

# LENT

We are now in the season of Lent where Christians prepare their hearts for Easter. Many Christians choose to “fast” during Lent by giving up certain luxuries (such as a favorite food, entertainment, social media) as a way of mourning over sin and Jesus' crucifixion. Lent ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter.

The journey to the cross is one of introspection and grieving over the sins we have committed that nailed Jesus to the cross.

Here are some suggested readings for Lent this week (excluding Sunday). Let these be a starting place for your own experience of Jesus and the cross.

## Week 1: March 1-7, 2017

**Day 1: • Read Matthew 6:5–15.** • Pray the Lord's Prayer, pausing after each line to think about what it means. • Why did Jesus tell us to pray alone and unseen?

**Day 2: • Read Mark 1:35–39.** • Find a solitary place to pray today. Think of a time when you had a spiritual experience in a solitary place. • What was that like?

**Day 3: • Read Matthew 6:16–18.** • Choose one item to fast today (food, media, etc.). • What can be challenging about fasting? What can be beneficial? What can be a wrong reason to fast?

**Day 4: • Read Ephesians 5:15–20.** • Sing a favorite hymn or chorus. • How can you make different spiritual disciplines a joyous experience? What kind of attitude do you need to have for that to happen?

**Day 5: • Read Colossians 3:12–17.** • Ask God to show you if there is someone you have wronged. • Is there someone you need to reconcile with as you focus on Christ?

**Day 6: • Read Joel 2:1–10.** • Sketch this passage. • What does this description make you feel? Why?



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## Week 2: March 8-14, 2017

**Day 7: • Read Joel 2:12–17.** • Ask God to show you if there is something you need to repent of. • What does it mean to “rend your heart”?

**Day 8: • Read Isaiah 58:1–12.** • Ask God to show you if you are going through the outward motions of Lent yet acting unjustly before him in everyday life. • Is there someone you need to be helping right now?

**Day 9: • Read Psalm 51.** • Write the sins that God brings to mind on a sheet of paper. Confess them, then shred the paper to symbolize that they are in the past. • What is one area in which you need to feel that you are “whiter than snow”?

**Day 10: • Read 2 Corinthians 5:20–21.** • Consider to whom you might be an ambassador for Christ today. • What should be the distinguishing characteristics of an ambassador for Christ?

**Day 11: • Read 2 Corinthians 6:4–10.** • Write a note of encouragement to a spiritual leader who has sacrificed time or effort for you. • How have you experienced the kind of victory during difficulties that Paul is talking about in these verses?

**Day 12: • Read Matthew 6:1–6.** • Give away something of value today, whether it is money or a possession. • What kind of motives do you generally have when giving? What do you tend to expect in return?



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## Week 3: March 15-21, 2017

**Day 13: • Read Genesis 2.** • Jot down the good things surrounding Adam in this passage. • What in creation can you thank God for today?

**Day 14: • Read Genesis 3:1–7.** • Discuss with someone else the fatal decisions in this passage. • What similar dialogue are you having with “the serpent” these days?

**Day 15: • Read Colossians 1:9–13.** • Pray this prayer for someone today. • Which of these things would you most like God to work into your life?

**Day 16: • Read Romans 5:12–21.** • Write down one law that you know you have broken. • What joy do you find in knowing that Jesus has justified you despite your sin?

**Day 17: • Read Matthew 5:1–11.** • Jot down what you think each of the Beatitudes means. • Which of these would you most like to be true of you?

**Day 18: • Read Genesis 12:1–4.** • Consider how the Lord’s promise to Abram was fulfilled. • Is there anything God is telling you to leave behind or move forward on?



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## Week 4: March 22-March 28, 2017

**Day 19: • Read Psalm 121.** • Find a photo of hills or mountains online, in a magazine, or in your own albums, to give you a visual picture of this psalm. • In what area do you need God's help to keep your foot from slipping?

**Day 20: • Read Romans 4:1–8.** • Thank God for giving you something you don't deserve. • How do works and faith intersect in the Christian life?

**Day 21: • Read Romans 4:13–17.** • Think back to a time you tried to keep “the law” and failed. • How is Abraham the father of all?

**Day 22: • Read John 3:1–21.** • List the things in your life that show you love the light. Now list the things that show you love the darkness. • Which of the things on your “darkness” list can you ask God to begin to move into the light?

**Day 23: • Read Matthew 17:1–9.** • Sketch what you think this scene looked like. • How did this experience further reveal who Jesus is?

**Day 24: • Read Exodus 17:1–7.** • Consider an area in which you are “thirsty.” • Are you “testing” the Lord by your unbelief?



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## Week 4: March 29-March 28, 2017

**Day 19: • Read Psalm 121.** • Find a photo of hills or mountains online, in a magazine, or in your own albums, to give you a visual picture of this psalm. • In what area do you need God's help to keep your foot from slipping?

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## Week 5: March 29-April 4, 2017

**Day 25: • Read Psalm 95.** • Go outside and shout aloud how great God is. • Is there any area in which you are hardening your heart?

**Day 26: • Read Romans 5:1–11.** • Chart the progression in verses 3–4. • How can suffering lead ultimately to hope?

**Day 27: • Read John 4:5–42.** • Write down the arguments the Samaritan woman gave Jesus. • Are you giving Jesus any similar arguments?

**Day 28: • Read Psalm 130.** • Draw a sketch of yourself in the “depths.” Then draw a picture of Jesus pulling you out of the depths. • How has God shown his unfailing love to you recently?

**Day 29: • Read John 11:1–45.** • Talk to someone today whose life was dramatically changed by Jesus. Ask them how that transformation came about. • How has Jesus “brought you back to life”?

**Day 30: • Read Romans 8:6–11.** • Make two lists. In one, put what your life is like when your mind is controlled by your sinful nature. In the other, write down what your life is like when controlled by the Spirit. • What one thing can you pray will move from the first list to the second?



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## Week 6: April 5-11, 2017

**Day 31: • Read Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29.** • Write down all the things you have to be thankful for. • Which thing on that list brings you the most joy?

**Day 32: • Read Matthew 21:1–11.** • Look up commentaries on this passage to see what different people have to say about it. • How might you honor Christ as king today?

**Day 33: • Read Isaiah 50:4–9a.** • Recall a time that God has given you an “instructed tongue.” • When has God sustained you during a time that you were particularly weary?

**Day 34: • Read Psalm 31:9–16.** • Share with someone else a time that you were in great sorrow and God renewed your strength. • For what do you now need God’s strength?

**Day 35: • Read Philippians 2:5–11.** • Describe Jesus’ attitude according to this passage. • In what one area do you need God to help you have an attitude like Jesus’?

**Day 36: • Read Ephesians 1:15–21.** • Pray this prayer for someone today. • Which of these things would you most like God to work into your life?



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## **Week 7: April 12-15, 2017**

**Day 37: • Read Psalm 32.** • Ask someone who is “godly” to pray for an area you are struggling in. • How has God made you “upright in heart” in a way that you were not before?

**Day 38: • Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–13.** • Share with someone a time that you were tempted to do wrong and found “a way out.” • What “evil thing” have you set your heart on?

**Day 39: • Read Psalm 63.** • Recall a time that you were extremely thirsty. • How can you thirst for God in the same way?

**Day 40: • Read Matthew 26:14–27:66.** • Read this aloud to someone close to you. • What strikes you about this account in a new way?



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