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salem church - ohio  
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This journal was written by the McDowell team and shaped by the wisdom of the historic Christian faith, alongside contemporary formation voices including Practicing the Way and 24/7 Prayer.

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# a lent journal

## **lent is an invitation to slow down.**

For centuries, followers of Jesus have entered this season by creating space — space to listen, to reflect, and to return their attention to God. Lent is not about striving harder to earn God's approval. It is about making room for grace.

Jesus invites us into a way of life shaped by simple, faithful practices — prayer, fasting, rest, generosity, Scripture, and love of neighbor. These practices are not meant to earn God's love. They are rhythms through which we learn to receive it.

**rhythms of grace** is designed to walk with you through Lent by offering gentle, intentional practices that shape us over time. You are not expected to do everything perfectly, just invited to show up honestly.

This journal is meant to be spacious. There will be pages you write a lot, and pages you barely touch. Some practices may feel natural, others uncomfortable. That's okay. **Formation is rarely loud or immediate — it happens slowly, quietly, and often beneath the surface.**

Whether you are engaging this journal on your own or with others, our hope is simple: that these rhythms would help you stay present to God, rooted in grace, and open to the transforming work of the Spirit.

**Grace meets us not only at the finish line, but all along the way.**



# how to use this journal

This journal is designed to be a **companion**, not a checklist. You do not need to complete every page or move through it in the same way each week. The goal is communion and connection with God, not completion.

Each week follows the same rhythm, offering multiple ways to engage — personally, in community, and at your own pace.

# the practices

## **introduction**

Each week begins with a short reflection introducing the spiritual practice for that week. This page sets the tone, offers a simple definition, and invites you to approach the practice with grace rather than pressure.

## **sermon notes**

This space is provided for capturing insights, questions, or reflections from the weekend gathering. Use it however you like.

## **scripture list**

Each week includes a list of Scripture passages connected to the practice. These passages are meant to be read slowly and prayerfully, not all at once.

## **daily rhythm**

This page offers a simple rhythm to carry with you during the week. It is not meant to be demanding or exhaustive. Prayer and Scripture are the foundations of the daily rhythm.

## **group questions**

If you are journeying with others, these questions are designed to guide honest, open conversation. Let curiosity, listening, and grace shape your time together. Or, use these for family or personal reflection.

## **practices**

Each week includes a few practical ways to engage the spiritual practice being explored. These are invitations, not requirements. Start small, adapt as needed, and trust that God meets you in the midst of ordinary faithfulness.





# prayer

## **prayer is:**

active communion and communication with God – listening, speaking, and resting in His presence. It is an essential component of a growing relationship with our Heavenly Father.

## **prayer is not:**

a performance, a religious obligation, a way to control outcomes, or a formula.

## **resources:**

**God on Mute** - Pete Greig

**Hearing God** - Dallas Willard

**Praying like Monks, Living like Fools** - Tyler Staton

**Prayer** - Tim Keller

sunday, february 22

notes • questions • scribbles

A large grid of small blue dots for taking notes or scribbles.



Jesus' life was marked by prayer. We begin where Jesus began: in complete dependence on God. Prayer is a practice that reminds us we are beloved children, not self-sufficient machines.



## scripture list

Read a few passages each day in your quiet time. Write a word or phrase that might help you remember the story in that passage.

- luke 11:2-4
- matthew 6:9-13
- psalm 23
- psalm 51
- psalm 103
- deuteronomy 4:29
- 2 chronicles 7:14
- psalm 77
- 1 samuel 3:1-10
- psalm 5:3
- matthew 26:36-46
- john 17
- acts 4:29-31
- matthew 7:7-11
- philippians 4:6-7

## daily rhythm

Begin each day in prayer and Scripture. Take a couple minutes of silence to still your heart and mind. Then, repeat the Lord's Prayer. Read a few passages from the previous page — and consider how they apply to following Jesus. At noon, pray for others. And as you lay your head down at night, spend a few minutes giving thanks for God's goodness.

