



# VICE & VIRTUE

STUDY GUIDE

# VICE & VIRTUE



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PROMONTORY  
LAKE ERROCK  
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**Central Community Church App**



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# INTRODUCTION

## L E N T

Lent is a season that disturbs many people. Maybe that includes you. Among Protestant Christian communities, Lent can either be seen as a "graceless," "harsh," "legalistic" season on the Christian calendar or, on the other hand, trivialized into a time to "pick something to give up," like a seasonal spiritual diet plan. Both these characterizations miss the mark.

Lent is a time of "re-initiation" for the Christian in which we come back to the essential events that make us, as the church fathers would say, "little Christs" in the first place: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and our identification with those events. We have been "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20) and we have been "raised up with him" (Col. 2:12).

Lent is infused with grace and love, not opposed to it. Grace is a free gift to those who are in need and Lent is the season to know that need. It is a season to sense again the path of the Christian life and to recognize that an essential part of that journey is dying with Jesus.

Lent might not be something you're familiar with or overly comfortable with. So why do we make a point of emphasizing it every year at Central?

Because Lent affords us an annual opportunity to be laser-focused on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, to contemplate the cost that Jesus paid for our salvation and the sufficiency of His sacrifice. And that is something worth emphasizing.

The word Lent derives from an Old English word for *spring* and *lengthen*. Lent was originally a preparation period for those pursuing baptism but quickly became a season for the church as a whole to symbolically follow Jesus into the wilderness.

The 40 days of Lent leading up to Easter (excluding Sundays which are feast days) draw on the biblical parallels of the flood narrative (Gen. 6-8), the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, Moses receiving the Law of God at Sinai (Ex. 24), Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19), and – most significantly – the fasting and temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4, Mark 1, Luke 4).

*"It is written,  
"Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."*

**JESUS (MATTHEW 4:4)**

Lent is a time of disruption – to break from our normal routines – to go into the wilderness ourselves in self-sacrifice and self-denial. **We do this, not to earn anything from God, but to empty ourselves of lesser things in order to fill ourselves with the greater things of the gospel.**

Whereas Advent is a season of ever-increasing light as we await the incarnation of Jesus, Lent is a season of ever-increasing darkness in approach of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Observing Lent affords us an intentional opportunity to remind ourselves that the resurrection only came after the crucifixion. **Celebrating the resurrection of Jesus begins with embracing His suffering—and Lent is the opportunity for the church to do both.**

Some think that Lent strikes an unnecessarily somber tone. But when practiced rightly, it actually invites us into a deeper hope (this is referred to as *bright sadness*) and culminates in deeper joy.

**When we prepare ourselves for Easter by entering into the sorrow and pain that preceded it, the joy is greater and gratitude deeper for having followed Jesus into the wilderness.**

# ASH WEDNESDAY

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE DUST

*"By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."*

**GENESIS 3:19**

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. There are numerous instances in the Old Testament where someone would pray in sackcloth and ashes. Rending one's garments and putting on sackcloth was a symbol of mourning; ashes, a symbol of repentance.

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of ash being placed in the shape of the cross on the participant's forehead (in our Ash Wednesday services we place it on the hand), with the words, "Repent, and believe in the gospel" or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" spoken as they're administered. This vivid imagery represents the heart behind the day and entire season of Lent: *We are sinners, we will die some day, and we desperately need gospel-grace.*

**C.S. LEWIS**

*Christianity tells people to repent and promises them forgiveness. It therefore has nothing (as far as I know) to say to people who do not know they have done anything to repent of and who do not feel that they need any forgiveness. It is after you have realized that there is a real Moral Law, and a Power behind the Law, and that you have broken that law and put yourself wrong with that Power—it is after all this, and not a moment sooner, that Christianity begins to talk.*

**PSALM 51:1-2**

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!*

## PRAYER

Dear Jesus, it's Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. For the next forty days we have the privilege of fixing our gaze on you—the Author and Perfecter of our faith. For your glory and our growth, we ask you to overwhelm us with fresh mercies and irrepressible grace in the coming weeks.

Don't let this be a typical Lenten season, Jesus. Saturate and empower it with the gospel. It's all about you, Jesus. It is all about your finished work—not our constant failings and vain promises of doing better and doing more. Whatever fasting we may choose to practice, may it be as a betrothed Bride, not as gloomy hypocrites. Our deepest repentance is always born out of seeing more of your beauty, more of the gospel, more of you, Jesus.

Indeed, Jesus, we begin Lent today anticipating our wedding, not our funeral. The law has been fulfilled and judgment is complete; the dowry has been paid in full and our wedding dress is your righteousness; the invitations have been sent out and the date has been secured. We praise, bless, and adore you.

