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Introduction

What is Lent? For some Christians, Lent has always been a part of their spiritual life and practice, but for others it is unfamiliar. Lent is the season when Christians have historically prepared their hearts for Easter with reflection, repentance, and prayer. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and proceeds for forty days, culminating in Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Since Sundays are weekly celebrations of the resurrection of Jesus, the six Sundays in Lent are not counted as part of the forty-day season. Many Christians choose to fast throughout the season of Lent, but the focus is not so much on depriving themselves of something as it is on devoting themselves to God and his purposes in the world.

Lent is an important season of the church year. The church year is an excellent way to help us focus our attention on God by the way we organize our time. Rather than following the solar calendar's more familiar structure, organized by the rhythms of nature, the church calendar is organized around God and his activity in the world. The church calendar follows six seasons of varying length: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost. Each of these seasons has a different focus: Advent focuses on the anticipation of God's coming into the world, both in the Incarnation and in Christ's second coming. Christmas concentrates on the birth of Christ. Epiphany centers itself in the light of God's presence shining in the world. Lent directs our attention toward human sin and God's gracious solution. Easter celebrates resurrection life. Pentecost helps us to remember and participate in the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit in the world. The annual rhythm of these seasons can have a powerful effect on your personal and communal spiritual growth. More information about the church year and how it can shape your spiritual life can be found at www.HolyBibleMosaic.com.

ELEMENTS OF WEEKLY MEDITATIONS

Each weekly meditation centers around a specific theme and uses several elements to create an environment for a meaningful experience with God. A brief introduction at the beginning of each weekly collection will start you on the path, and the remaining elements will help guide you along the way. This devotional will give you a taste of what is available throughout the year in *Holy Bible: Mosaic*.

Scripture. The first and most important element is the weekly listing of five Scripture readings. Four of these readings are adapted from standard lectionaries used by different Christian traditions around the world. These selections provide one reading each from the Gospels, the Psalms, the Old Testament, and the New Testament. The Suggested Reading is specifically chosen to complement the other readings in connection with the weekly theme.

Scripture is at the heart of each weekly meditation. Read these passages. Meditate on them. Read them again. Allow the text to penetrate your soul throughout the week as you engage with the other elements. Don't let the other elements eclipse the Scripture in your devotional time. They should complement the Scripture readings, not supersede them.

Historical and Global Contributions. One major distinctive of *Holy Bible: Mosaic* is the collection of reflective material from every continent and every century of Christian history. This material comes in many different forms that work together in each week's collection. You will find full-color artwork, excerpts from influential Christian thinkers throughout church history, quotes from brothers and sisters in Christ who have wrestled with ideas related to each week's theme, and worshipful pieces (including prayers, hymns, and poetry), all designed to bring you into contact with the global, historic church as you engage with God's Word.

Meditations. Each week also features an original meditation that connects the weekly theme to the modern world. These meditations were written specifically for *Holy Bible: Mosaic* by Christians engaged in living out the gospel in their own communities.

Whitespace. In addition to the lined spaces inviting you to write your thoughts down, ample space was purposefully given for you to draw, write, or interact with the material in any way that is helpful to you. Make use of the space however you want.

WAYS TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL

Individually. Use this Lent devotional in your personal devotional time, and allow the Scripture readings and meditative elements to serve as a springboard for your own prayer and reflections. Read the Scripture from the back of this booklet, or use your own Bible and see the readings in context.

In a Group. Families, Bible studies, and small groups can use this devotional to share in the experience together. Read the Scripture together, discuss the quotations and readings as a group, and talk about what God is doing in your lives through the Scripture and other material.

As a Church. If you are a church leader, consider using this devotional as a tool to encourage your entire congregation to read and reflect on Scripture throughout the season of Lent. Read the Scripture passages in your worship service, perhaps even preaching from one or more of them. This could be a great way for your church to share a communal devotional experience.