### monday, february 23

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

### tuesday, february 24

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

### wednesday, february 25

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

### thursday, february 26

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

### friday, february 27

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

### saturday, february 28

Rest in God's grace and peace.

## group conversations

### Opening the Conversation:

1. When you think about prayer, what's the first feeling that comes up for you? (Comfort? Confusion? Guilt? Peace? Something else?)

### Going Deeper:

2. Finish this sentence: "Prayer would be easier for me if..."
3. Most of us have inherited ideas about prayer from our families, churches, or culture. What did you learn about prayer growing up? How has that shaped (or complicated) your prayer life now?
4. Read **Matthew 6:5-13** together. What surprises you about Jesus' instructions here? What feels challenging?
5. Jesus contrasts authentic prayer with performance prayer. When are you most tempted to perform — even if it's just for yourself?

### Personal Application:

6. Pete Greig says to "keep it simple, keep it real, and keep it up." Which of these three is hardest for you right now, and why?
7. What's one small, realistic step you could take this week to create space for prayer? (Not what you **should** do — what actually feels possible?)

### Closing:

8. How can we pray for each other as we practice this together?

## practice praying

Prayer has always been a rhythm of the Kingdom. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Psalms were thought of as a prayer and song book. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray in a humble, simple way. The early church practiced fixed hour prayer, stopping to recognize God's presence and tune into His wisdom.

### lent challenge

Enter into a daily rhythm of prayer — morning, noon, and night. Commit to this rhythm through these 40+ days. Let them become a part of your regular routines.

In the **morning**, simply pray the Lord's Prayer. As you pray each day, pay attention to the words, and ad lib as you become more familiar.

At **noon**, take a breath and pray for friends, families, and the lost. Simply pray for others.

As you lay your head down each **night**, spend time in gratitude — thanking God for goodness in your life.

### regular practice

How is the daily rhythm of prayer going? What challenges have you encountered? What benefits or ah-ha moments have you had?

Take what you're learning and experiencing and continue to create space and grow in it. The daily rhythm we've suggested isn't a formula — just a starting point.

### helps

- Choose a regular time and place you'll start each day in prayer.
- **Lectio365** is an APP that can help you with a prayer and scripture practice every day.
- Use note cards for prayer requests. As you pray each day, flip through the note cards, which have needs for you and your family/friends.



# f a s t i n g

## **fasting is:**

a practice that creates space — to quiet distractions, awaken hunger, and remind us of our deep dependence on God. When we fast, we choose to set aside something good in order to experience something greater.

Traditionally, fasting is about abstaining from food for a given period of time in order to seek God. But if there are health-related challenges to this, one can abstain from another daily activity/item, such as media, sweets, Amazon, etc.

## **fasting is not:**

a diet, a spiritual test, or a way to impress others.

## **resources:**

**God's Chosen Fast** - Arthur Wallis

**How to Fast** - Reward Sibanda

**Fasting: The Ancient Practices** - Scot McKnight

sunday, march 1

notes • questions • scribbles

A large grid of small blue dots for taking notes or scribbles.



Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness as He was tempted to find life in power, success, and comfort. Fasting reminds us of the true source of life and invites us to depend upon God for all our needs.



## scripture list

Read a few passages each day in your quiet time. Write a word or phrase that might help you remember the story in that passage.

- matthew 6:16-18** . . . . .
- acts 13:2-3** . . . . .
- nehemiah 1:4** . . . . .
- ezra 8:23** . . . . .
- joel 2:12** . . . . .
- esther 4:16** . . . . .
- daniel 9:3-5** . . . . .
- jonah 3:5-8** . . . . .
- luke 2:37** . . . . .
- acts 14:23** . . . . .