Over these next forty days, intensify our hunger and fuel our hope. Break us that you might beautify us. Increase our love for holiness as you supersize our love for your glory. Free us from our idols as you reveal their emptiness and silliness in comparison with your beauty and bounty. We pray in your exalted and worship-worthy name.

Amen.

## ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES | MARCH 5

**CHILLIWACK: 6.00PM**

**PROMONTORY: 7.00PM**

**HARRISON: 6.00PM**

A 45 minute time of singing, readings, prayer, silent reflection, and confession. All ages are welcome, activity pages will be available for the kids.





# WEEKLY FASTS

## EMPTYING + FILLING

We see Lent as a gift, not a law, and weekly fasts throughout the season of Lent as an opportunity to commune with Jesus more intentionally. Fasting isn't only the neglecting of something but replacing and filling ourselves with a better thing – the best thing: Jesus.

Fasting throughout Lent creates an opportunity to turn off some of the clutter, busyness, noise, comforts, and distractions we're accustomed to in order to go into the wilderness with Jesus more intentionally and dwell on His sacrifice in the lead up to Easter.

Fasting from food has been the traditional practice but in our context we feast on all kinds of things worth weaning ourselves from and there's no better time of year to do that than in the lead up to the cross of Christ and all He sacrificed for us.

There are 40 fasting days in Lent but 46 days in the season of Lent. That's because Lent consists of feasting as well as fasting. You fast for six days, Monday-Saturday, and then Sundays (the day of the Resurrection) are feast days.

Each fast corresponds with a vice and virtue and creates a formative opportunity to put the vice to death and foster the Kingdom virtue.

Ultimately, the goal is to give up comforts, or in some cases, vices that we are prone to run to for distraction, control, and meaning, in order to focus on and have our lives formed by the greater thing, God and His Gospel.

# WEEKLY FASTS

## EMPTYING + FILLING

- WEEK 1: Fast from **Glory & Status Seeking**  
Practice the Kingdom Virtue of **Sacrificial Service**
- WEEK 2: Fast from **Non-Essential Purchases**  
Practice the Kingdom Virtue of **Generosity**
- WEEK 3: Fast from **Media & Triggers for Lust & Sexual Temptation**  
Practice the Kingdom Virtue of **Chastity through Self-Control**
- WEEK 4: Fast from **Words & Actions that Tear Down**  
Practice the Kingdom Virtue of **Patience through Prayer & Reconciliation**
- WEEK 5: Fast from **Excess**  
Practice the Kingdom Virtue of **Temperance by Forging Patterns of Self-Control**
- WEEK 6: Fast from **Social Media**  
Practice the Kingdom Virtue of **Encouragement & Providing Help to Others**
- WEEK 7: Fast from **TV, Movies, Scrolling, and Procrastination**  
Practice the Kingdom Virtue of **True Rest**

# WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

## VICE & VIRTUE

The weeks of this guide can be used for personal reflection and will also function as our Life Group Study Guide throughout our *Lent: Vice & Virtue* series. Each entry includes the sermon text, a brief explanation, reflection questions, a corresponding weekly fast, and suggested additional reading to meditate on throughout the week.

The *Seven Deadly Sins*, or what this guide will refer to as *Capital Vices*, are a grouping of sins within the teachings of Christianity. “Capital” comes from the Latin word for head (*caput*), meaning source, like the head of a river. These sins have long been considered capital sins not because they are the worst, but because they are gateway sins through which all others flow.

Dorothy Sayers called capital vices “well-heads from which all sinful behaviour ultimately springs . . . the seven roots of sinfulness.” But the seven vices should also be seen as deeply ingrained, character-shaping habits of the heart. This insight is captured by the language of *virtue and vice*.

In our day, these vices are often seen as virtues – celebrating with pride our disordered love. While “sin” and “vice” are not popular concepts, removing sin from our language does not remove the reality that the wages of sin is still death.

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul used the language of “*putting off*” the old-self, dying to our sinful nature, and “*putting on*” the new-self – the process of transformation of our character from vice to virtue (Eph. 4:22-24).

The Apostle Peter tells us to “*make every effort*” to supplement our faith with virtue (2 Peter 1:5). Therefore, each week of Lent we will identify a particular vice in our lives that we are called to put to death and *make every effort* through repentance, spiritual disciplines, and Holy Spirit-empowered grace to replace it with the opposing kingdom virtue.

