEEK 3, DAY 1

Corporately fasting from TV/Streaming Services/Movies

MORNING READING

Jeremiah 31:31-40

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

³⁵ *Thus says the Lord,*

who gives the sun for light by day

and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,

who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—

the Lord of hosts is his name:

³⁶ *“If this fixed order departs*

from before me, declares the Lord,

then shall the offspring of Israel cease

from being a nation before me forever.”

³⁷ *Thus says the Lord:*

“If the heavens above can be measured,

and the foundations of the earth below can be explored,

then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel

for all that they have done,

declares the Lord.”

³⁸ *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when the city shall be rebuilt for the Lord from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. ³⁹ And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb,*

and shall then turn to Goah. ⁴⁰ The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the Lord. It shall not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever.”

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 12 (TUESDAY, MARCH 10)

WEEK 3, DAY 2

Corporately fasting from TV/Streaming Services/Movies

MORNING READING

John 12:27-36

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴ So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” ³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 13 (WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11)

WEEK 3, DAY 3

Corporately fasting from TV/Streaming Services/Movies

MORNING READING

John 12:36-43

“While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. ³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,

and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹ *Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,*

⁴⁰ *“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”*

⁴¹ *Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. ⁴²*

Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

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RESOLVE

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DAY 14 (THURSDAY, MARCH 12) WEEK 3, DAY 4

Corporately fasting from TV/Streaming Services/Movies

MORNING READING

John 12:44-50

And Jesus cried out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. ⁴⁵ And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

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EVENING PRAYER**RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE****RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS**

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REVIEW THE DAY

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RESOLVE

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DAY 15 (FRIDAY, MARCH 13)

WEEK 3, DAY 5

Corporately fasting from TV/Streaming Services/Movies

MORNING READING

John 13:1-11

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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RESOLVE

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DAY 16 (SATURDAY, MARCH 14) WEEK 3, DAY 6

Corporately fasting from TV/Streaming Services/Movies

MORNING READING

John 13:12-20

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. ¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ ¹⁹ I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

WEEK 3 REVIEW

After the third week of the Lent season, what has stood out to you from the daily practices?

Have any of the practices been particularly challenging this week? Why is that?

What has the Lord been teaching you during this week?

As we fasted from TV/movies this week, what did the Lord show you?

After this week, how might you be more intentional with how you use TV and movies?

How might you and your LifeGroup spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24) to continue these practices as we head into week 4 of Lent?

Sundays are traditionally the time during Lent to break from your fast and enjoy all of God's good gifts with a deeper appreciation and intentionality than before.

PRAY

Take some time right now to prepare your heart for week 4. Thank God for what He's teaching you so far. Ask God to use this season to make us more like Him.

LISTEN

Check out our "Songs for Lent" playlist on Spotify (user: midtowncolumbia) for the complete list of songs.

Self-denial means knowing only Christ, and no longer oneself. It means seeing only Christ, who goes ahead of us, and no longer the path that is too difficult for us... . Self-denial is saying only: He goes ahead of us; hold fast to him.

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

WEEK 4
MARCH 15-21

THIS WEEK WE ARE FASTING FROM NON-ESSENTIAL PHONE AND NON-ESSENTIAL INTERNET USAGE. BY ABSTAINING FROM THESE, WE RECOGNIZE THAT OUR PHONE SHOULDN'T DEMAND OUR CONSTANT ATTENTION. LIFE GOES ON EVEN IF WE STEP BACK FROM OUR PHONE FOR A WHOLE HOUR OR DAY. INSTEAD OF SETTING OUR ATTENTION ON OUR SCREENS, WE SET OUR ATTENTION ON JESUS, THE TRUE SOURCE OF LIFE.

DAY 17 (MONDAY, MARCH 16)

WEEK 4, DAY 1

Corporately fasting from non-essential phone and Internet usage

MORNING READING

Isaiah 53:1-6

Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

*² For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;*

*he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.*

*³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

*⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.*

*⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 18 (TUESDAY, MARCH 17)

WEEK 4, DAY 2

Corporately fasting from non-essential phone and Internet usage

MORNING READING

John 13:21-35

After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus’ side,²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?”²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 19 (WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18)

WEEK 4, DAY 3

Corporately fasting from non-essential phone and Internet usage

MORNING READING

John 13:36-14:7

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." ³⁷ Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

¹⁴ "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what

the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back?
What do you need to pray for?