# daily rhythm

Begin each day with the Lord's Prayer. Read a few passages from the previous page. At noon, pray for others. And as you lay your head down at night, spend a few minutes giving thanks to God.

## monday, march 2

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## tuesday, march 3

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## wednesday, march 4

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## thursday, march 5

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## friday, march 6

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
.  
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## saturday, march 7

Rest in God's grace and peace.

## group conversations

### Opening the Conversation:

1. What's your honest, gut-level reaction to the word "fasting"?
2. Have you ever fasted before — from food or something else? If so, what was that experience like? If not, what's kept you from trying it?

### Going Deeper:

3. Our culture constantly tells us "you deserve this" and "treat yourself." How does fasting push back against those messages? Why might that be important?
4. Fasting reveals what we're hungry for. When you imagine going without something you regularly reach for (food, your phone, Netflix, etc.), what feelings come up? What might those feelings tell you?
5. Read **Matthew 6:16-18**. Jesus seems more concerned with **how** we fast than **if** we fast. Why do you think hiddenness matters so much to him?

### Personal Application:

6. If you could put one word to what you most desire from this practice of fasting, what would it be? (Examples: clarity, freedom, closeness to God, self-control, something else?)
7. What's one thing you could fast from this week that would actually create space for God — not just make you miserable?

### Addressing Fears:

8. What concerns do you have about fasting? What would make it feel less daunting?

### Closing:

9. How can we support each other in this practice, especially on hard days?

## practice fasting

Fasting is found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. And it was practiced for a variety of reasons — both as a regular rhythm of life and as a response to something that had happened. For followers of Jesus, we fast in order to offer ourselves fully to Jesus, to grow in our awareness of and dependence on the Spirit, to amplify our prayers, and to seek wisdom from God.

### lent challenge

Fast from sunup to sundown one day/week until Easter. Don't share this on social media. If you have health concerns, check with your doctor before you begin. Refrain from all food from sunrise to sunset. Allow the hunger to awaken you to God's Spirit. Spend the time you'd normally be eating in prayer and/or reflection. Give yourself grace as you tune in to the Spirit.

### regular practice

Consider a fast once or twice a year as a starting point. If you are praying through a major decision, a fast may help you focus on seeking God's wisdom and direction. Lent or Advent is a good time to fast. Remember, this isn't a practice to master — it is an invitation to deepen your relationship and connection with God.

### helps

- Drink plenty of water to keep yourself hydrated.
- Coffee is ok — but drink it black as you are fasting.
- Slow down in your hunger (don't speed up). Give your attention to God in these moments.
- If a full day is too much, start smaller. Pick a meal or set hours to fast.
- Don't judge your experience as you begin. Give it time. Keep coming back. And tune in.



# sabbath

Sabbath literally means 'to stop.' And it is an invitation to us, as followers of Jesus, to stop our normal rhythms and schedules and become fully present to ourselves, our community, and to God. It is a new way of life.

**sabbath is:**

a regular rhythm of stopping, resting, delighting, and worshiping — all rooted in a deep trust in God.

**sabbath is not:**

a productivity tool, a set of rules, or something to master.

**Sabbath is a gift of grace.**

At the very beginning, God weaves rest into the rhythm of creation. Before productivity began, presence was enough. Human beings, not human doings. Deep delight in life itself.

In a culture that values speed, efficiency, and constant connection, Sabbath is a chosen resistance. Stop striving. Release control and outcomes. Trust that God is working even when we are not.

**resources:**

**The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry** - John Mark Comer

**Sabbath as Resistance** - Walter Brueggemann

**Keeping the Sabbath Wholly** - Marva Dawn

**Sabbath** - Abraham Heschel

sunday, march 8

notes • questions • scribbles

A large grid of small dots for taking notes or scribbles.



There was a stillness between the crucifixion of Jesus on Friday and the resurrection of Jesus on Sunday. In Sabbath, we trust that God is working even when we are still. Sabbath invites us to stop striving, producing, controlling and discover a deep rest that leads to life.





