

Centered on Christ INVITING GOD INTO YOUR LENTEN PLANS





Dear Friend,

The season of Lent is upon us. Are you ready to embrace it, or are you feeling a bit uncertain about what this year's 40 days will bring?

If you are like me, I anticipate with hope the refinement and transformation that is possible during the season of Lent. What does God have in mind for me? How will He make me a new creation? At the same time, I worry that the next 40 days will just feel like any other 40 days. Will I give into temptation? Will I get distracted? Will I fail Lent again this year?

Often, I approach Lent as this ideal time to make up for all that is lacking in my life. In six short weeks, I need to increase prayer, begin fasting, detach by decluttering my entire home, grow in all the virtues, and take time to finish reading the stack of spiritual books on my nightstand.

And while each of these Lenten ideas is good, the purpose of Lent is not to accomplish a bunch of holy tasks, checking them off like items on a to-do list.

The purpose of Lent is to grow closer to Jesus. Giving something up or adding something in invites us to fall in love with Him more deeply. Our sacrifices allow us to enter into His Passion, Death, and Resurrection in an intimate way, truly encountering His deep love for us.

So, instead of striving for a successful Lent, what if we focused on being present? To Jesus? To what draws us closer to Him?

I created this mini-journal as a guide. It encourages you to invite the Lord in and keep Him (not your Lenten to-do list) at the center of the season. Take your time going through it. My prayer for you is that this Lent, is not successful but rather prayerful, peaceful, hopeful, and restful—as you fall more in love with a Savior who is already so in love with you.

Lenten blessings,

Sanah



Below is a list of words that may resonate with you. Are you drawn to a particular word or two? Which ones reflect something that you desire or are lacking in your life? Circle those words.

HOPE REST FAITH REPAIR MERCY STILLNESS JOY PEACE RESTORE REFRESHMENT LOVE HEALING COURAGE

In the space below, share your desires with the Lord. What do you hope for this Lent? What do you feel called to do? How do you see the season unfolding? How does the word (or words) that you circled tie into your heart's desire for Lent—and beyond?



As you consider how you would like to spend your Lenten season, pray with one of these Scripture verses.

LET THE SCRIPTURE VERSE CHOOSE YOU.

These are God's words—His message—for you. How does it speak to you about the upcoming Lenten season?

- For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. // Isaiah 55:8-9
- Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. // Proverbs 3:5-6

• I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will



So far, you have reflected on your own hopes and dreams for Lent. You also have pondered God's plans for you.

Now, unite your hopes with God's plan; your will with His. Bring all of this to the Lord in prayer and conversation.

Lord, refinement and transformation can be hard. But I know Your plan is one sheer goodness for me. When Lent gets hard, will You be my strength, Lord? W You show me how to rest in You?				



The Church offers a simple formula for the season of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. When we realize that simple can still be meaningful, we can let go of our high expectations to do all-things holy this Lent, and we can remember that God is constantly inviting us into His plans and His ways. More importantly, He is inviting us into a loving relationship with Him.

Use the Church's simple formula of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to allow the Holy Spirit to guide your Lenten observances this year. In prayer, talk to God about each of these three areas:

Prayer // Lord, how would You like me to grow in prayer this Lent?			

STEP	4 //	
keep it	simple	(continued)

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Fasting // Lord, since You know me so well, what area of my life needs the most detaching? Do I need to cut back on sugar? Do I have more clothes than I need Do I spend too much time on social media?

STFP 4 //

keep it simple (continued)
Almsgiving // Lord, how can I show my love for you? How can I be Your hands and feet? Where am I most needed to serve?

A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

God's plan is simple but meaningful. He does not ask too much of us but just the right amount to draw us closer to Him in love. What's amazing is that His expectations are not too high, either. And no matter how imperfect we may be, no matter how many times we may stumble, take heart! His mercies are new every morning for us to begin again. // Lamentations 3:22-23



The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom, like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing ... They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

// ISAIAH 35