REST

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 20 (THURSDAY, MARCH 19)

WEEK 4, DAY 4

Corporately fasting from non-essential phone and Internet usage

MORNING READING

John 14:8-14

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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EVENING PRAYER

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REVIEW THE DAY

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REPENT

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 21 (FRIDAY, MARCH 20)

WEEK 4, DAY 5

Corporately fasting from non-essential phone and Internet usage

MORNING READING

John 14:15-24

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

¹⁸ “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” ²³ Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 22 (SATURDAY, MARCH 21)

WEEK 4, DAY 6

Corporately fasting from non-essential phone and Internet usage

MORNING READING

John 14:25-31

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. ²⁸ You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. ³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, ³¹ but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

WEEK 4 REVIEW

After the fourth week of the Lent season, what has stood out to you from the daily practices?

Have any of the practices been particularly challenging this week? Why is that?

What has the Lord been teaching you during this week?

As we fasted from non-essential phone/Internet, what did the Lord show you?

After this week, how might you be more intentional with how you use phone and Internet?

How might you and your LifeGroup spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24) to continue these practices as we head into week 5 of Lent?

Sundays are traditionally the time during Lent to break from your fast and enjoy all of God's good gifts with a deeper appreciation and intentionality than before.

PRAY

Take some time right now to prepare your heart for week 5. Thank God for what He's teaching you so far. Ask God to use this season to make us more like Him.

LISTEN

Check out our "Songs for Lent" playlist on Spotify (user: midtowncolumbia) for the complete list of songs.

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

-Luke 9:23

WEEK 5

MARCH 23-MARCH 29

THIS WEEK WE ARE FASTING FROM NON-ESSENTIAL SHOPPING. BY ABSTAINING FROM THIS, WE RECOGNIZE HOW MUCH WE ARE RULED BY CONSUMERISM AND THE NAGGING NEED TO ALWAYS WANT MORE, MORE, MORE. INSTEAD, WE SEE THAT IN JESUS ALONE WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED TO LIVE A FULL LIFE OF CONTENTMENT AND JOY.

DAY 23 (MONDAY, MARCH 23)

WEEK 5, DAY 1

Corporately fasting from non-essential shopping

MORNING READING

Isaiah 53:7-12

*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;*

*like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.*

*⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?*

*⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

*¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*

*¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.*

*¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.*

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 24 (TUESDAY, MARCH 24)

WEEK 5, DAY 2

Corporately fasting from non-essential shopping

MORNING READING

John 15:1-11

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

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REPENT

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 25 (WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25)

WEEK 5, DAY 3

Corporately fasting from non-essential shopping

MORNING READING

John 15:12-17

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

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REVIEW THE DAY

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REPENT

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 26 (THURSDAY, MARCH 26)

WEEK 5, DAY 4

Corporately fasting from non-essential shopping

MORNING READING

John 15:18-16:4

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you:

‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Whoever hates me hates my Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

²⁵ But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’

²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

¹ “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. ² They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. ³ And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. ⁴ But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

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REVIEW THE DAY

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 27 (FRIDAY, MARCH 27)

WEEK 5, DAY 5

Corporately fasting from non-essential shopping

MORNING READING

John 16:4-15

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

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REVIEW THE DAY

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 28 (SATURDAY, MARCH 28)

WEEK 5, DAY 6

Corporately fasting from non-essential shopping

MORNING READING

John 16:16-24

“A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me.” ¹⁷ So some of his disciples said to one another, “What is this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father?’” ¹⁸ So they were saying, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he is talking about.” ¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, ‘A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me’?” ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. ²¹ When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²² So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ²³ In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

WEEK 5 REVIEW

After the fifth week of the Lent season, what has stood out to you from the daily practices?

Have any of the practices been particularly challenging this week? Why is that?

As we fasted from non-essential this week, what did the Lord show you?

After this week, how might you be more intentional with how you shop?

What has the Lord been teaching you during this week?

How might you and your LifeGroup spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24) to continue these practices as we head into week 6 of Lent?

Sundays are traditionally the time during Lent to break from your fast and enjoy all of God's good gifts with a deeper appreciation and intentionality than before.

PRAY

Take some time right now to prepare your heart for week 6. Thank God for what He's teaching you so far. Ask God to use this season to make us more like Him.

LISTEN

Check out our "Songs for Lent" playlist on Spotify (user: midtowncolumbia) for the complete list of songs.

*I have now concentrated all my
prayers into one, and that one prayer
is this, that I may die to self, and live
wholly to Him.*

-Charles Spurgeon

WEEK 6

MARCH 29-APRIL 4

THIS WEEK WE ARE FASTING FROM CAFFEINE, ALCOHOL, SWEETS, AND DESSERTS. BY ABSTAINING FROM THESE, WE RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH THINGS CAN HAVE A GRIP OVER OUR LIVES - BOTH BODY AND MIND. TOO OFTEN WE ARE DRIVEN BY OUR APPETITES AND THE DESIRE TO FILL OUR STOMACHS. INSTEAD, WE OUGHT TO BE DRIVEN BY A DEEPER DESIRE TO BE FILLED WITH GOD'S PRESENCE AND THAT THE LORD ULTIMATELY SUSTAINS US.