# daily rhythm

Start with the Lord's Prayer. Then read a few passages from the previous page. At noon, pray for others. And at night, spend a few minutes giving thanks for God's goodness.

## monday, march 9

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## tuesday, march 10

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## wednesday, march 11

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## thursday, march 12

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## friday, march 13

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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## saturday, march 14

Rest in God's grace and peace.

# group conversations

## Opening the Conversation:

1. Describe your typical week in one sentence. Now describe your ideal week. What's the gap between those two?
2. What does the word 'rest' mean to you? (Be specific — not what it should mean, but what it actually means in your life right now.)

## Going Deeper:

3. If you're honest, what makes it hard for you to stop? What are you afraid might happen if you truly rested?
4. Read **Mark 2:23-28**. The religious leaders were furious that Jesus' disciples were "working" on the Sabbath. Jesus says, "The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath." What do you think He means?
5. Our culture worships productivity. How have you seen that? Where do you feel pressure to prove your worth through busyness or achievement?

## Reflecting on the Past Week:

6. Think about your fasting experience this past week. What did it reveal to you about rest, dependence, or letting go of control?

## Personal Application:

7. Read **Matthew 11:28-30**. Jesus invites us: "Come to me, all who are weary..." Where are you most tired right now — physically, emotionally, spiritually?
8. What would genuine rest look like for you? What activity actually restores you rather than just distracts you?
9. What's one obstacle to Sabbath rest you could remove this week? (It might be practical, or it might be an internal narrative you need to challenge.)

## Closing:

10. What would it look like for you to practice even a few hours of Sabbath this week?

## practice sabbath

For much of church history, Sabbath has been practiced as a 24-hour rhythm of intentional rest, delight, worship, and community. While the modern church has often stepped away from the Sabbath practice, it has recently been seen as a renewed invitation in our over-stimulated culture.

### lent challenge

For the next 5 weeks of Lent, consider a form of Sabbath rest that you could practice once each week. This could be turning off your phone (or all media!) from sunup to sundown one day/week. Or pick a day and go for a long walk/drive with no music/podcasts/etc. Simply enjoy the beauty and silence with God. Or, work to practice, a full 24-hour Sabbath.

### regular practice

Don't be legalistic as you begin exploring the practice of Sabbath. Find delight as you slow down, turn off, and rest. Take it slow and learn as you go. Remember, Sabbath was created for your good.

### helps

- **12 Activities of Sabbath (from Practicing The Way)** — Lighting candles, blessing children, eating a Sabbath meal, expressing gratitude, singing, worship with your church, walking, napping, making love to your spouse, reading (especially Scripture), spending time alone with God, and spending time with family/friends in conversation and joy.
- Invite some friends to practice Sabbath with you. You'll find beauty in shared experience.



# generosity

## **generosity is not:**

about how much we have or how much we give.

## **generosity is:**

about how tightly we hold on to what we have.

Generosity flows from the heart of God. God gives freely — life, breath, provision, forgiveness — and invites His people to reflect that same open-handed love. Generosity is not a response to abundance; it is an act of trust.

In a culture shaped by scarcity and accumulation in an effort to feel secure, generosity is countercultural. It loosens our grip on money, time, and possessions and reorients our hearts toward God and others. Do we trust God with what we have and with what we'll need?