Any number of other ways might be imagined for using this book. Please feel free to share the unique ideas you have by e-mailing us at NLT@tyndale.com or by logging on to www.HolyBibleMosaic.com. There you will also find resources to extend the experience beyond the printed page, and you can add your piece to the Mosaic by contributing to the community forum or commenting on the blog.



VIA CRUCIS—PABLO SANAGUANO SANCHEZ (ECUADOR/CONTEMPORARY)



Identifying Discontent

Lent, Week 1

GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:1-7 † P. 43 • PSALM 51 † P. 46
1 PETER 3:13-22 † P. 47 • MATTHEW 4:1-11 † P. 48

The season of Lent walks us through the grief of Jesus' last days before his crucifixion. As we read Jesus' personal conversation with his disciples in the upper room, we imagine the joy of friendship coupled with the sadness of a friend's imminent betrayal. As we enter into the darkness of Jesus' arrest, trial, and beating, we weep with those first Christians, and in our efforts to save Jesus from ourselves, we grieve in our Peter-like betrayals.

The tradition of Lent—a forty-day sacrifice—is one way of mourning the death that sin has caused in our lives. As we see Jesus perfectly withstand Satan's temptation in the wilderness, we admit our own shortcomings, our own inadequate sacrifices. This period of “giving up” has a profound way of recalling our desperate need for Jesus Christ.

SUGGESTED READING: GENESIS 2:4–3:24 † P. 43

“All God’s plans have the mark of the cross on them, and all His plans have death to self in them.” —E. M. BOUNDS (USA/1835–1913)

Identifying Discontent

1816



1900

JOHN CHARLES RYLE (ENGLAND)

Remember what I say: if you would cleave to earthly pleasures, these are the things which murder souls. There is no surer way to get a seared conscience and a hard impenitent heart, than to give way to the desires of the flesh and mind. It seems nothing at first, but it tells in the long run.

Consider what Peter says: “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). They destroy the soul’s peace, break down its strength, lead it into hard captivity, make it a slave.

Consider what Paul says: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Colossians 3:5). “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24). “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Once the body was a perfect mansion of the soul; now it is all corrupt and disordered, and needs constant watching. It is a burden to the soul—not a helpmeet; a hindrance—not an assistance. It may become a useful servant, but it is always a bad master.

Consider, again, the words of Paul: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). “These,” says Leighton, “are the words, the very reading of which so wrought with Augustine, that from a licentious young man he turned a faithful servant of Jesus Christ.”

People do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

—**DEUTERONOMY 8:3**

*“The Blood deals with what we have done, whereas the Cross deals with what we are. The Blood disposes of our sins, while the Cross strikes at the root of our capacity for sin.” —**WATCHMAN NEE** (CHINA/1903–1972)*

MEDITATION

AWE-FULL

Great and holy God
awe and reverence
fear and trembling
do not come easily to us
for we are not
Old Testament Jews
or Moses
or mystics
or sensitive enough.
Forgive us
for slouching into Your presence
with little expectation
and less awe
than we would eagerly give a visiting dignitary.
We need
neither Jehovah nor a buddy—
neither “the Great and Powerful Oz” nor “the man upstairs.”
Help us
to want what we need . . .
You
God
and may the altar of our hearts
tremble with delight
at
Your visitation
amen.

—**FREDERICK OHLER** (USA/CONTEMPORARY)



Hollow Sacrifice

EILEEN BUTTON

Like many Catholic children, I gave up sweets for Lent. I remember creeping downstairs on Easter morning, hoping to be greeted by a marvelous chocolate bunny. After surviving the torturous season of sacrifice, I could barely wait to nibble the cottontail's long, delicious ears.

I would sometimes be disappointed to find a hollow chocolate cross in my basket instead. Propped in green plastic grass stood a milk chocolate version of my Savior's object of torture. I couldn't eat it. It felt blasphemous to do so. While it was almost impossible to endure the long, sweet-less days of Lent, the triviality of my "sacrifice" always shocked me when I was confronted by that chocolate cross on Easter morning.

