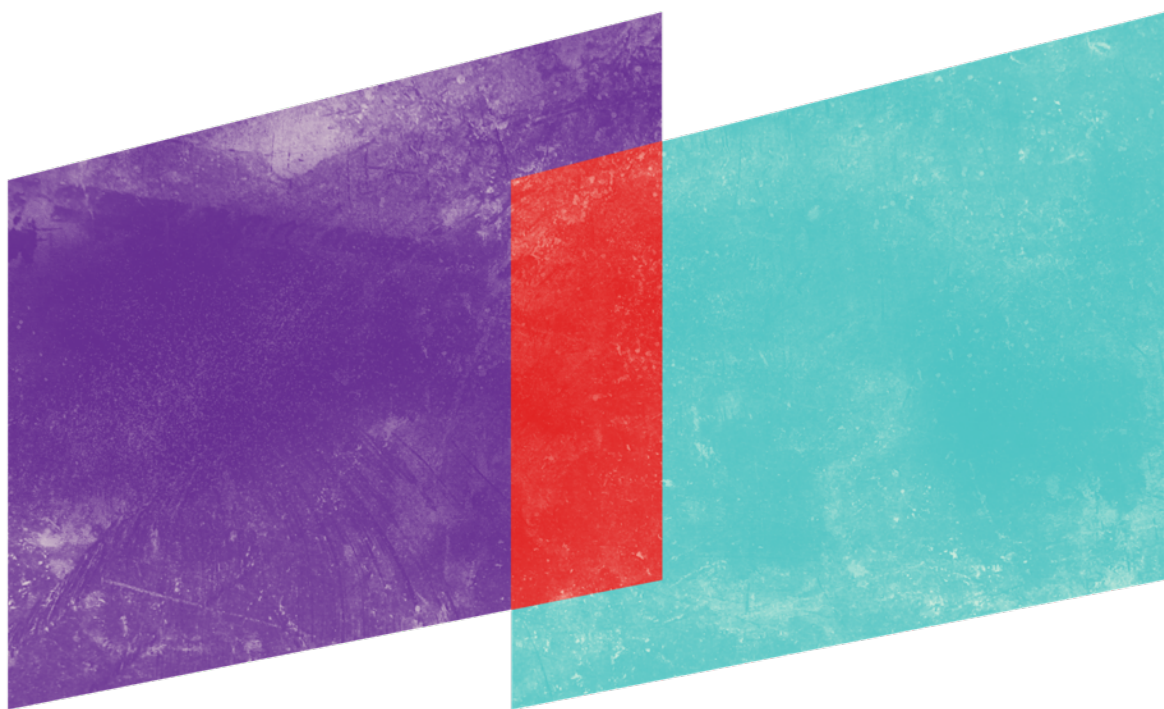


# LENT **2015**

A 40-DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE  
THROUGH GRIEF + GRATITUDE



REACH // GRAND COLLEGE MINISTRY  
GRAND AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

#REACHLENT

# DISCIPLINE **TRANSFORMS**

One of the most important truths about any season of intentional Spiritual growth is this: Spiritual Discipline is intended for our good. It is meant to bring the abundance of God into our lives.

No one accidentally gravitates towards godliness or purity or into a powerful prayer life. It takes effort, intentionality, planning, accountability, and discipline.

Today, as you begin walking through this Lent experience, we want you to take some time and do two things:

1. Invite someone in your life (your small group or best friend would be perfect) to walk through this study and through Lent with you. Get accountability before you start.
2. Spend some time asking God how or where He wants to grow you over the next 40 days. Remember that observing Lent and fasting does not simply mean abstaining from something, but also living toward something. Ask God what He wants you to live towards.

The irony of this 40-day journey into Spiritual Discipline is that it's going to take Spiritual Discipline to remain steady throughout the journey. Hopefully, accountability and purpose will provide the system of support necessary for you to accomplish the task.

May these next 40 days lead you into freedom and to the person who made freedom possible: namely, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Spend some time today asking God what you would like Him to accomplish in you and through you during this season.



# A PRAYER FOR GETTING FREE FROM OUR **ENTANGLEMENTS**

Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” John 11:43-44 (NIV)

Dear Lord Jesus, as surely as you spoke the words to a dead Lazarus, “Come out,” and he was raised from the dead, so when you spoke the gospel to our hearts, we too were raised to newness of life. We have passed from death to life, from condemnation for our sins to the righteousness of faith, and from life in the kingdom of darkness to life in the kingdom of God. Hallelujah, for sovereign, irresistible, resurrecting grace!

Yet as surely as Lazarus needed to be freed from his grave-clothes, so do we. The smell and signs of death still cling to us, bind us, and trip us up. There are many areas of our lives in which we long for greater freedom.