**Generosity is the joyful practice of freely giving what we have — our resources, time, and attention — in response to God's abundant grace.**

## **resources:**

**Money, Sex, and Power** - Richard Foster

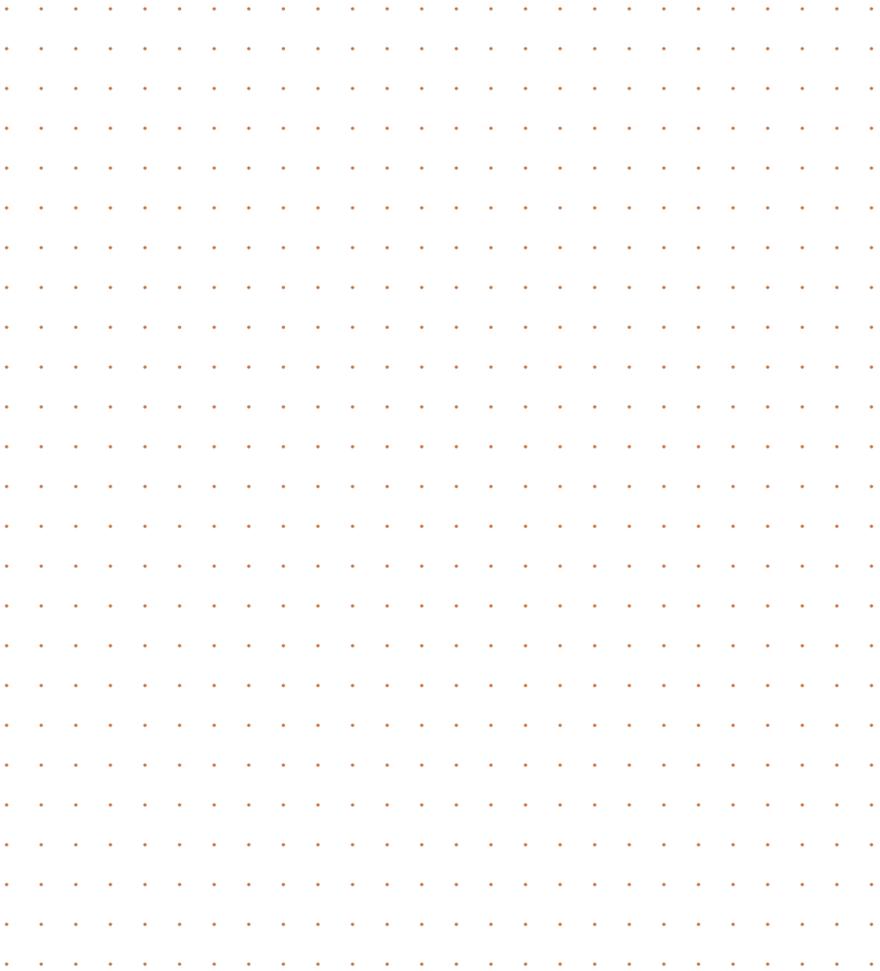
**Sharing Possessions** - Luke Timothy Johnson

**The Four Loves** - CS Lewis

**Giving to God** - Mark Allan Powell

sunday, march 15

notes • questions • scribbles



God so loved the world that He gave. Generosity invites us to participate with God — out of love and compassion for His ministry and mission. We release our grip on material possessions and discover it really is more blessed to give than receive.



## scripture list

Read a few passages each day in your quiet time. Write a word or phrase that might help you remember the story in that passage.

- 2 corinthians 9:6-11 . . . . .
- deuteronomy 15:7-11 . . . . .
- proverbs 11:24-25 . . . . .
- malachi 3:10 . . . . .
- luke 12:13-21 . . . . .
- matthew 6:19-21 . . . . .
- acts 4:32-35 . . . . .
- 1 timothy 6:17-19 . . . . .
- acts 20:35 . . . . .

## daily rhythm

Begin each day in prayer and Scripture. Take a couple minutes of silence to still your heart and mind. Then, repeat the Lord's Prayer. Read a few passages from the previous page — and consider how they apply to following Jesus. At noon, pray for others. And as you lay your head down at night, spend a few minutes giving thanks for God's goodness.

### monday, march 16

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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### tuesday, march 17

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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### wednesday, march 18

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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### thursday, march 19

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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### friday, march 20

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude

Scripture Read . . . . .  
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### saturday, march 21

Rest in God's grace and peace.