The season of Lent is puzzling to many. Denying ourselves our favorite treats or habits—even for a short time—seems archaic in our I-want-it-now culture. Lent is a plodding, definitive crescendo that leads up to the cacophonous noise of Good Friday and the gorgeous aria of Easter. It's a season marked by deliberateness and intentionality.

But we often get in the way of our own best intentions. When fasting we might be tempted to feel a sense of pride about our sacrifice. The very thing we relinquish sometimes clamors inside us as a "need" to be met. Instead of focusing on Jesus Christ, our attention can dangerously be drawn to the very thing we've voluntarily surrendered.

Even so, the practice of Lent can be a valuable discipline. It's difficult to grasp what our sense of entitlement does to our bodies and souls. Our culture worships at the feet of pleasure. As we "shovel it in," we can become desensitized to our needs—the real hungers in our lives. Observing Lent can help us wrestle with the causes of our perpetual consumption. When we decide to relinquish what fails to truly satisfy, we come face-to-face with some tough questions. Can we believe Jesus when he says, "People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"? How can we make room for the Savior in our lives? Can we grasp the reality of Good Friday and live within its irony?

Lent challenges us to consider the honest answers to these and other soul-searching questions. It invites us to jump off the hamster wheel of consumption and experience the pinch of abstaining from thoughtless indulgence.

Perhaps I was offended by a hollow chocolate cross for another reason: The outside of our lives might look pretty, but we can be tragically empty. Occasionally, the reality of Jesus Christ's sacrifice and the power of his love break through our hardened hearts. The realization causes us to gasp. The hollow parts of our souls can be filled.

Identifying Discontent

SHOW ME THE SUFFERING OF THE MOST MISERABLE

Show me the suffering of the most miserable;
So I will know my people's plight.
Free me to pray for others;
For you are present in every person.
Help me to take responsibility for my own life;
So that I can be free at last.
Give me honesty and patience;
So that I can work with other workers.
Bring forth song and celebration;
So that the Spirit will be alive among us.
Let the Spirit flourish and grow;
So that we will never tire of the struggle.
Let us remember those who have died for justice;
For they have given us life.
Help us love even those who hate us;
So we can change the world.
Amen.

—**CÉSAR CHÁVEZ** (USA/1927–1993)

REFLECTION

—*The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.*

—**PSALM 51:17**



DEPRESSION-ERA FARMER AND CHILD—BEN SHAHN (USA/1898–1969)



Scripture Readings

Zent, Week 1: Identifying Discontent

GENESIS 2:4–3:24

This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs¹ came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. ⁹The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. ¹⁶But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit

¹ 2:6 Or *mist*.

Scripture Reading: Lent, Week 1: Identifying Discontent

of every tree in the garden—¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man² to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man’s ribs³ and closed up the opening. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

²³“At last!” the man exclaimed.

“This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called ‘woman,’
because she was taken from ‘man.’”

²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

²⁵Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

^{3:1}The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

²“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³“It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

⁴“You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

⁶The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man⁴ and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

² 2:19 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.

³ 2:21 Or *took a part of the man’s side*.

⁴ 3:8 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.

Scripture Reading: Lent, Week 1: Identifying Discontent

¹⁰He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

¹¹"Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

¹²The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike⁵ your head,
and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶Then he said to the woman,

"I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
and in pain you will give birth.
And you will desire to control your husband,
but he will rule over you."⁶

¹⁷And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

¹⁸It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
though you will eat of its grains.

¹⁹By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground
from which you were made.

For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return."

²⁰Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.⁷ ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

⁵ 3:15 Or *bruise*; also in 3:15b.

⁶ 3:16 Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you.*

⁷ 3:20 *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "to give life."