Jesus, grant us greater freedom from the fear and adulation of man. Some people have way more power over our hearts than they deserve. Their criticism and rejection can devastate us, and their praise and admiration can make us. May your great love for us and delight in us, shift the center of our relational world. Help us to love others as you love us, period.

We also crave to be set free from our self-centered worries and our soul-sapping fears. Jesus, you have the hearts of all the kings in your hand—not to mention our days, wounds, longings, and burdens. Perhaps the most tenacious fragment of our grave-clothes, still wrapped tightly around our hearts, is our unbelief. Continue to free us to trust you implicitly and explicitly, with all things at all times. Oh, to be that free.

Lastly, Jesus, free us for staying more alive to your love than our losses; more aware of your grace than our gripes, and more tuned in to what we do have in you, than what we don't have in life. So very Amen we pray, in your glorious and grace-full name.



# WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Read Mark 1:14-15

Jesus begins His ministry on earth with a profound proclamation. He says that God's Kingdom has come near and we must repent and believe in the gospel. Historically, Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of the Lent Season. In preparation for celebrating the resurrection, Christians would dry and burn palm branches from the previous year's Palm Sunday, then mark the forehead of believers with ash in the shape of the cross, signifying their response to the good news in two parts: repent and believe.

Take a few moments to journal about how the gospel has changed your story. As we begin the Lent season, how is Jesus asking you to repent and believe?



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE

This is an excerpt of a sermon John Piper preached at the Passion Conference in 2001. The video quality isn't great, but the content is so powerful it's worth it. Pastor Piper reminds us that what the world calls success is often what God calls a wasted life. He encourages us today to know one thing well—namely Christ— and to leverage our whole lives to make Christ known.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0slqvQmT5IU>

Reflection Questions:

How can we fight against the American Dream and live a life that counts for eternity?

What do you think it means to know one thing well, to be gripped by one thing?

Write out what our modern day tragedy is and how you can reject it.

What can you do to reject the script offered to us by culture? How can we not buy it?



# FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

## TO ABSORB THE WRATH OF GOD

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.” Galatians 3:13

God put [Christ] forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. Romans 3:25

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10

If God were not just, there would be no demand for His Son to suffer and die. And if God were not loving, there would be no willingness for His Son to suffer and die. But God is both just and loving. Therefore His love is willing to meet the demands of His justice. God’s law demanded, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:5). But we have all loved other things more. This is what sin is—dishonoring God by preferring other things over Him, and acting on those preferences. Therefore, the Bible says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We glorify what we enjoy most. And it isn’t God.

Therefore sin is not small, because it is not against a small Sovereign. The seriousness of an insult rises with the dignity of the one insulted. The Creator of the universe is infinitely worthy of respect and admiration and loyalty. Therefore, failure to love Him is not trivial—it is treason. It defames God and destroys human happiness. Since God is just, He does not sweep these crimes under the rug of the universe. He feels a holy wrath against them. They deserve to be punished, and He has made this clear: “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). “The soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). There is a holy curse hanging over all sin. Not to punish would be unjust. The demeaning of God would be endorsed. A lie would reign at the core of reality. Therefore, God says, “Cursed be every- one who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them” (Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 27:26). But the love of God does not rest with the curse that hangs over all sinful humanity. He is not content to show wrath, no matter how holy it is. Therefore God sends His own Son to absorb His wrath and bear the curse for all who trust Him. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13). This is the meaning of the word “propitiation” in the text quoted above (Romans 3:25). It refers to the removal of God’s wrath by providing a substitute. The substitute is provided by God Himself. The substitute, Jesus Christ, does not just cancel the wrath; He absorbs it and diverts it from us to Himself. God’s wrath is just, and it was spent, not withdrawn. Let us not trifle with God or trivialize His love. We will never stand in awe of being loved by God until we reckon with the seriousness of our sin and the justice of His wrath against us. But when, by grace, we waken to our unworthiness, then we may look at the suffering and death of Christ and say, “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the [wrath-absorbing] propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

\*Today's content is an excerpt from John Piper's Fifty us Came To Die.



# SATURDAY, FEBRUARY **21**

Read Psalm 139:1-14

Pray, praise, and adore the Father through prayer today.  
Spend a few minutes in prayer telling God why you love Him.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY **22**

REST. REMEMBER. REFLECT.

Journal about your week with the Lord.





# MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Read Psalm 63

“Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”

- Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

As created human beings with souls, we crave depth. We long to be satisfied in God yet we so often suppress this longing with the selfish desires of our flesh: sex and relationships, recognition, emotional attention, substance abuse, and many others. We're dying of thirst and we keep drinking saltwater--which only makes matters worse. All the while, God waits for us to come to Him, the spring of life, to receive soul nourishment. In His presence flow fountains of everlasting water that restore and replenish our hearts. In Him we no longer thirst for the cravings of our sinful nature.

Meditate today on the goodness of God. Tell Him that your soul thirsts for Him and repeat to yourself, “God, your steadfast love is better than life.”

