

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

A DEVOTIONAL SERIES



LENT 2021

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In the liturgical church calendar, Lent is a season of preparation, observed for forty days before Easter - a period that alludes to the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. This season inspires a time of reflection, purification, and repentance in preparation for the celebration of Christ's suffering and death on Good Friday, and resurrection on Easter.

To help enhance our observance of Lent and preparation for the glorious celebration of Easter, this devotional package has been created to provide one devotional guide per week. It includes a guide for the 6 weeks leading up to Holy Week, and one guide for the week immediately following Easter.

This guide is for you. Whether you are observing Lent with a few others within your household or your small group, or if you prefer a more personal and contemplative experience, please feel free to customize the provided features to fit your circumstances. You could also use this guide as an opportunity to connect with others from your family, congregation, or neighborhood and go through some of the content together, even virtually. Consider following us on Instagram or Facebook for weekly prompts.

May this guide be a blessing to you and inspire moments of reflection and conviction as we prepare to celebrate the pinnacle of our Savior's love and power.

WEEKLY TOPICS

- Week of February 15 ◦ **Love** ◦ [Matthew 22:36-39](#)
- Week of February 22 ◦ **Face temptation** ◦ [Matthew 4:4, 4:7, 4:10](#)
- Week of March 1 ◦ **Your King comes!** ◦ [John 12:12-16](#)
- Week of March 8 ◦ **Denied** ◦ [Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75](#)
- Week of March 15 ◦ **Suffering** ◦ [Isaiah 53:3-5](#)
- Week of March 22 + Holy Week ◦ **Risen** ◦ [1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#)
- Week of April 5 ◦ **Witness** ◦ [Luke 24:25-27, 44-48](#)



EACH GUIDE HAS THE FEATURES BELOW

Bible passage and devotional commentary

There are many prophecies and cross-references throughout Scripture. The Bible verses in this devotional all explore a teaching of Jesus or an event in His life that was - according to the Scriptures, the title of this series.

Questions

Contemplative questions to use as journal prompts in your personal devotion, or conversation starters for your family or a friend.

Family Activity

These suggestions can help engage children in the Lent experience and emphasize a takeaway from the weekly passage. Consider utilizing a children's Bible for the readings.

Song suggestions

Whether used to create a meditative moment, or an audible expression, these songs provide an opportunity to worship the Lord through music. Some are found in our hymnals, while others you can access by searching for them on YouTube, or clicking on the link (if you are viewing on a computer).

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LOVE

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 15

MATTHEW 22:36-39

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind! This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Many people might say that the commands found in Matthew 22:36-39 sum up what it means to be a Christian – to love God and to love your neighbor. And yet, from the very beginning, before the first Christian church, and before Jesus even came to earth, God established these commands for His people (ref. Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18). Why are they so hard to live up to?

When Christ came to earth, He embodied these commands, showing the world how we were created to live: loving God and those around us with every part of our being. As we enter Lent this year, let's utilize this time of reflection to study the love of Christ – in His teachings, His actions, and His sacrifice on the cross - and focus on selflessly loving Him and others as we were created to.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Speaking prompt ◦ One day a lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment?" How many commandments there are? Ten, right? Well, the Ten Commandments we know were written on the tablets of stone, but the Israelites were actually given 613 laws (248 dos and 365 don'ts). Wow! That is a lot of rules, isn't it? Can you imagine trying to remember all of them? Six hundred and thirteen laws! Which one do you think Jesus said was the most important? Let's read our Bible verse for today (Matthew 22:36-39).

Activity ◦ Draw a large tree trunk and branches. Then draw, cut out, and glue colored leaves to the tree with some ways that we can show love to God, our family, members in our church, and our community.

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

- Jesus Loves Me ◦ Hymnal 380 / Celebration Hymnal 185
- More Love to Thee ◦ Celebration Hymnal 634
- By Our Love (For King and Country) ◦ [click here](#)
- Oh How Good It Is (Keith and Kristyn Getty) ◦ [click here](#)



QUESTIONS

Why is loving God and others so important, and why is it sometimes difficult to do?

What are some ways that we can show our love for God every day?

How do you think Jesus would want us to show our love for others? How did He show His love for others?

The Bible says that we love God because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). How do you know that God loves you? What are some things that He's done to prove His love for you?

How could acknowledging our own biases or prejudices help us to love our neighbor more? How could learning to overlook and move past personal weaknesses in our neighbors and ourselves nurture our ability to love?