DAY 29 (MONDAY, MARCH 30)

WEEK 6, DAY 1

Corporately fasting from caffeine, alcohol, sweets, and desserts

MORNING READING

Psalm 22:1-13

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

*2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.*

*3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.*

*4 In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.*

*5 To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

*6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.*

*7 All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;*

*8 "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"*

*9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.*

*10 On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.*

*11 Be not far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.*

*12 Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;*

*13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.*

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 30 (TUESDAY, MARCH 31)

WEEK 6, DAY 2

Corporately fasting from caffeine, alcohol, sweets, and desserts

MORNING READING

John 16:25-33

“I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; ²⁷ for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

²⁹ His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! ³⁰ Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.” ³¹ Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? ³² Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. ³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what

the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back?
What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 31 (WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1)

WEEK 6, DAY 3

Corporately fasting from caffeine, alcohol, sweets, and desserts

MORNING READING

John 17:1-6

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

⁶ "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

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REST

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 32 (THURSDAY, APRIL 2)

WEEK 6, DAY 4

Corporately fasting from caffeine, alcohol, sweets, and desserts

MORNING READING

John 17:7-19

Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you.

⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back?

What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 33 (FRIDAY, APRIL 3)

WEEK 6, DAY 5

Corporately fasting from caffeine, alcohol, sweets, and desserts

MORNING READING

John 17:20-26

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 34 (SATURDAY, APRIL 4)

WEEK 6, DAY 6

Corporately fasting from caffeine, alcohol, sweets, and desserts

MORNING READING

John 18:1-14

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" ⁵ They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶ When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷ So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." ⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one." ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

¹² So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³ First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

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What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

WEEK 6 REVIEW

After the sixth week of the Lent season, what has stood out to you from the daily practices?

Have any of the practices been particularly challenging this week? Why is that?

What has the Lord been teaching you during this week?

As we fasted from caffeine, alcohol, sweets, and desserts what did the Lord show you?

After this week, how might you be more intentional with how use caffeine, alcohol, sweets, and desserts?

How might you and your LifeGroup spur one another on (Hebrews 10:24) to continue these practices as we head into week 6 of Lent?

Sundays are traditionally the time during Lent to break from your fast and enjoy all of God's good gifts with a deeper appreciation and intentionality than before.

PRAY

Take some time right now to prepare your heart for week 6. Thank God for what He's teaching you so far. Ask God to use this season to make us more like Him.

LISTEN

Check out our "Songs for Lent" playlist on Spotify (user: midtowncolumbia) for the complete list of songs.

*God had one son on earth without sin,
but never one without suffering.*

-Augustine

*Prayer is reaching out after the
unseen; fasting is letting go of all that
is seen and temporal. Fasting helps
express, deepen, confirm the resolution
that we are ready to sacrifice
anything, even ourselves to attain
what we seek for the kingdom of God.*

-Andrew Murray

WEEK 7 - HOLY WEEK APRIL 6-APRIL 11

FASTING FROM FOOD FURTHER PRESSES US INTO TO THE FACT THAT WE ARE CREATED WITH BODY AND SOUL - INTERCONNECTED - AND BOTH ARE MEANS BY WHICH WE LOOK MORE JESUS.

FOR ONE DAY THIS WEEK, LIFEGROUPS WILL FAST FROM FOOD FROM SUNDOWN THE NIGHT BEFORE LIFEGROUP TIME AND BREAK THEIR FAST TOGETHER TO START THEIR LIFEGROUP TIME BY SHARING A MEAL. (FOR EXAMPLE, IF A LIFEGROUP MEETS ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT, THEY WOULD FAST FROM FOOD FROM SUNDOWN TUESDAY NIGHT AND THEN BREAK THEIR FAST TO SHARE A MEAL WITH THEIR LIFEGROUP ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT.)

AS YOU GATHER TO SHARE A MEAL TOGETHER, GO TO REVIEWING LENT ON P. 156-157 AND WORK THROUGH THE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TOGETHER.