May I rejoice that, while men die, the Lord lives;  
that, while all creatures are broken reeds, empty cisterns,  
fading flowers,  
withering grass,  
He is the Rock of Ages, the Fountain of living waters.  
Turn my heart from vanity,  
from dissatisfactions,  
from uncertainties of the present state,  
to an eternal interest in Christ.

- Valley of Vision, “The Infinite and the Finite”



## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods... So we fasted and implored our God for this, and He listened to our request.

Ezra 8:21, 23

Often, the most effective time of drawing near to God come when we deviate from the normal rhythm of our life and ask Him to encounter us during that time. In scripture, prayer and fasting go hand in hand. They are used to present our requests to God, and simultaneously draw near to Him. In fasting from lunch, replace the time that you'd normally spend eating with time in prayer for the people you live with: for their protection, for their stressful season of life, or for their salvation.

TODAY: Fast from lunch and spend your normal lunch time praying for your roommates, suitemates , and friends.



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY **25**

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21

The gospel tells us we have been given a righteousness that is not our own. But this didn't come free. It cost God much to give us new life. Jesus had to become sin for us to be made righteous. Have you ever stopped to think about the alternative? What would it mean for us to take on the punishment that Jesus took in our place? Understanding the fullness of this exchange changes everything.

Where in your life have you not allowed Jesus to take all your sin? Where have you not applied all His righteousness?



# THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

## DISCIPLINE OF STUDY

For the next three Thursdays we are going to watch short clips from Pastor Tim Chaddick of Reality Church LA. In these excerpts, he talks about the power and purpose of Internal Disciplines. The first one we will look at is the Discipline of Study. Now we don't mean study like for a test, we mean meditate, think on, process deeply, in the hopes of getting to know the One we are studying. Be encouraged by this clip and be reminded that God wants to meet you in His Word and make you rooted in Christ.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5vjt-3IG-E>

Reflection Questions:

What is the last bible verse you memorized?

What can you do today to help yourself start the discipline of study?

Text someone in your small group asking them to memorize Psalm 1:1-3 with you.

Spend today thinking on these verses:

### Psalm 1

Blessed is the one  
who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
or sit in the company of mockers,  
but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.  
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither—  
whatever they do prospers.



# FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

## TO BECOME A RANSOM FOR MANY

The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.  
Mark 10:45

There is no thought in the Bible that Satan had to be paid off to let sinners be saved. What happened to Satan when Christ died was not payment, but defeat. The Son of God became human so “that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). There was no negotiation. When Jesus says that He came “to give his life as a ransom,” the focus is not on who gets the payment. The focus is on His own life as the payment, and on His freedom in serving rather than being served, and on the “many” who will benefit from the payment He makes. If we ask who received the ransom, the biblical answer would surely be God. The Bible says that Christ “gave himself up for us, [an] . . . offering . . . to God” (Ephesians 5:2). Christ “offered himself without blemish to God” (Hebrews 9:14). The whole need for a substitute to die on our behalf is because we have sinned against God and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). And because of our sin, “the whole world [is] held accountable to God” (Romans 3:19). So when Christ gives Himself as a ransom for us, the Bible says that we are freed from the condemnation of God. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). The ultimate captivity from which we need release is the final “judgment of God” (Romans 2:2; Revelation 14:7). The ransom price of this release from God’s condemnation is the life of Christ. Not just His life lived, but His life given up in death. Jesus said repeatedly to His disciples, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him” (Mark 9:31). In fact, one of the reasons Jesus loved to call Himself “the Son of Man” (over sixty-five times in the Gospels) was that it had the ring of mortality about it. Men can die. That’s why He had to be one. The ransom could only be paid by the Son of Man, because the ransom was a life given up in death. The price was not coerced from Him. That’s the point of saying, “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.” He needed no service from us. He was the giver, not the receiver. “No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord” (John 10:18). The price was paid freely; it was not forced. Which brings us again to His love. He freely chose to rescue us at the cost of His life. How many did Christ effectively ransom from sin? He said that He came “to give His life as a ransom for many.” Yet not everyone will be ransomed from the wrath of God. But the offer is for everyone. “There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). No one is excluded from this salvation who embraces the treasure of the ransoming Christ.

\*Today's content is an excerpt from John Piper's Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came To Die.



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY **28**

Read Psalm 103:19 and Daniel 4:3

Pray that the Kingdom of God would invade the dorms, the apartments,  
and the campus that you are on.



# SUNDAY, MARCH 1

REST. REMEMBER. REFLECT.

Journal about your week with the Lord.