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FACING TEMPTATION

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 22

MATTHEW 4:4, 7, 10 (READ VERSES 1-11)

But He answered and said, "[It is written](#), 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Jesus said to him, "[It is written again](#), 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! [For it is written](#), 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

As Christians, we often hear that we will face temptation in life. These temptations can take many forms, and we must recognize the precarious situation we are in, where the decisions we make can either take us further away from God or bring us closer to Him. Given the significance of our decisions during times of temptation, where can we turn for help?

In Matthew 4:1-11, we read that when Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, He turned to the truth of Scripture. It is God's Word and His promises that give Jesus the proper response to the evil one. With a knowledge of Scripture, which reveals to us how God has faithfully provided for His people, we can confidently face temptation knowing God is with us.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Speaking prompt ◦ Satan tempted Jesus to try and get Him to lose focus of His purpose. From today's verse, we see the Jesus was ready to protect Himself against Satan's temptations, using the words of Scripture.

Activity ◦ Draw or cut out a shield shape (consider using cardboard or poster board) and then write the Scripture phrases that Jesus quoted from the Matthew passage. Consider also adding Psalm 28:7, **The Lord is my strength and my shield**. If you're looking to extend the activity and opportunities for conversation, consider looking through the Bible together to find additional verses to add to the shield that could be used to combat against temptations.

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

- Great Is Thy Faithfulness ◦ Hymnal 40 / Celebration Hymnal 139
- Be Strong in the Lord ◦ Celebration Hymnal 734
- Don't Be Afraid (Keith Lancaster) ◦ [click here](#)
- Lord, I Need You (Matt Maher) ◦ [click here](#)



QUESTIONS

What are some things that we are at times tempted to do that make God unhappy with us? How can we avoid doing these things?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and discuss. What is God promising in this verse? How does that make you feel towards Him?

What's one of your favorite stories from the Bible, and why is it one of your favorites? What's the lesson from the story, and how might you turn to this lesson throughout your life?

Find a Bible passage that you can turn to in times of temptation that will encourage and strengthen you in overcoming it.

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YOUR KING COMES!

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

WEEK OF MARCH 1

JOHN 12:12-16

The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!" Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

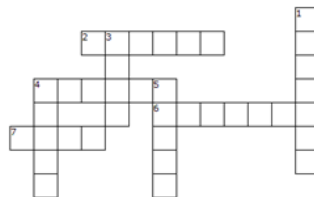
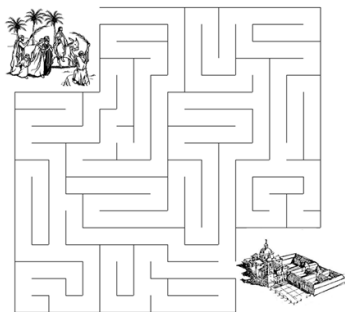
In these verses from John 12, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey is described, including a reference to Zechariah 9, where it reads: **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey** (Zechariah 9:9).

The twelfth chapter of John continues, saying that **the disciples did not understand these things at first**, but later reflected on the event and remembered. How often have we perhaps missed the presence and power of Christ in our lives? We can make time to reflect on the past, rejoicing in the help of our Savior, and also allow space for ourselves to attune our hearts to His present activity. May we seek to more frequently recognize our King, who is always near.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Speaking prompt • At the end of this month, we will celebrate Palm Sunday. Just because it is a few weeks away, doesn't mean that we can't start thinking of that time now. Just like how we get ready to celebrate Christmas for a few weeks before Christmas, we want to spend time thinking about Holy Week, which starts with Palm Sunday!

Can you help Jesus find the way through the streets of Jerusalem to the temple?



ACROSS

- The part of a tree that grows out from the main trunk and has leaves
- Loose outer garments without sleeves worn instead of a coat
- What the people shouted as Jesus rode into Jerusalem
- A young male horse (or donkey)

DOWN

- A community which is smaller than a town, usually in the countryside
- A pathway for vehicles, persons, and animals
- A large group of people who have gathered together
- To speak with a very loud voice

BRANCH	SHOUT	CROWD	VILLAGE
COLT	ROAD	HOSANNA	CLOAKS

- Hosanna, Loud Hosanna • Hymnal 486
- We Will Glorify • Celebration Hymnal 301
- Hosanna - Praise Is Rising (Paul Baloche) • [click here](#)
- He Is Exalted • Hymnal 13 / Celebration Hymnal 36 • [click here](#)

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS



QUESTIONS

"Hosanna" is a word used to express adoration, praise or joy. Why did the Jewish people greet Jesus in this way on Palm Sunday? Who were they expecting Him to be, and what were they hoping He would do?

Why did Jesus come into Jerusalem on a donkey, do you think?

