



LENT DEVOTIONAL

In the church calendar, the 46-day period before Easter is called the season of Lent. The same way that we long for the season of spring in the dead of winter, Lent is a season of longing for deliverance. The practice of pondering our ongoing need for Christ is a beautiful way for us to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the finished work of Jesus, especially as we await the celebration of Easter Sunday. Similar to the way we wait during Advent to celebrate the *coming* of our deliver-ER, Lent is about the tension and waiting for our deliver-ANCE. Though we have found, or been found by Jesus, we all long for the complete redemption promised in Christ. We ache and strain to join God in our daily transformation, as we await His return. Lent stretches our awareness of our need for Jesus and gratitude for the goodness of God in this process.

During this season the church has historically encouraged followers to practice specific personal disciplines, or rhythms in our lives. These rhythms are **fasting/abstinence**, and **meditation** on Scripture.

Lent can be a powerful time to reflect on God's redemptive work and anchor our lives. The discomfort from fasting and abstinence moves our attention away from earthly focuses to find contentment from God within the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

FASTING/ABSTINENCE


Fasting is the practice of not eating during specific times in order to create a deeper awareness of our hunger for God. It is often for a specific time period (i.e. half-day, full-day, 24-hour period, etc.). The length of time does not earn any special favor with God or earn bragging rights. That is actually the exact opposite of the purpose. The goal is to connect our spiritual hunger for God with our physical bodies, and practice drawing near to God more holistically with our mind, soul, and hungry body. As we are physically hungry during the day, we resist satisfying the longing, but rather turn to God, uniting our spiritual and physical hunger.

Abstinence is similar to fasting, but is abstaining from something specific in our lives for a higher purpose. It can be anything from desserts, coffee, streaming services, alcohol, etc. Generally speaking, if it is an area of comfort and solace, it is a great consideration for abstinence. In both fasting and abstinence, our goal is to become more aware of our hunger for God, and use the time we would have spent in other pursuits in prayer and devotion to God. The purpose in both is to abstain from distractions or temporary wants to focus on a stronger relationship with God. The purpose of fasting is to draw closer to God through prayer. Our goal is to literally *cry out to God* more fully with our whole being.

MEDITATION ON SCRIPTURE

God's word is a powerful tool for renewing our mind and transforming us from the inside out.

How to practice meditating on scripture:

- On the back are suggested passages for each day leading up to Easter.
 - From your own Bible, read the passage slowly for the first time.
 - Read it slowly a second time, listening for a word or phrase. Ask God, why that is speaking to you, what He might have for you in that.
 - Meditate on that, and allow it to soak into your mind and heart. In this process, turn it into a personal prayer. You can ask God to make it so in your life, thank Him for what He's showing you, or simply rest in how He is lovingly speaking to you.
 - Read the passage a final time.
 - During this season, you can practice this, with the same passage several times throughout the day.
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MARCH

6 MATTHEW 6:16-18	7 GENESIS 2:7	8 GENESIS 3:19	9 JOB 42:5-6	10 PHILIPPIANS 1:29-30
11 MARK 1:12-15	12 ECCLESIASTES 3:19-20	13 HOSEA 12:6	14 JOEL 2:12-13A	15 PSALM 69:9-10
16 DANIEL 9:3	17 PSALM 40:1-3	18 PHILIPPIANS 3:10-11	19 ISAIAH 58:6-7	20 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7-8
21 PHILIPPIANS 2:1-2	22 MICAH 7:7	23 JOHN 3:16-17	24 JOHN 14:6	25 1 PETER 5:6-8
26 MATTHEW 6:21	27 PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4	28 PSALM 34:17-18	29 ISAIAH 30:18	30 ZEPHANIAH 3:17
31 LAMENTATIONS 3:25-26				

APRIL

1 PSALM 27:14	2 PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7	3 PSALM 130:5-6	4 EZRA 8:23	5 GALATIANS 5:5
6 HOSEA 12:6	7 ROMANS 12:12	8 PSALM 25:13	9 PHILIPPIANS 2:8	10 PSALM 42:1-2
11 PSALM 42:5	12 JEREMIAH 29:13	13 MATTHEW 7:26	14 MATTHEW 9:37	15 MATTHEW 12:30
16 MATTHEW 21:5	17 MATTHEW 27:54	19 MATTHEW 28:5	EASTER SUNDAY MATTHEW 28:18-20	

