

Lent Devotional Guide: 40 Days of Reflection

A gentle daily path through repentance, trust, service and the way of the cross. Take a few quiet minutes with each entry, read the passage in your Bible, and make room for an honest response.

A note on the Scripture: the verse summaries in this guide are plain-English paraphrases, not quotations from a particular Bible translation. Read each passage in your preferred Bible for its full wording and context.

Many Western traditions observe Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday and do not count Sundays among the forty penitential weekdays. Other Christian traditions calculate or observe Lent differently, and some do not observe it.

This guide offers forty numbered entries for use on any days you choose. Day 1 is Ash Wednesday; no calendar date is prefilled because its date changes each year.

01 Joel 2:12-13	Return with your whole heart Paraphrase: God calls people to return sincerely, with honest hearts, because mercy is gracious and abundant. Reflect: What would an honest return to God look like today?
02 Psalm 51:10-12	A renewed heart Paraphrase: The psalmist asks God to create a clean heart, restore a steady spirit and renew the joy of being held by God. Reflect: What part of your inner life needs renewal?
03 Micah 6:6-8	Practise what matters Paraphrase: God seeks lives shaped by justice, faithful love and humble companionship with God, rather than outward display alone. Reflect: Which of these three ways can you practise today?
04 Psalm 139:23-24	Let God search your heart Paraphrase: The prayer invites God to know the heart, reveal harmful ways and lead the worshipper along a life-giving path. Reflect: What might you be willing to see more clearly?
05 Matthew 6:1-6	Practise quiet devotion Paraphrase: Jesus teaches that giving, prayer and devotion are not performances; the Father sees what is done sincerely and in secret. Reflect: What quiet practice could nurture your faith?
06 Matthew 6:16-18	Choose a meaningful fast Paraphrase: Jesus cautions against making a fast a public display and points towards a sincere practice known to God. Reflect: What might you set aside to make room for attention to God?

07 Matthew 4:1-11	Meet temptation with trust Paraphrase: In the wilderness, Jesus refuses to make power, appetite or spectacle the centre of his calling, remaining faithful to God. Reflect: Which pressure draws you away from what matters most?
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Trust in the wilderness

08 Deuteronomy 8:2-3	Remember the source of life Paraphrase: Israel's wilderness years revealed dependence on God, who provided what the people needed beyond bread alone. Reflect: What sustains you beyond material provision?
09 Proverbs 3:5-6	Trust beyond your own view Paraphrase: Wisdom invites trust in God rather than self-reliance, and asks that God be acknowledged in every part of life. Reflect: Where might you practise trust without having every answer?
10 Psalm 23:1-4	Walk through the valley Paraphrase: The shepherd's care brings provision, direction and presence, even when the path leads through a frightening valley. Reflect: What helps you remember you are not alone?
11 Isaiah 43:1-3	Held through deep waters Paraphrase: God speaks of belonging and presence, promising to remain with the people through waters and fire. Reflect: Which difficulty could you bring honestly to God?
12 Lamentations 3:22-24	Begin again with mercy Paraphrase: Even amid grief, the poet remembers that God's compassion has not run out and that new mercy comes with the morning. Reflect: What small sign of mercy can you notice today?
13 Matthew 6:25-34	Release tomorrow's worry Paraphrase: Jesus points to God's care for creation and encourages his listeners to seek God's reign rather than be consumed by tomorrow. Reflect: What concern can you place in God's care for today?
14 Matthew 11:28-30	Receive rest for the soul Paraphrase: Jesus welcomes those who are weary and burdened, offering a way of learning marked by gentleness and rest. Reflect: What burden could you bring to Jesus in prayer?
15 John 15:1-5	Abide and bear fruit Paraphrase: Jesus describes his followers as branches who depend on him for life and fruitfulness, rather than striving alone. Reflect: What helps you stay connected to the source of life?
16 Psalm 46:1-3, 10	Be still amid uncertainty Paraphrase: The psalm names God as refuge when the world shakes and calls the people to stop, be still and recognise God's presence. Reflect: Where might stillness make space for trust?
17 Romans 8:31-39	Nothing separates you from love Paraphrase: Paul proclaims that hardship, danger and even death cannot separate God's people from the love revealed in Christ. Reflect: What would change if you trusted this love today?
18 Mark 4:35-41	Trust in the storm Paraphrase: When a storm frightens the disciples, Jesus brings calm and asks them to consider the trust when the world overlooks them. Reflect: What storm are you facing, and what support do you need?