# MONDAY, MARCH 2

Read Psalm 16 & 1 Peter 1:3-9

There is incredible joy in the presence of God. The gift of God's presence is what King David and the Apostle Peter describe as a "beautiful inheritance". Not only has God completely forgiven our sins on the cross of Christ, but He has provided us with a future kingdom in heaven that cannot be shaken or stolen. We dwell secure in Christ both now and forevermore. For the Christian, this is profoundly good news. The very thought of receiving such an infinitely valuable inheritance in Christ overwhelms us with passionate joy to live for God, for He is our treasure above all.

Thank God today that we get to receive a beautiful inheritance in Him!

Thou art preparing joy for me and me for joy;  
I pray for joy, wait for joy, long for joy;  
give me more than I can hold, desire, or think of.  
Let me rest in the thought of your love,  
pardon for sin, my title to heaven,  
my future unspotted state.

- Valley of Vision, "Joy"

"Whenever the Christian idea of meditation is taken seriously, there are those who assume it is synonymous with the concept of meditation centered in Eastern religions. In reality, the two ideas stand worlds apart. Eastern meditation is an attempt to empty the mind; Christian meditation is an attempt to fill the mind. The two ideas are quite different."

- Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline





## TUESDAY, MARCH 3

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

Psalm 126:3

Regardless of your background, upbringing or past experiences, God has allowed you to be where you are in life right now for a specific purpose and reason. Often when we get caught up in the worries and busy-ness of the day, we forget that God has directed our path to bring us to the current place. Remembering what Jesus has done for you allows you to remember that He's God, and He's in control. It reminds us of His unconditional goodness and love. Whether constant happiness or constant struggle has been your story, there is joy in knowing that His love never fails, never gives up, and never runs out on you.

TODAY: Reflect and write down the story of how God has brought you to where you are currently in life.



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

Read John 3:16 and Ephesians 1:5

The gospel is not only the good news that Jesus took all our sin and gave us His righteousness, it also means we have been adopted as God's sons and daughters. We have been adopted and given all the benefits of being a holy child of God. How great the Father's love for us that He would give His son to make us His own.

How does the gospel allowing us to become sons and daughters of God change the way we relate to Him?



# THURSDAY, MARCH 5

## DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

Prayer is putting God where He belongs and putting us where we belong. Prayer lets God be God in our lives. It's experiencing the power of God in places where we couldn't experience it on our own. Prayer is a place of communion with God, a space where we converse with God, and secret place to be known and know God. Be challenged by this clip as Pastor Chaddick invites us to come out of hiding and sit in the presence of God in prayer and repent and believe.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5Bn\\_XuVM2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5Bn_XuVM2s)

Reflection Questions:

This week, how much was prayer a part of your life, schedule, and routine?

Do you make time in your week to pray for things other than your needs?

Today, take a moment to adore and praise God for who He is and what He's done.

After you adore and praise God, repent of things the Lord brings to your attention.

Lastly, believe the Gospel again. Believe God is for you in Christ. Thank Him for that.



# FRIDAY, MARCH 6

## TO TAKE AWAY OUR CONDEMNATION

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died— more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Romans 8:34

The great conclusion to the suffering and death of Christ is this: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). To be “in Christ” means to be in relationship with Him by faith. Faith in Christ unites us to Christ so that His death becomes our death and His perfection becomes our perfection. Christ becomes our punishment (which we don’t have to bear) and our perfection (which we cannot perform). Faith is not the ground of our acceptance with God. Christ alone is. Faith unites us to Christ so that His righteousness is counted as ours. “We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified” (Galatians 2:16). Being “justified by faith” and being “justified . . . in Christ” (Galatians 2:17) are parallel terms. We are in Christ by faith, and therefore justified. When the question is asked, “Who is to condemn?” the answer is assumed. No one! Then the basis is declared: “Christ Jesus is the one who died!” The death of Christ secures our freedom from condemnation. It is as sure that we cannot be condemned as it is sure that Christ died. There is no double jeopardy in God’s court. We will not be condemned twice for the same offenses. Christ has died once for our sins. We will not be condemned for them. Condemnation is gone not because there isn’t any, but because it has already happened. But what about condemnation by the world? Is that not an answer to the question, “Who is to condemn?” Aren’t Christians condemned by the world? There have been many martyrs. The answer is that no one can condemn us successfully. Charges can be brought, but none will stick in the end. “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies” (Romans 8:33). It’s the same as when the Bible asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?” (Romans 8:35). The answer is not that these things don’t happen to Christians. The answer is: “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37). The world will bring its condemnation. They may even put their sword behind it. But we know that the highest court has already ruled in our favor. “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). No one successfully. If they reject us, He accepts us. If they hate us, He loves us. If they imprison us, He sets our spirits free. If they afflict us, He refines us by the fire. If they kill us, He makes it a passage to paradise. They cannot defeat us. Christ has died. Christ is risen. We are alive in Him. And in Him there is no condemnation. We are forgiven, and we are righteous. “And the righteous are bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1).

\*Today's content is an excerpt from John Piper's Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came To Die.