## group conversations

### Opening the Conversation:

1. Quick gut-check: when someone brings up money and giving in church, what's your first reaction?
2. Tell a story about a time someone was generous toward you. How did it affect you?

### Going Deeper:

3. How was money talked about (or not talked about) in your family growing up? How has that shaped your relationship with money now?
4. Read **Matthew 6:19-24**. Jesus makes a bold claim: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Look at where your time, money, and energy actually go. What does that reveal about what you treasure?
5. Jesus says we "cannot serve both God and money." That's uncomfortable. Where do you feel the tension between trusting God and trusting your bank account?

### Getting Honest:

6. Finish this sentence: "I would be more generous if..."
7. What fears keep you from being generous? Fear of not having enough? Fear of being taken advantage of? Fear of losing security or control?
8. Read **Acts 20:35** and **Luke 12:13-21**. Can you think of a time when giving actually brought you more joy than keeping? What made that different?

### Personal Application:

9. What's one act of generosity you could do this week that would require you to trust God — not something easy, but something that stretches you?

## practice generosity

### lent challenge

Preplan and schedule a financial gift to your church each of the next 4 weeks (through Easter week). If you already give regularly to your church, consider giving a financial gift to a non-profit or ministry you're connected to in each of the next four weeks.

While the amount isn't that important, it should be an amount that you notice, an amount that is sacrificial.

### regular practice

Tithing is an orthodox practice, and is the foundation for local church ministry and mission. Set aside a portion of your regular income and give it to the church with no strings attached. While there is no 'law' around the amount, a set percentage, such as 10%, is a good way to begin.

When you see or hear about a specific need, and you have the means to contribute, give freely and joyfully.

To test this, take an amount of cash with you over the next few weeks. Ask God to present a need that you can meet with that cash. When you see it, meet it.

### helps

- Set up recurring giving with your local church. This can be done through many churches' giving platforms or through your own bank.
- Sit with your family and let them know what you plan to give each year, based on your income. Talk about why generosity is important, and help them see the joy that comes from giving.
- If you have kids and provide any sort of allowance, teach them to give away 10%. Start with the church, but also help them to find other opportunities to give.
- Give material goods you have, but don't use/need. Clothing, furniture, bikes, tools, kitchen goods. What is collecting dust for you could bring joy and life to others.



# scripture

From the beginning, God has chosen to reveal Himself through words — spoken, written, and embodied. Scripture tells the story of who God is, who we are, and how God is at work in the world.

From the early days of the church, the library of writings called the Bible have been central to followers of Jesus. They were written over the course of 1,000+ years, by dozens of authors, in multiple languages and genres of literature. While it can feel overwhelming, when you put it together, you find that this collection is one cohesive story pointing us to Jesus.

## **scripture is:**

the inspired word of God through which we encounter God, learn about God's activity within human history, listen for God's voice, and are formed in the way of Jesus.

## **scripture is not:**

- a self-help manual
- a history book
- a human how-to
- a collection of disconnected writings
- a book to master

**As you read, allow it to read you as well. Open your heart and mind to the work of the Holy Spirit.**

## **resources:**

**The Story of Scripture** - Christopher JH Wright

**Eat This Book** - Eugene Peterson

**How to Read the Bible Book by Book** - Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart

**For Everyone (commentary series)** - NT Wright

sunday, march 22

notes • questions • scribbles

A large grid of small orange dots for writing notes or questions.



When tempted in the desert, Jesus stood on God's Word. Scripture is an anchor that can sustain, shape, and lead us home.



## scripture list

Read a few passages each day in your quiet time. Write a word or phrase that might help you remember the story in that passage.

- matthew 5:17-19** . . . . .
- psalm 119:97-105** . . . . .
- deuteronomy 6:4-9** . . . . .
- psalm 1:1-3** . . . . .
- matthew 4:4** . . . . .
- luke 4:16-21** . . . . .
- john 5:39-40** . . . . .
- 2 timothy 3:16-17** . . . . .
- colossians 3:16** . . . . .