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Love made visible

19 Luke 10:25-37	Become a neighbour Paraphrase: Jesus tells of a wounded traveller helped by an unexpected neighbour, making mercy a practice that crosses social boundaries. Reflect: Who might need practical care from you this week?
20 John 13:1-17	Take the place of a servant Paraphrase: Jesus washes his friends' feet and gives them an example of humble love, showing that leadership can serve. Reflect: What unnoticed act of service could you offer?
21 Matthew 5:1-12	Notice the blessed among us Paraphrase: Jesus calls people who grieve, seek justice, show mercy and make peace blessed, even when the world overlooks them. Reflect: Which quality in this teaching do you want to grow in?
22 Luke 6:27-36	Love beyond easy boundaries Paraphrase: Jesus asks his hearers to love enemies, do good and give generously, reflecting the generous kindness of God. Reflect: What boundary might compassionate love ask you to cross?
23 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, 13	Let love shape your actions Paraphrase: Paul says remarkable gifts mean little without love, whose patient and generous character outlasts even knowledge and hope. Reflect: Which quality of love can you put into action?
24 Philippians 2:1-11	Choose humility Paraphrase: Christ's self-giving humility becomes a pattern for community life, where people seek one another's good rather than status. Reflect: Where could you make room for another person's good?
25 James 2:14-18	Let faith become practical Paraphrase: James challenges faith that offers kind words but no help, calling believers to make care visible through action. Reflect: What practical need can you respond to today?
26 Mark 10:46-52	Listen to the overlooked Paraphrase: Jesus stops for a blind beggar whom the crowd tries to silence, listens to his request and restores his sight. Reflect: Whose voice might you need to hear more carefully?
27 John 8:1-11	Choose mercy over judgement Paraphrase: Faced with a woman condemned by others, Jesus interrupts the rush to punish and calls each person to honest self-examination. Reflect: How can humility change the way you respond to another person?
28 Luke 19:1-10	Let welcome transform you Paraphrase: Jesus welcomes Zacchaeus, and the encounter moves him towards repair, generosity and a changed way of living. Reflect: Is there a relationship or harm you could begin to repair?
29 Matthew 25:31-40	Meet Christ in the vulnerable Paraphrase: Jesus identifies himself with people who are hungry, isolated, ill or imprisoned, making care for them a response to him. Reflect: Whose need could you notice and respond to this week?

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The way of the cross

30 Luke 9:23-25	Follow the costly path Paraphrase: Jesus calls those who follow him to let go of self-centred living, take up their cross daily and find life in him. Reflect: What might faithful self-giving look like in your circumstances?
31 Mark 14:32-42	Pray honestly in anguish Paraphrase: In Gethsemane, Jesus names his distress and entrusts himself to the Father's will, while asking his friends to stay and watch. Reflect: What honest words do you need to bring into prayer?
32 Isaiah 53:3-6	Remember the suffering servant Paraphrase: Isaiah portrays a servant who bears suffering and carries the wounds of others, a passage Christians have long read alongside Jesus' passion. Reflect: How can you respond with care to another's pain?
33 Matthew 26:6-13	Offer what you can Paraphrase: A woman pours costly perfume on Jesus, and he receives her act of devotion despite criticism from those around him. Reflect: What meaningful gift of attention or care can you offer?
34 Matthew 26:36-46	Stay present in the garden Paraphrase: Jesus grieves in Gethsemane and asks his friends to keep watch; he meets his coming suffering with prayer and resolve. Reflect: How can you remain present with someone who is hurting?
35 Matthew 27:27-31	Hold dignity in suffering Paraphrase: The soldiers mock and harm Jesus, exposing the cruelty of power and the vulnerability he endures. Reflect: How might you uphold the dignity of someone being mocked or excluded?
36 Luke 23:32-43	Offer mercy even here Paraphrase: On the cross, Jesus responds to mockery with mercy and offers hope to a condemned man who turns to him. Reflect: Where might mercy interrupt a cycle of blame?
37 John 19:25-30	Entrust one another to care Paraphrase: From the cross, Jesus attends to his mother and beloved disciple, entrusting them to one another's care before his death. Reflect: Who might need your steady care or companionship?
38 John 20:1-18	Hear your name in hope Paraphrase: Mary comes to the tomb in grief, then recognises the risen Jesus when he speaks her name and sends her to share the news. Reflect: Where might hope be meeting you in the midst of grief?
39 Luke 24:13-35	Recognise hope on the road Paraphrase: Two grieving travellers find their understanding renewed as a stranger opens the Scriptures and shares a meal with them. Reflect: When have conversation or shared food helped you see differently?
40 John 20:19-23	Receive peace and be sent Paraphrase: The risen Jesus comes to frightened disciples with peace, shows them his wounds and sends them to continue his work. Reflect: What peaceful or healing action might you carry into the world?

A closing prayer

God of Christ, guide us in repentance, strengthen our trust, and teach us to serve with compassion. Keep us near to Christ in suffering and hope, and send us to share your peace. Amen.

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