What does it mean when we say that Jesus is our King?

How can spiritual disciplines help you recognize the presence of Christ? Consider the disciplines of silence and solitude, fasting, prayer, and reading Scripture.

Write a prayer thanking God for His presence and provision in your life.

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DENIAL

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

WEEK OF MARCH 8

MATTHEW 26:31-35, 69-75

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!" And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Prior to praying in Gethsemane, Jesus shares startling news with His disciples that soon they will all stumble and scatter. Peter insists that he will not stumble, only for Jesus to assure him that he will deny Him not once, but three times.

Life often comes at us unexpectedly. No matter how strong we feel our faith is, we never know for sure how we will react when our world comes to a sudden halt because of tragedy, sickness, loss of employment, etc. Will you stumble and deny Him in those moments? Or will you strengthen your faith? Jesus, the One who loves us the most, will never leave us. In times of despair, affirm and edify your faith by looking nowhere else but to Him.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Speaking prompt ◦ The disciples fled and denied knowing Jesus because they were afraid. What are things that you are afraid of? Make a list. Read Psalm 34, verses 1 & 4. How can you worship God when life is hard?

Activity ◦ Draw a picture of what you look like when you are scared. Then draw something that comforts you.

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

- Be Still, My Soul ◦ Hymnal 174 / Celebration Hymnal 712
- Star, to Which I'm Looking ◦ Hymnal 210
- Christ, the Sure and Steady Anchor (Matt Boswell) ◦ [click here](#)
- What a Beautiful Name (Hillsong Worship) ◦ [click here](#)



QUESTIONS

What are some ways that we deny, or "separate ourselves from," Christ?

It mentions in the devotional that we need to "look to Jesus" in times of despair. What does this mean to you? How can we "look to Jesus," and why is this important?

Why should we be careful not to be overly confident in ourselves, as Peter was? Who should we be confident in?

What effect did remembering have on Peter? How can we make time to reflect more on the words of Christ?

How can you encourage others in their faith when they are living through difficult moments?

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SUFFERING

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

WEEK OF MARCH 15

ISAIAH 53:3-5

He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

700 years before Jesus arrived on the earth; God opened the eyes of His prophet Isaiah so that he could already have a glimpse of Jesus' saving work. The gospel of Jesus Christ shines clearly in Isaiah 53. As a humble Servant, Jesus condescended, became like us and suffered like none other. He was a **Man of sorrows**; carrying deep sadness because of the sin of mankind, which He took upon Himself and carried to the cross. Sinless Himself, yet punished for our sins, the righteous One suffered for the unrighteous.

Jesus suffered so that we could have the power to overcome our sinful nature and become a new creation in Him. What sins are you still carrying yourself? You have the power within you by the Spirit of the Lord to be victorious in every battle with the evil one. Remember what Jesus has done and follow Him to victory.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Speaking prompt ◦ Jesus suffered a very painful death on the cross. We celebrate the day He died as Good Friday. All of us do things that are wrong from time to time. All of us have sinned. No matter how large or small the sin, it separates us from God. However, as we learned today, God loves us so much, He sent His only Son to save us. Jesus did not sin; instead, He died on the cross in our place, so we could have everlasting life and be with Him in Heaven.

Activity ◦ Get out some paint and paper (try not to be too messy!). Think about Jesus' suffering, think about His love for you, and think about how He makes you victorious – paint something that represents this.

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

- Hallelujah, What a Savior ◦ Celebration Hymnal 311
- O Sacred Head, Now Wounded ◦ Hymnal 497 / Celebration Hymnal 316
- Jesus Paid it All (Fernando Ortega) ◦ [click here](#)
- Lord from Sorrows Deep I Call (Matt Boswell and Matt Papa) ◦ [click here](#)



QUESTIONS

There is a hymn that says: **[Give me] more patience in suffering, more sorrow for sin...** What does "sorrow for sin" or remorse mean to you?

What are some ways that you have suffered for your sin? How does your suffering compare to Jesus' suffering?

The devotional mentions that the gospel of Jesus Christ shines clearly in Isaiah 53. What is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and how does it apply to us?

Jesus' suffering gives us the power to overcome our own sin and suffering. What a powerful statement this is! Read Romans 8:37 and discuss what it means to you.

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RISEN

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

WEEK OF MARCH 22

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins [according to the Scriptures](#), and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day [according to the Scriptures](#)...

Our verse for this week is taken from the Bible reading for Easter Sunday, and is also the origin of our theme, **According to the Scriptures**. Reading Scripture through the lens of Jesus Christ makes us aware of the unity of the Scriptures because we identify how Jesus is recognized and foretold in the Old Testament, and that amplifies the meaning of passages throughout both Testaments.

