

EASTER

Lenten Challenge 2021



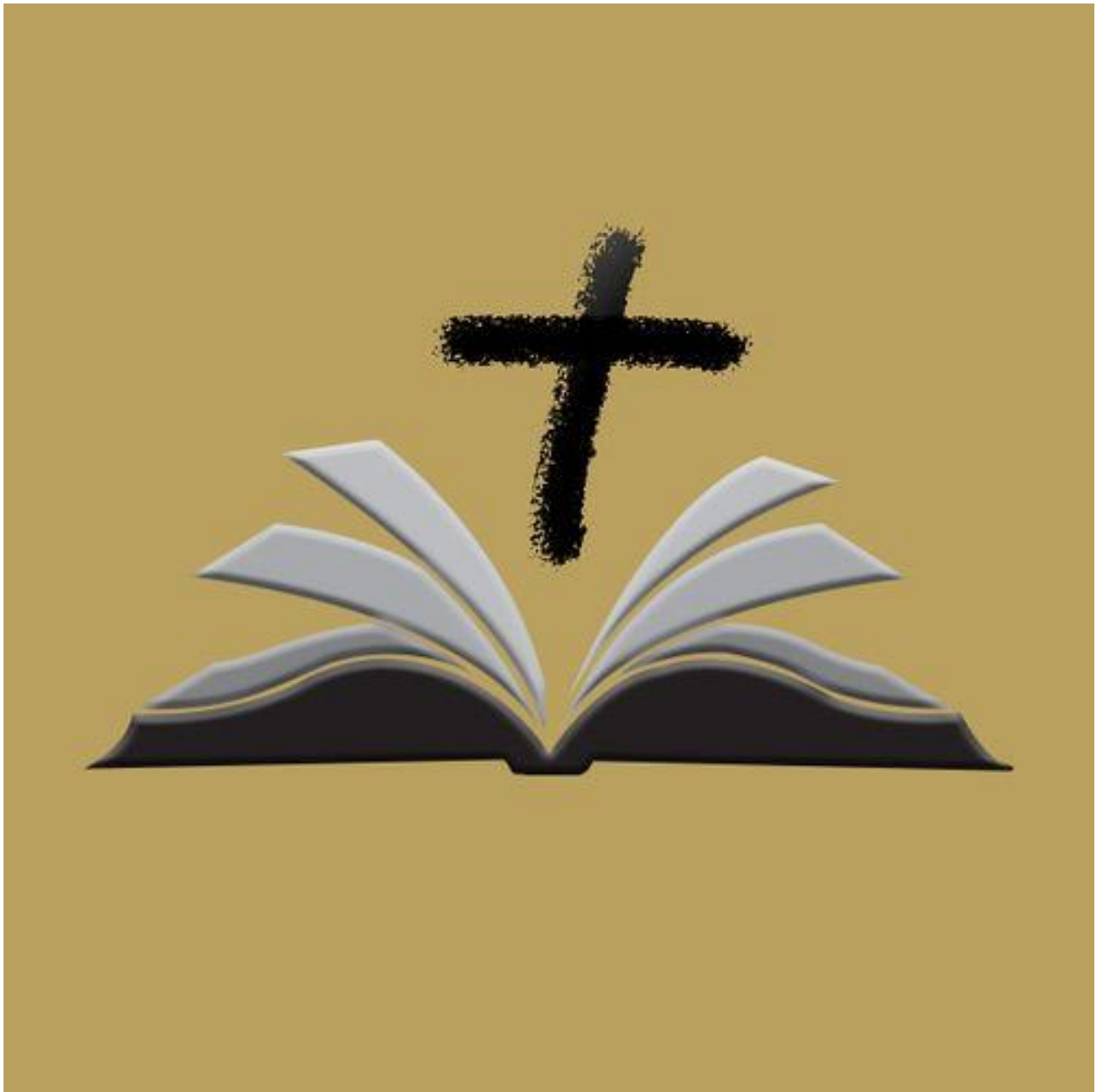
Lent is the 40 days (not including Sundays) from Ash Wednesday February 1st to the Saturday before Easter - April 3rd. Lent is often described as a time of preparation and an opportunity to go deeper with God. This means that it's a time for personal reflection that prepares people's hearts and minds for Good Friday and Easter. By observing the 40 days of **Lent**, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. **Lent** is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities.