SATURDAY, MARCH 7

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-6

Pray for the people in your life that don't know Jesus.  
Pray that they would see the goodness of our Father and experience the salvation found  
in Christ. Pray that God would use you to be the answer to that prayer.



SUNDAY, MARCH 8

REST. REMEMBER. REFLECT.

Journal about your week with the Lord.



# MONDAY, MARCH 9

Read Psalm 61

The trials of life will crush you if you do not have a firm foundation in Christ. When the loved one passes away, when the economy crashes, when the relationship ends, when the disease returns, when the divorce splits the family, when the class gets failed, when the diagnosis comes back negative--where we place our trust determines how we face this world. If we take refuge in the shelter of God, no opposition can truly move us and no fear can cripple us. If we place our trust in ourselves, other people, or any other created thing and not the Creator Himself, we are left with a house built upon sand; we are easily swept away with the storms that life brings. But if we build our lives upon the Solid Rock of Christ, we have a lasting hope that endures all suffering and hardship.

Meditate on the immovable nature of God. Pray today, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy wounded side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Save from wrath and make me pure.

- Augustus Montague Toplady

The purpose of meditation is to enable us to hear God more clearly. Meditation is listening, sensing, heeding the life and light of Christ. This comes right to the heart of our faith. The life that pleases God is not a set of religious duties; it is to hear His voice and obey His word. Meditation opens the door to this way of living.

- Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline



TUESDAY, MARCH 10

That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him."

1 Corinthians 2:9

Part of the joy that we get to experience in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ is a changed heart. In fact, perhaps the greatest thing that we get is new desire, new purpose, and new vision for our lives. Take some time today to think about the person you want to be in 2 years. Who do you hope that you'll be and what do you hope to have achieved?

TODAY: Write a letter to yourself in 2 years.





WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

What good news it is that we don't have to save ourselves by our works! If it were our works that saved us we would be in an utterly hopeless situation. But God, in His great mercy and love, saves us by His work and His grace. What a weight-lifting, joy-giving truth. We don't have to work for it, we don't have to maintain it, we don't have to improve upon it. His grace is sufficient.

Reflect on the truth that you have been saved by grace through faith alone, not by your own works. How does this free us to truly love God and worship him with total surrender?



THURSDAY, MARCH 12

DISCIPLINE OF SOLITUDE

We're going to take a moment to talk about Solitude, which is likely the best context for Study and Prayer. Chaddick talks a lot about the city of LA, but it's interesting how similar the college campus can be to a big city. It seems like you're never alone. And if we don't find time to be alone, it's hard to be real. Solitude is the place where we don't have to impress anyone, we can just be with the Lord. Be encouraged by this short clip on why the Discipline of Solitude matters.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBfJ1OdICO8>

Reflection Questions:

Are you making time weekly to get away and be alone with God?

In your rhythm are you prone to be more alone, or prone to be more involved?

Why is it so hard to be alone with God?

Talk to someone in your Small Group about their alone time with God. Ask them what they do in hopes of getting a few ideas for your next alone time with God.



# FRIDAY, MARCH 13

## TO MAKE US HOLY, BLAMELESS, AND PERFECT

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.  
Hebrews 10:14

He has now reconciled [you] in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present  
you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.  
Colossians 1:22

Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened.  
For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.  
1 Corinthians 5:7

One of the greatest heartaches in the Christian life is the slowness of our change. We hear the summons of God to love Him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength (Mark 12:30). But do we ever rise to that totality of affection and devotion? We cry out regularly with the apostle Paul, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:24). We groan even as we take fresh resolves: “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own” (Philippians 3:12).

That very statement is the key to endurance and joy. “Christ Jesus has made me his own.” All my reaching and yearning and striving is not to belong to Christ (which has already happened), but to complete what is lacking in my likeness to Him. One of the greatest sources of joy and endurance for the Christian is knowing that in the imperfection of our progress we have already been perfected—and that this is owing to the suffering and death of Christ. “For by a single offering [namely, himself!] he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). This is amazing! In the same sentence he says we are “being sanctified” and we are already “perfected.” Being sanctified means that we are imperfect and in process. We are becoming holy—but are not yet fully holy. And it is precisely these—and only these—who are already perfected. The joyful encouragement here is that the evidence of our perfection before God is not our experienced perfection, but our experienced progress. The good news is that being on the way is proof that we have arrived. The Bible pictures this again in the old language of dough and leaven (yeast). In the picture, leaven is evil. We are the lump of dough. It says, “Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7). Christians are “unleavened.” There is no leaven—no evil. We are perfected. For this reason we are to “cleanse out the old leaven.” We have been made unleavened in Christ. So we should now become unleavened in practice. In other words, we should become what we are. The basis of all this? “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” The suffering of Christ secures our perfection so firmly that it is already now a reality. Therefore, we fight against our sin not simply to become perfect, but because we are. The death of Jesus is the key to battling our imperfections on the firm foundation of our perfection.