We hope that over the last few weeks, you have been given the opportunity to see "through the lens" - Jesus Christ; that He has been your focus, that you have recognized His presence, and that you have found meaning in the holy words of His teachings. We encourage you to read through the Gospel accounts of Holy Week below and to continue reflecting on who Jesus is and what He has done for you.

Matthew 21:1-17, and chapters 26-28

Mark 11:1-11, and chapters 14-16

Luke 19:28-48, and chapters 20-24:12

John 12:12-19, and chapters 13, and 18-21

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Activity ◦ Prepare small items relating to Holy Week (e.g. leaves, nails, bread, stone, linen/cloth, picture of an empty tomb) and hide them around the house. Let the children hunt for the items. After everything is found, read the accounts of Holy Week listed above (at least one) and let the children hold up their items as the story is told.

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

- In Christ Alone (Keith and Kristyn Getty) ◦ Hymnal 92 ◦ [click here](#)
- Christ the Lord Is Risen Today ◦ Hymnal 508 / Celebration Hymnal 367
- Crown Him with Many Crowns ◦ Hymnal 510 ◦ [click here](#)
- Christ, our hope in life and death (Keith and Kristyn Getty) ◦ [click here](#)



QUESTIONS

In reading the various accounts of Holy Week, did you learn something new?

What is the significance of Jesus having risen from the dead?

In this Bible passage, Paul is delivering the gospel message of Jesus to those who belonged to the church in Corinth. What are some ways that we can also deliver Jesus' gospel message, and why is it important for us to do so?

Find an example in the Old Testament where Jesus is foretold or prophesized.

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WITNESS

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

WEEK OF APRIL 5

LUKE 24:25-27, 44-48

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples. First, to the two on the road to Emmaus, and then to the group gathered in Jerusalem. To comfort them and bring clarity to their bewilderment, Jesus teaches them, from the entirety of the Old Testament writings, that it was necessary for Him to first endure suffering before moving on to glory. The disciples were His eyewitnesses and those who would profess His gospel.

Their witness, along with the very same Scriptures that Jesus used to teach them, are available to us today in the Bible so that we may know God and the redemptive history of which we are a part. As we grow in our understanding of all that He has done, we realize that we cannot be silent. Today, we are His witnesses. Allow the clarity of Scripture to empower your understanding, leading you to proclaim His wondrous works in all you say and do.

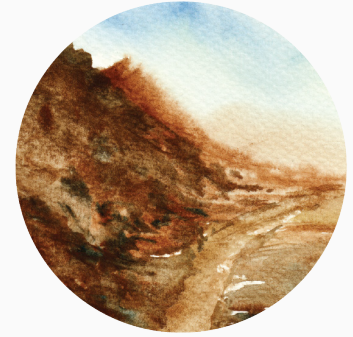
FAMILY ACTIVITY

Speaking prompt ◦ When Jesus died, his followers thought that he was gone forever. They didn't know what to do. They were very sad. They couldn't see things clearly because they were so mixed up and upset. Two of Jesus' friends were sadly walking back to their home in the village of Emmaus when another traveler joined them on the road. They didn't recognize who it was, but they began to talk to Him and tell Him all about what had happened to Jesus and how sad they were. Jesus then began to tell them about what was written in the Bible about Him. When it was evening, they arrived at their home and invited the stranger to stay with them and have supper. When they sat down to eat and the traveler broke the bread and blessed it, something happened. Suddenly they saw clearly, what they hadn't seen before even though they had been looking right at it most of the day. They realized that the stranger who had joined them on the road was Jesus!

Activity ◦ Make a vision chart, similar to one in an eye doctor's office. The letters on the first line will be big, the letters on the next line will be a little smaller, etc. Use the following phrase: JESUS HELPS ME SEE MORE CLEARLY WHEN I AM CONFUSED

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

- I Love to Tell the Story ◦ Hymnal 86 / Celebration Hymnal 444
- I Will Sing of My Redeemer ◦ Hymnal 91 / Celebration Hymnal 517
- Facing a Task Unfinished (Keith and Kristyn Getty) ◦ [click here](#)
- Lift high the Name of Jesus (Keith and Kristyn Getty) ◦ [click here](#)



QUESTIONS

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

If we didn't actually see Jesus' death and resurrection, how can we still be His witnesses?

Read Acts 4:20. What should we feel compelled to share with others about Jesus? What is it about Him that we can't help but speak?

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