Fasting, or giving something up, is a very common practice during Lent. The idea is that giving up something that's a regular part of life, like eating dessert or scrolling through Facebook, can be a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice. That time can also be replaced with more time connecting with God. Giving money or doing something good for others is a way to respond to God's grace, generosity and love. For example, some people spend time volunteering or donate money they would normally use to buy something, like their morning coffee.

40 for 40 (February 17 - April 3)

We want to extend a few challenges for you that will span the full Lent Season, from Wednesday, February 17 through to Saturday April 3.

It is a time of reflection and of asking for forgiveness, and when Christians prepare to celebrate Jesus's resurrection at the feast of Easter, which comes at the very end of Lent.





Get rid of 40 things for 40 days

This challenge is to give up or get rid of something on each day of Lent you do not need. This is like a Spiritual Spring-cleaning. Think of purging yourself of the junk you have accumulated. It may need to go in the trash or be given to a charity (or even a neighbor). Enjoy the freedom that comes with minimizing each day.

Now onto **Week-Specific Challenges** for Lent

Here are some ideas for you to consider for each week during the season of Lent.

Feb. 17-20



Stop the Binge

Binge-watching, binge-eating, binge-reading, binge-everything has consumed so many of us during 2020. Some have binged TV shows. Others have consumed by the news or chocolate or whatever. Whatever you have been binging on, give it up for four days to kick-off Lent 2021. After the four days, ask yourself this question: Would life be better without the binge? If so, you can develop a new healthy habit of moderation in all things.

Feb. 22-27



After 8:00 PM

Our bodies are not designed to eat around the clock. For this challenge, simply give up any eating after 8:00 p.m. You may discover this simple practice lightens your load, increases the quality of sleep, and helps you wake up with a healthier energy level. As always, if you have medical conditions please consult your doctor or continue the best medical advice. For the rest of us, giving up the late evening snacks will be a very good thing. Let your late-night food this week be food for your soul after 8:00 p.m. instead of those cookies.

Mar. 1-6



Creature Comforts

Creature comforts are very personally determined. Webster Dictionary defines creature comforts this way: “*something that gives bodily comfort*”. It might be a daily Starbucks or that regular pizza delivery. During this week’s challenge, identify one personalized creature-comfort and sacrifice it for the week. In its place, seek spiritual comfort in Christ.

Mar. 8-13



Ditch your Device

Possibly the most straightforward and difficult Lenten Challenge is this one: After dinner, no devices consuming your time. Actually, *be* with the people in the room *while* you are in the room with people. It will be good for all. One exception for this challenge: If you are using your device to connect meaningfully with people, that is commendable. Or maybe connecting with our Wednesday Zoom bible study. We want to challenge you to consider “connection” as more than Facebook, Instagram, etc. Use your device for an actual conversation. Use some of your newly found time to invest in a conversation with God. A dear friend of ours has a rule in their home - no devices of any type after a certain hour - that is parents and kids - everyone!

Mar. 15-20



Trade Watching for Walking

Watching shows and movies on our devices and televisions has skyrocketed. In 2007, Netflix had 7.5 million subscribers. Today there are more than 203 million. An estimated 34 million new subscribers were added in 2020 (16 million during the first two months of COVID quarantine). Viewing went up virtually everywhere. News organizations, network shows, even the first “no fans allowed” golf competition set all time viewing records. Folks we are watching too much, too often. Our challenge to you is this: Trade watching for walking. Get outside and walk. Wave at your neighbors. Give yourself and dog some exercise.

Mar. 22-27



Victimization

Everyone has lost something or worse still - someone in 2020. It may have been a simple freedom, a political hope, a loved one, a celebration, a family gathering...we all experienced loss. As people lost, many view themselves as victims. Victims of disease. Victims of regulatory guidelines. Victims of...you fill in the blank. Too many of us have forgotten the power of “being grateful” for everything that the Lord has already done for us. So this week, let’s change our focus and when you wake up immediately begin to thank the Lord for life and who He is to you - then think about your family and friends - your church and thank

Mar. 29 - Apr. 3



No Politics

Easter Sunday is coming. It is our prayer that many people will make this their first return to worship services in about a year. During 2020, our nation experienced one of the most politically divided years historically. Some political posts have created deep relational rifts between Christians who've loved each other for decades. As we come back together—united in Christ—we need to make sure only Jesus sits on the throne of our hearts and calls us to unity. For this week, bridle your tongue politically as you prepare for Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Remember to watch our website for the upcoming announcements of our special services during Holy Week