**WEEK 1: PRIDE // HUMILITY**

**WEEK 2: GREED // GENEROSITY**

**WEEK 3: LUST // CHASTITY**

**WEEK 4: WRATH // PATIENCE**

**WEEK 5: GLUTTONY // TEMPERANCE**

**WEEK 6: ENVY // CHARITY**

**WEEK 7: SLOTHFULNESS // DILIGENCE**

You are invited to embark on the well-worn path of historic, biblical Christianity by mediating on, wrestling with, and addressing the capital vices and replacing them with kingdom virtues through the season of Lent, following Jesus into the wilderness, resisting the devil, being ministered to by God’s Word, and filled with the Holy Spirit.



# WEEK 1

PRIDE // HUMILITY

# WEEK 1

## PRIDE // HUMILITY

### JAMES 4:6-7

*But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

### C.S. LEWIS, MERE CHRISTIANITY

*According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.*

There was pride in heaven. What hope is there for us on earth?

If the capital vices and the fruit they bear were a tree, pride would be the roots and trunk of the tree – from which every other sin stems from. Pride is the root or underlying cause of all sin. Proverbs 16:18 tells us that pride goes before destruction. First comes pride, then comes everything else that leads a person to destruction. Therefore, it makes sense to start our study with this root-vice – that existed in Adam and Eve when they pridefully chose their way over God's, and has existed in every human heart since – including yours.

Historically, *vainglory* has often been listed as one of the seven vices and *pride* has been seen as an overarching root of all of them. While pride and vainglory are distinct from each other, they are two sides of the same coin. Pride is a distorted, excessive sense of self-importance and feeling of superiority; vainglory is the excessive and disordered desire for recognition and approval from others.

What makes pride particularly heinous is that it sets itself in opposition to God. God's Word tells us that He is our source; pride tells us that we are the source of our own lives – and the more we believe that, the more we remove ourselves from reality. Pride is the delusion that I know better than God and placing myself above God. This is why our text tells us that God opposes the proud; but there is hope because He gives grace to the humble (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

Therefore, Christians are called to the kingdom virtue of humility. Humility keeps us from pridefully imagining ourselves to be better lords of our own lives on the one hand and humility's counterfeits: self-deprecation and self-hatred on the other. We can only think too much of ourselves if we diminish God and elevate ourselves. When we think too poorly of ourselves we are forgetting how beloved by God we are, as evidenced most clearly through His Son Jesus.

Our hope rests in the fact that our justification doesn't come from self but the cross of Christ. And it is at the cross that we see God and ourselves rightly, where there is no room for pride and humility is the only fitting response.

#### **C.S. LEWIS, MERE CHRISTIANITY**

*Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.*

#### **TIMOTHY KELLER, CENTER CHURCH**

*Our natural condition under sin is to be "glory empty" – starved for significance, honor, and a sense of worth. Sin makes us feel superior and overconfident (because we are trying to prove to ourselves and others that we are significant) and inferior and underconfident (because at a deep level we feel guilty and insecure). Some people's glory emptiness primarily takes the form of bravado and evident pride; for others, it takes the form of self-deprecation and self-loathing. Most of us are wracked by both impulses.... When the gospel changes us...it humbles us before anyone, telling us we are sinners saved only by grace. But it also emboldens us before anyone, telling us we are loved and honored by the only eyes in the universe that really count.... The gospel makes us neither self-confident nor self-disdaining but gives us boldness and humility that can increase together.*

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Pride, vanity, and narcissism have been sinful issues of the heart throughout the ages. Does our day and age lend itself more than ever to this character-shaping vice?
- Discuss how understanding ourselves in light of God and the gospel roots out pride on the one hand and self-loathing on the other and leads to humility?
- How can you “put off” pride and “put on” humility this week?

## WEEKLY FAST

### **Fast from Glory & Status Seeking in your heart & through your actions.**

- Refrain from social media posts, statements, and actions that bring attention to yourself.
- Reflect on areas where pride manifests in your life—arrogance, self-righteousness, an unwillingness to admit faults, or seeking validation from others.

### **Practice the Kingdom Virtue of Sacrificial Service**

- There is no task beneath a follower of Jesus, *for even 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). Therefore, perform some tasks this week that you are tempted to consider beneath you, recognizing that God gives grace to the humble. Perform the task without expecting anything in return.
- Rehearse the gospel to yourself this week. Romans 12:3 instructs you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment. Rehearsing the gospel helps us see ourselves rightly.
- Spend more time listening than speaking.
- If you have hurt others due to pride, exhibit humility by going to them, apologizing, and seeking their forgiveness.