Scripture Reading: Lent, Week 1: Identifying Discontent

²²Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings⁸ have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” ²³So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

PSALM 51

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
because of your unfailing love.
Because of your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my sins.
- ² Wash me clean from my guilt.
Purify me from my sin.
- ³ For I recognize my rebellion;
it haunts me day and night.
- ⁴ Against you, and you alone, have I sinned;
I have done what is evil in your sight.
You will be proved right in what you say,
and your judgment against me is just.⁹
- ⁵ For I was born a sinner—
yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.
- ⁶ But you desire honesty from the womb,¹⁰
teaching me wisdom even there.
- ⁷ Purify me from my sins,¹¹ and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.
- ⁹ Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit¹² from me.

⁸ 3:22 Or the man; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.

⁹ 51:4 Greek version reads *and you will win your case in court*. Compare Rom 3:4.

¹⁰ 51:6 Or from the heart; Hebrew reads *in the inward parts*.

¹¹ 51:7 Hebrew *Purify me with the hyssop branch*.

¹² 51:11 Or your spirit of holiness.

Scripture Reading: Lent, Week 1: Identifying Discontent

- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.
- ¹³ Then I will teach your ways to rebels,
and they will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves;
then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.
- ¹⁵ Unseal my lips, O Lord,
that my mouth may praise you.
- ¹⁶ You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.
- ¹⁸ Look with favor on Zion and help her;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- ¹⁹ Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit—
with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings.
Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

1 PETER 3:13-22

Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. ¹⁵Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. ¹⁶But do this in a gentle and respectful way. ¹³ Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. ¹⁷Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

¹⁸Christ suffered¹⁴ for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.¹⁵

¹⁹So he went and preached to the spirits in prison—²⁰those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood.¹⁶ ²¹And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from¹⁷ a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

²²Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.

¹³ **3:16** Some English translations put this sentence in verse 15.

¹⁴ **3:18a** Some manuscripts read *died*.

¹⁵ **3:18b** Or *in spirit*.

¹⁶ **3:20** Greek *saved through water*.

¹⁷ **3:21** Or *as an appeal to God for*.

MATTHEW 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ²For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

³During that time the devil¹⁸ came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

⁴But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say,

'People do not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'¹⁹"

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

'He will order his angels to protect you.
And they will hold you up with their hands
so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'²⁰"

⁷Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'²¹"

⁸Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹"I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

¹⁰"Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say,

'You must worship the LORD your God
and serve only him.'²²"

¹¹Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

Lent, Week 2: Dependence

GENESIS 12:1-9

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

¹⁸ 4:3 Greek *the tempter*.

¹⁹ 4:4 Deut 8:3.

²⁰ 4:6 Ps 91:11-12.

²¹ 4:7 Deut 6:16.

²² 4:10 Deut 6:13.

Tesserae

A Map for the Mosaic

A mosaic is made up of many small pieces of marble, glass, or tile called “tesserae.” This devotional is adapted from *Holy Bible: Mosaic*, which is made up of hundreds of tesserae, the words and art of believers from throughout the centuries and across the globe. Each piece is taken from a larger whole, and these pages are a roadmap to guide you in tracking down each piece in its original context.

Lent, Week 1: Identifying Discontent

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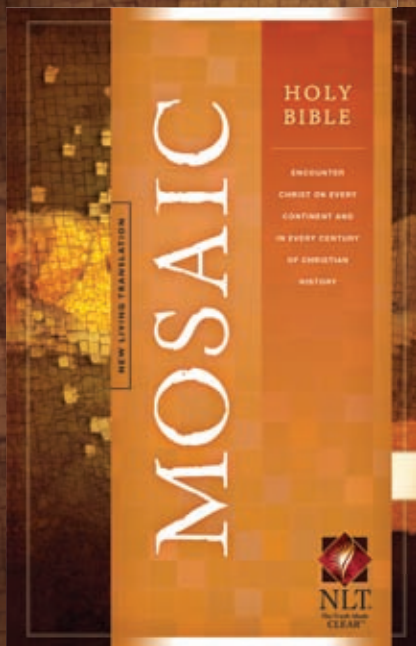
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