# daily rhythm

Prayer — the Lord's Prayer to begin the day. At noon pray for others. Before bed, thank God for his goodness.

## monday, march 23

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

. . . . .

## tuesday, march 24

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

. . . . .

## wednesday, march 25

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

. . . . .

## thursday, march 26

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

. . . . .

## friday, march 27

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

. . . . .

## saturday, march 28

Rest in God's grace and peace.

## group conversations

### Opening the Conversation:

1. What's your history with the Bible? (Be honest — maybe it's been life-giving, maybe it's been a source of hurt, maybe you've never really engaged it. All answers are welcome here.)
2. When you open the Bible, what are you usually hoping to find? What do you actually find?

### Going Deeper:

3. Read **Matthew 5:17-19** and **John 5:39-40**. Jesus says people can study Scripture and still miss Him completely. How is that possible? Have you ever experienced that?
4. Many of us treat the Bible like a to-do list, a self-help manual, or a book we're supposed to master. How does it change things to see Scripture as a way to **encounter God** rather than just learn about God?
5. Eugene Peterson says we need to let Scripture read us, not just us read it. What do you think he means?

### Reflecting on the Journey:

6. Over the past few weeks, you've been reading Scripture daily as part of the journal rhythm. What's that been like? What have you noticed — about God, about yourself, about this practice?

### Personal Application:

7. What makes reading the Bible difficult for you? (Lack of time? Don't know where to start? It feels confusing or boring? Something else?)
8. If you were going to continue a regular practice of Scripture reading after Lent ends, what would make that sustainable for you?

# practice reading scripture

Throughout church history, followers of Jesus have engaged Scripture slowly, prayerfully, and in community.

## lent challenge

The first challenge is simply reading Scripture daily. This journal has been designed to help lead in this direction.

The second challenge is to memorize Scripture. For some, we have been working to memorize the Lord's Prayer. Memorizing Scripture is one way to allow the Bible to form and shape us.

## regular practice

There are many ways to incorporate daily Bible reading into our lives. **YouVersion** (the Bible APP) and **Lectio365** (from 24/7 Prayer) APPS are two of the best resources that can help you experiment with this practice. But you may also choose a simple practice of reading a chapter from the New Testament and a chapter of Psalms each day to start. Remember, this is a means of grace, not studying for a test. Allow Scripture to read you, inform you, challenge you, and transform you.

## helps

- **YouVersion** (Bible) App
- **Lectio365 App**
- **For Everyone** Bible commentary series from NT Wright.



# s e r v i n g

At the heart of the Christian faith is a God who enters into the world, in flesh and blood, and serves. Serving flows out of genuine love for the other. In a culture that values status, success, and self-promotion, serving is a quiet, countercultural act. It invites us to move toward others.

## **serving is:**

the humble practice of loving others through tangible acts of care, compassion, and presence, following the example of Jesus.

## **serving is not:**

saving or fixing others  
proving our spiritual depth  
earning God's approval.

## **resources:**

**Lead Like Jesus** - Ken Blanchard

**When Helping Hurts** - Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

**Garden City** - John Mark Comer

sunday, march 29

notes • questions • scribbles



Jesus took the form of a servant, washing feet and giving His life. In serving others, we become like Jesus and do the things He did. Serving isn't a punishment — it's a gift.



## scripture list

Read a few passages each day in your quiet time. Write a word or phrase that might help you remember the story in that passage.

- john 13:1-17  
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- micah 6:8  
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- isaiah 58:6-10  
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- proverbs 19:17  
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- mark 10:42-45  
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- matthew 25:34-40  
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- luke 10:25-37  
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- galatians 5:13  
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- philippians 2:3-7  
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- james 2:14-17  
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# daily rhythm

Prayer — the Lord's Prayer to begin the day. At noon pray for others. Before bed, thank God for his goodness.