\*Today's content is an excerpt from John Piper's Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came To Die.



SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Read Matthew 7:7-12

What is it that you need today? Physically? Spiritually? Emotionally?  
Ask God to take care of your needs and then trust Him to take care of those needs.



SUNDAY, MARCH **15**

REST. REMEMBER. REFLECT.

Journal about your week with the Lord.



MONDAY, MARCH 16

Read Ephesians 2:1-9

What does the gospel tell us about God's grace? What does it tell us about our works? Ask yourself if you feel entitled, if you think you've earned God's favor by your good works. Take a moment to reflect on the implications of this verse. Our tendency is to think we are generally good people, but this passage tells us that apart from God's grace, we are dead in our sins. The beauty of the gospel is that God makes the dead come to life. We were enemies of God, but the gospel tells us that He has seated us with Christ, because of the great love that He had for us.

How will you stop relying on your works to please God? How will you accept His Grace?



TUESDAY, MARCH 17

Teach me your way oh Lord, that I may walk in your truth.

Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

Psalm 86:11

It is difficult to follow somebody you don't know. And when Jesus asks you to follow Him, He doesn't mean following blindly or being left in the dark. He wants you to know Him, His plan for the world, and His plan for your life. But that requires a willingness to hear what He has to say, and act on it. There may be nothing that a dad wants to hear more than "Teach me." God, being our Heavenly Father, desires to hear the same from us.

TODAY: Memorize Psalm 86:11



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

Read Ephesians 2:1-9

What does the gospel tell us about God's grace? What does it tell us about our works? Ask yourself if you feel entitled, if you think you've earned God's favor by your good works. Take a moment to reflect on the implications of this verse. Our tendency is to think we are generally good people, but this passage tells us that apart from God's grace, we are dead in our sins. The beauty of the gospel is that God makes the dead come to life. We were enemies of God, but the gospel tells us that He has seated us with Christ, because of the great love that He had for us.

How will you stop relying on your works to please God? How will you accept His Grace?





THURSDAY, MARCH 19

GOSPEL VIDEOS

Watch these videos to be reminded of the glorious grace of God towards us in the gospel. Here are three gospel videos to stir your affection again for Christ and what He's accomplished.

MATT PAPA GOSPEL VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4cL-Zcxa9M>

PROPOGANDA GOSPEL VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyYExp7apl4>

RC SPROUL GOSPEL VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lapqqQ45Q4w>

Reflection Questions:

What truth/sentences stood out to you in these videos?

What was a fresh perspective on the gospel you received from watching these videos?

Was there anything that God encouraged you with?

Is there any content you need to believe today about the gospel that you're not believing?



# FRIDAY, MARCH 20

## SO THAT WE MIGHT BELONG TO HIM

You also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead.

Romans 7:4

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

Acts 20:28

The ultimate question is not who you are but whose you are. Of course, many people think they are nobody's slave. They dream of total independence. Like a jellyfish carried by the tides feels free because it isn't fastened down with the bondage of barnacles. But Jesus had a word for people who thought that way. He said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." But they responded, "We . . . have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" So Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:32-34). The Bible gives no reality to fallen humans who are ultimately self-determining. There is no autonomy in the fallen world. We are governed by sin or governed by God. "You are slaves of the one whom you obey. . . . When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. . . . But now . . . you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God" (Romans 6:16, 20, 22). Most of the time we are free to do what we want. But we are not free to want what we ought. For that we need a new power based on a divine purchase. The power is God's. Which is why the Bible says, "Thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart" (Romans 6:17). God is the one who may "grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:25-26). And the purchase that unleashes this power is the death of Christ. "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). And what price did Christ pay for those who trust Him? "He obtained [them] with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Now we are free indeed. Not to be autonomous, but to want what is good. A whole new way of life opens to us when the death of Christ becomes the death of our old self. Relationship with the living Christ replaces rules. And the freedom of fruit-bearing replaces the bondage of law. "You also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God" (Romans 7:4). Christ suffered and died that we might be set free from law and sin and belong to Him. Here is where obedience ceases to be a burden and becomes the freedom of fruit-bearing. Remember, you are not your own. Whose will you be? If Christ's, then come and belong.

\*Today's content is an excerpt from John Piper's Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came To Die.



SATURDAY, MARCH **21**

Read Psalm 139:23-24

Pray toward personal repentance, confession, and healing of broken relationships.



SUNDAY, MARCH **22**

REST. REMEMBER. REFLECT.

Journal about your week with the Lord.



MONDAY, MARCH **23**

Read Isaiah chapter 53.

Many years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote about how our Savior would redeem His people. We often hear about how Jesus died for our sins, but if we're not careful it can start to lose its meaning. Take a moment to remember that Jesus paid a price for you.

How can you be thankful today for Christ's sacrifice? In light of Christ's work on the cross, how will you live differently?