DAY 35 (MONDAY, APRIL 6)

WEEK 7, DAY 1

Fasting from food with your LifeGroup one day, then sharing a meal

MORNING READING

Psalm 22:14-31

*I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.
16 For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—
17 I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;
18 they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.
19 But you, O Lord, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!
20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dog!
21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!
22 I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
23 You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
24 For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted,
and he has not hidden his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.*

*25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.*

*26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live forever!*

*27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.*

*28 For kingship belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.*

*29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep himself alive.*

*30 Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it.*

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 36 (TUESDAY, APRIL 7)

WEEK 7, DAY 2

Fasting from food with your LifeGroup one day, then sharing a meal

MORNING READING

John 18:15-27

Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸ Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

¹⁹ *The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ²⁰ Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said."*

²² *When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"*

²³ *Jesus answered him, "If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?" ²⁴ Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.*

²⁵ *Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." ²⁶ One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" ²⁷ Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.*

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

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REST

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REVIEW THE DAY

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REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

DAY 37 (WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8)

WEEK 7, DAY 3

Fasting from food with your LifeGroup one day, then sharing a meal

MORNING READING

John 18:28-40

Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" ³⁰ They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you." ³¹ Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." ³² This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸ Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him. ³⁹ But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰ They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

DAY 38 (THURSDAY, APRIL 9)

WEEK 7, DAY 4

Fasting from food with your LifeGroup one day, then sharing a meal

MORNING READING

John 19:1-16

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. ² And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. ³ They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. ⁴ Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." ⁵ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" ⁶ When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." ⁷ The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God." ⁸ When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. ⁹ He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" ¹¹ Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."

¹² From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." ¹³ So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. ¹⁴ Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" ¹⁵ They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." ¹⁶ So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for what He's shown you today in His Word. Resolve today to put what you learned from God's Word today into practice.

EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

GOOD FRIDAY

DAY 39 (FRIDAY, APRIL 10)

WEEK 7, DAY 5

Fasting from food with your LifeGroup one day, then sharing a meal

MORNING READING

John 19:17-30

and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called *The Place of a Skull*, which in Aramaic is called *Golgotha*.¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.¹⁹ Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”²⁰ Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.²¹ So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”²² Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom,²⁴ so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things,²⁵ but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.”²⁹ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

Read through the passage a second time. What does this passage reveal to you about God? What does this passage reveal to you about people?

RESPOND

Read through the passage a third time. Where do you need to obey what the passage is telling? Where are you resistant or want to push back? What do you need to pray for?

REST

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EVENING PRAYER

RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE

RECALL GOD'S GOODNESS

What can you thank God for today?

REVIEW THE DAY

When were you most aware of Jesus' presence today? When were you least aware of Jesus' presence today?

REPENT

What sin(s) do you need to confess to God? What are you struggling to trust God with? How can you give God control of it? Has the Holy Spirit been prompting you to do anything that you've been resisting? What step(s) do you need to take to walk in obedience?

RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

HOLY SATURDAY

DAY 40 (SATURDAY, APRIL 11)

WEEK 7, DAY 6

Fasting from food with your LifeGroup one day, then sharing a meal

MORNING READING

John 19:31-42

Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. ³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵ He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶ For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

³⁸ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ³⁹ Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. ⁴⁰ So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

READ

What words or phrases stood out to you? Feel free to read the passage out loud and/or paraphrase the passage in your own words.

REFLECT

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RESPOND

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REST

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EVENING PRAYER

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RESOLVE

Pray that God will empower you tomorrow by His Spirit to walk with Him more closely.

He is risen!

He is risen, indeed!

-early Christian greeting

Thus on Easter we celebrate Christ's Resurrection as something that happened and still happens to us. For each one of us received the gift of that new life and the power to accept it and to live by it. It is a gift which radically alters our attitude toward everything in this world, including death. It makes it possible for us joyfully to affirm: "Death is no more!" Oh, death is still there, to be sure and we still face it and someday it will come and take us. But it is our whole faith that by His own death Christ changed the very nature of death, made it a passage—a "passover," transforming the tragedy of tragedies into the ultimate victory.

-Alexander Schmemmann

REVIEWING LENT

Now that the Lent season is over, take some time to reflect. We just spent 40 days denying ourselves in order to become more aware of God's presence in our lives. Write down insights you gained, things you noticed. Look back at what you were learning during weeks 1-6 - how did the Lord use this to make you more like Jesus?

As we conclude our time, spend some time pressing into how you might incorporate these spiritual formation tools into your daily habits.

Of the weekly corporate fasts, which one was especially challenging for you? Why is that?

What insights did you gain as you were fasting throughout this season?

Now that Lent is over, how might you regularly practice detachment in order to make space for God ongoingly?

How can you LifeGroup help you with this?

Of the daily practices, which one was especially challenging for you?

What insights did you gain overall as you were practicing Bible reading and prayer throughout this season?

Now that Lent is over, how might you regularly practice being in God's word and in prayer ongoingly?

How can your LifeGroup help you with this?

PRAY

Thank God for His atoning work on the cross. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we are invited to know Him and to become more like Him each day through His Spirit. Ask God to give you the wisdom and strength to regularly practice abiding with Him.



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