## monday, march 30

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

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## tuesday, march 31

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

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## wednesday, april 1

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

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## thursday, april 2

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

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## friday, april 3

 Lord's Prayer        Pray for Others        Gratitude   
Scripture Read . . . . .

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## saturday, april 4

Rest in God's grace and peace.

## group conversations

### Opening the Conversation:

1. Tell us about a time someone served you in a way that really moved you. What made it meaningful?
2. Who's someone you've seen live with a servant heart? What do you notice about them?

### Going Deeper:

3. Read **Luke 10:25-37** (the Good Samaritan). Put yourself in the story. Are you more often the priest who passes by, the Levite who keeps distance, or the Samaritan who stops? Why?
4. Jesus asks, "Which of these three was a neighbor to the man?" The answer seems obvious, but the lawyer couldn't even say the word "Samaritan." What does that tell us about who we're willing to serve — and who we'd rather avoid?
5. The text says the Samaritan was "moved with compassion." What moves you? What breaks your heart? What makes you angry on behalf of others?

### Getting Honest:

6. If you're truthful, what keeps you from serving more? (Lack of time? You're already exhausted? You're afraid of being taken advantage of? You don't know where to start? Something else?)
7. There's a difference between serving out of guilt and serving out of love. How do you tell the difference in your own life?
8. Where is God inviting you to serve — not out of obligation, but as an overflow of love?

## practice serving

Following Jesus transforms us into people marked by and moved by love. Serving others is a choice to humble oneself and meet a need for the good of the other.

### lent challenge

As Lent nears an end, look at needs in your local church to serve. Where are the biggest needs? How might you step into a volunteer role to serve others? Your local church might also have local ministry partners with needs. Is there a place you could serve on a weekly or monthly basis, for the good of others?

### regular practice

The local church is the body of Christ. Each part of the body, which includes you, has a role to play. Your church needs you. Don't sit on the sidelines — step into ministry and make a difference.

### helps

- Commit to serve regularly for a full season (a semester, 6 months, a year).
- Be realistic about your availability — don't over commit.



HE IS RISEN

But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."

Then they remembered that he had said this. So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

**L u k e 2 4 : 1 - 1 2**

# let's look back

You've walked 40+ days through the season of Lent. You've experimented with practices to help you experience the life of Jesus and deep communion and connection with God. Take some time to reflect on the journey.

**What surprised you most during these forty days?**

**Which practice was most life-giving to you? Why?**

**Which practice was hardest? What made it difficult?**

**Where did you sense God's presence most clearly?**

**What did you learn about yourself — your desires, your fear, your patterns and habits?**

Formation happens slowly, quietly, over long periods of time. What might feel small and insignificant today can compound into deep transformation that may not reveal itself for months or years. Keep going. Keep showing up. Keep making space for grace. You don't have to do everything — and you definitely don't need to strive for perfection. Just keep showing up and turning your heart and mind toward God.

**What practice or practices do you think would be most helpful to continue?**

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**What will that look like in your life? What support or accountability do you need?**

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**What practice would you like to explore more deeply in the coming months? What is your plan to walk that out?**

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This journal may be helpful to come back to from time to time. Return to it when you feel stuck or helpless. Remember what God has done.

These practices aren't formulas — they are conduits. They create the space for God's Spirit to work in and around you. Keep practicing. Keep showing up. The journey continues.

## resources

**The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry** - John Mark Comer

**The Practice of the Presence of God** - Brother Lawrence

**Lectio365** App (prayer + scripture)

**YouVersion Bible** App (scripture)

**Start a small group.** Invite a few friends or couples to join you in these practices. Ask a pastor at your church, or visit [practicingtheway.org](http://practicingtheway.org) to find resources to help you dig into these practices more.



Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn how to live freely and lightly.

Jesus (Matt. 11:28+)