## TUESDAY, MARCH 24

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God.  
Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.  
Hebrews 13:7

Though we often forget it, God has created us to be highly relational beings. His desire for us is to live life alongside one another- to encourage, help, laugh with, cry with, challenge and remind each other of who we are. There are some people that have sacrificed and served you selflessly that would be so encouraged by hearing you tell them the significance of their relationship to you. Maybe it's a friend, a sibling, a parent, or somebody who has mentored you. Let them know how thankful you are and ask how you can pray for them.

TODAY: Call a person who has had a big impact on your life, just to say thank you and hear how they're doing.



WEDNESDAY, MARCH **25**

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Paul thought that it was necessary, after 14 chapters, to remind the Corinthians that the gospel was of first importance. They knew this message, they had been living in the reality of the good news for a long time. And yet, Paul needed to remind them of the good news, to remind them what Christ had accomplished for them.

Today, think back to your story and what Jesus had done for you. Where do you need to be reminded of the good news? How have you begun to forget?



THURSDAY, MARCH 26

RETHINKING EVANGELISM

This Lent season is a great time to engage our friends and family with the gospel. Most people are interested in coming to church on Easter, even if it is the one time a year they come. God wants us to engage in evangelism with desperation for Him to move. We need to pray and fast and beg God to save our friends. May this video from Francis Chan encourage us to see outreach from God's perspective and may it spur us on to have courage to engage our lost friends.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sP5mepLMSTc>

Reflection Questions:

Do you struggle to believe God can do the impossible?

Why do you think we lack the courage to share the gospel with those around us?

List 5 people you can invite to church on Easter.

Pray that God would do a supernatural work in their hearts,  
a do a miracle of raising the dead.





FRIDAY, MARCH 27

TO ENABLE US TO LIVE FOR CHRIST AND NOT OURSELVES

He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves  
but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

2 Corinthians 5:15

It troubles a lot of people that Christ died to exalt Christ. Boiled down to its essence, 2 Corinthians 5:15 says Christ died for us that we might live for Him. In other words, He died for us so that we make much of Him. Bluntly, Christ died for Christ. Now that is true. It's not a word trick. The very essence of sin is that we have failed to glorify God—which includes failing to glorify his Son (Romans 3:23). But Christ died to bear that sin and to free us from it. So He died to bear the dishonor that we had heaped on Him by our sin. He died to turn this around. Christ died for the glory of Christ. The reason this troubles people is that it sounds vain. It doesn't seem like a loving thing to do. So it seems to turn the suffering of Christ into the very opposite of what the Bible says it is, namely, the supreme act of love. But in fact it's both. Christ's dying for His own glory and His dying to show love are not only both true, they are both the same. Christ is unique. No one else can act this way and call it love. Christ is the only human in the universe who is also God and therefore infinitely valuable. He is infinitely beautiful in all his moral perfections. He is infinitely wise and just and good and strong. "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Hebrews 1:3). To see Him and know Him is more satisfying than having all that earth can offer. Those who knew Him best spoke this way: Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ. (Philippians 3:7-8) "Christ died that we might live for Him" does not mean "that we might help Him." "[God is not] served by human hands, as though he needed anything" (Acts 17:25). Neither is Christ: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). What Christ died for is not that we might help Him, but that we might see and savor Him as infinitely valuable. He died to wean us from poisonous pleasures and enthrall us with the pleasures of His beauty. In this way we are loved, and He is honored. These are not competing aims. They are one. Jesus said to His disciples that He had to go away so that He could send the Holy Spirit, the Helper (John 16:7). Then He told them what the Helper would do when He came: "He will glorify me" (John 16:14). Christ died and rose so that we would see and magnify Him. This is the greatest help in the world. This is love. The most loving prayer Jesus ever prayed was this: "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory" (John 17:24). For this Christ died. This is love—suffering to give us everlasting enjoyment, namely Himself.

\*Today's content is an excerpt from John Piper's Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came To Die.



SATURDAY, MARCH **28**

Read Hebrews 13:7-8, 17-19

Pray for your church leaders -- that the Father would protect and guard them from the enemy's attacks. Pray that Grand Avenue Baptist Church would hear clearly from the Holy Spirit and be brave enough to follow in obedience.



SUNDAY, MARCH **29**

REST. REMEMBER. REFLECT.

Journal about your week with the Lord.



## MONDAY, MARCH 30

Read Matthew's account of the crucifixion in chapter 27, verses 27 through 56. Focus on what you read, and imagine being present as the events unfold, as if it were happening right in front of you.

How can the gospel be a message of good news and hope if it comes out of such a hopeless and painful event? Why did Jesus have to die?



TUESDAY, MARCH 31

Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing  
of the Lord your God which He has given you.

Deuteronomy 16:17

Because the greatest gift has been given to us in Christ--a relationship with our Heavenly Father--God asks us to be like Him and give generously. It is easy to forget that as a Father, God desires to create a giving heart within us out of the generosity that He's first shown us in Christ. The truth is, we don't need all the material things to enjoy the love of Christ. And what's more, we can show others that Christ loves us when we give generously like Him. It is greater to give than to receive.

TODAY: Go through your closet and donate everything you haven't worn in the last year to Helping Hand Ministry at Grand. Pray over the donation and ask God to use it for the Gospel & the Kingdom.



## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

Read Matthew 27:27-56 as if you were there, a part of the crowd. What do you observe about Jesus, and what do you observe about the crowd? How do you feel as you see Jesus marching through the streets, bloodied and bruised, being yelled at and scorned?

Today, as we approach Easter, begin to reflect on the truth of the gospel. The reality that Jesus--God in human form--chose to give everything and become sin for us is remarkable. Before we can truly celebrate the beautiful victory of the resurrection, we must fully identify with the depth of darkness from which Jesus has saved us.

How have you begun to forget what the gospel has done in your life? Even through this Lent season, how have you forgotten your own story of redemption?



THURSDAY, APRIL **2**

BEHOLD THE CROSS OF JESUS

You're going to need to set aside an hour for this video.

This is the opening sermon of the Passion Conference of 2014 by their leader Louie Giglio. 60,000 college students gathered in Atlanta for this conference and this is the first thing he wanted to tell them. Without spiritual eyes to see what God has accomplished we will go through life simply hearing about the Lord without experiencing the Lord. Our prayer for you today would be that God reminds you of what He's done and you see with fresh eyes how great a Savior Jesus is and how great a cost He paid for us to know Him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ui67JMLUtbs>

Reflection Questions:

How can we make His Name and His Renown the desire of our hearts?

What does it mean to have the eyes of your heart be enlightened?

Where do you want the Lord to reveal Himself to you?



# FRIDAY, APRIL 3

## TO SHOW THAT THE WORST EVIL IS MEANT BY GOD FOR GOOD

In this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus . . . both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Acts 4:27-28

The most profound thing we can say about suffering and evil is that, in Jesus Christ, God entered into it and turned it for good. The origin of evil is shrouded in mystery. The Bible does not take us as far as we might like to go. Rather it says, “The secret things belong to . . . God” (Deuteronomy 29:29). The heart of the Bible is not an explanation of where evil came from, but a demonstration of how God enters into it and turns it for the very opposite—everlasting righteousness and joy. There were pointers in the Scriptures all along the way that it would be like this for the Messiah. Joseph, the son of Jacob, was sold into slavery in Egypt. He seemed abandoned for seventeen years. But God was in it and made him ruler in Egypt, so that in a great famine he could save the very ones who sold him. The story is summed up in a word from Joseph to his brothers: “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20). A foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, forsaken in order to save. Or consider Christ’s ancestry. Once God was the only king in Israel. But the people rebelled and asked for a human king: “No! But there shall be a king over us” (1 Samuel 8:19). Later they confessed, “We have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king” (1 Samuel 12:19). But God was in it. From the line of these kings He brought Christ into the world. The sinless Savior had His earthly origin in sin as He came to save sinners. But the most astonishing thing is that evil and suffering were Christ’s appointed way of victory over evil and suffering. Every act of treachery and brutality against Jesus was sinful and evil. But God was in it. The Bible says, “Jesus [was] delivered up [to death] according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). The lash on His back, the thorns on His head, the spit on His cheek, the bruises on His face, the nails in His hands, the spear in His side, the scorn of rulers, the betrayal of His friend, the desertion by His disciples—these were all the result of sin, and all designed by God to destroy the power of sin. “Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [did] whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place” (Acts 4:27-28). There is no greater sin than to hate and kill the Son of God. There was no greater suffering nor any greater innocence than the suffering and innocence of Christ. Yet God was in it all. “It was the will of the LORD to crush him” (Isaiah 53:10). His aim, through evil and suffering, was to destroy evil and suffering. “With his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Is not then the passion of Jesus Christ meant by God to show the world that there is no sin and no evil too great that God, in Christ, cannot bring from it everlasting righteousness and joy? The very suffering that we caused became the hope of our salvation. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

\*Today’s content is an excerpt from John Piper’s Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came To Die.





SATURDAY, APRIL 4

Read Romans 12:1-2

Pray for what God wants of your life today.

Worship Him not only through your songs and prayers, but through your life today.



SUNDAY, APRIL 5

EASTER SUNDAY

He is risen. Still today. Celebrate! Pray before you go to church with your friends and family that your mind will not be focused on the usual things; who's there, what song is being sung, how the pastor delivers his sermon, or how hungry you are.

Pray that all your focus is on Him, the one seated at the right of God. He alone is worthy, He alone has defeated death. He alone is to be worshiped!

Worship unhindered!