## ADDITIONAL READING

Proverbs 16:1-19; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Matthew 6:1-6, 23:1-12; Romans 12:3-16; 1 Peter 5:6-7; 1 John 2:15-17

Timothy Keller, *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness*









# WEEK 2

GREED // HUMILITY

# WEEK 2

## GREED // GENEROSITY

### HEBREWS 13:5

*Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

### REBECCA KONYNDYK DEYOUNG, GLITTERING VICIES

*Greed is a perverted love. Its profile has disordered desire written all over it.*

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines greed as the "selfish and excessive desire for more of something (such as money) than is needed." While the dictionary definition might give the word itself a negative connotation, in real life greed's outworkings are not only accepted, but applauded. Greed, it is argued, is the necessary psychological force for our capitalistic economic system. In contrast, Scripture opposes greedy behaviour and denounces greed as a sin. Jesus himself once warned a crowd: "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15b). Years later Paul declared that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils" (1 Tim. 6:10), a statement that has caused some to wonder whether greed, not pride, deserves the title of the root of the tree of vices.

But can't the Christian pursue wealth and Jesus simultaneously?! Jesus is clear that only one can be your God. "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24). Church father Augustine once said: "We will never be able to satisfy our deep, human need for an eternal, perfect good with any amount of temporal, imperfect goods." Every person on earth is searching for satisfaction, but the accumulation of money and possessions only brings added stress and anxiety as now one has to care for the added money and goods. Only Jesus has the ability to satisfy our deepest longings.

Greed demonstrates two personal faith failures. First of all, greed demonstrates a lack of trust in our heavenly Father's care and provision for His children. Secondly, greed exposes our belief that Jesus cannot satisfy all our needs and desires.

Scripture counsels us to fight the vice of greed with the virtue of generosity. When we give, the chains of greed are loosed and broken. Generous giving takes our gaze off this life and places it on the next as we store up treasures for ourselves in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). Finally, generosity in the name of Jesus can serve as a form of gratitude and praise for the salvation Jesus accomplished on the cross. "Though [Jesus] was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9b). Jesus demonstrated generosity at its fullest by giving His very life for us. Through our generosity we can honour his sacrifice and point others to His grace.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Imagine others had access to all of your financial records, including bank accounts, investment portfolios, a list of your possessions and their worth, your spending habits, tax returns, cash flow, etc. but they didn't know anything else about you. What would people conclude about your character and your values? Would they conclude that you are a generous person? Would they conclude based on the way you steward your money and possessions that you are a follower of Christ?
- In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus instructs his followers not to lay up treasures here on earth, but to lay up treasure in heaven. Judging by the way you steward the money and possessions God has entrusted to you, where are you focusing on laying up treasures?
- As you prayerfully reflect on whether/how greed has a hold in your life, are there particular items or a specific amount of money that God might be calling you to give away to free you from the chains of those possessions?

## WEEKLY FAST

### **Fast from Non-Essential Purchases this week.**

- Let go of things you don't use or have in excess of and pass them on to those who are in need.

### **Instead, choose one or more ways to practice Kingdom Virtue of Generosity in place of purchases for yourself:**

- Practice gratitude and contentment. Spend time thanking God this week for the good things He has given you. Thank him for the material possessions He's entrusted you with, but most importantly, thank Him for the gift of His Son Jesus, and the salvation Christ purchased on the cross. Lastly, feast on the practice of generosity
- Instead of buying a non-essential you've been longing for, buy it or something similar for someone else who might need it or be blessed by it.
- Give above and beyond your normal giving to the church, our benevolence offering or some other Christian ministry.
- Pay for someone's meal or coffee.
- Tip generously when possible.

## ADDITIONAL READING

Exodus 16; Ecclesiastes 5:10; Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15;  
Philippians 4:10-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-10  
Chip Ingram, *The Genius of Generosity*









# WEEK 3

LUST // CHASTITY

# WEEK 3

## LUST // CHASTITY

### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:18-20

*Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

### **GARRETT KELL, PURE IN HEART: SEXUAL SIN AND THE PROMISE OF GOD**

*You will never regret resisting sin. You will always regret giving in. I have never looked back on obedience with regret, nor on compromise with gratitude. Seeing God is both our eternal destiny and our daily delight.*

Sexual desire is good! It was created and given by God for our pleasure and His purposes. But misdirected sexual desire – lust – leads to serious trouble. Lust is the inappropriate or excessive desire for sexual gratification for selfish “gain”. But it could extend to an inordinate desire for other things – for money or food, for power or praise. It promises fulfillment but leaves us empty. Lust objectifies people created in God’s image, leads to sexual immorality and perversion, leaves a wake of relational destruction, and puts us in grave physical and spiritual danger. When King David sinned, and then confessed and repented, he recognized that his sexual sin was, ultimately, against God. God avenges sexual sin (and so do people!). Lust, said Jesus, literally puts us on the path to hell. Scripture tells us that sexual immorality defiles His temple – your body – the temple of the Holy Spirit! Lust disregards God. There is an eternal danger.

However, it is possible to conquer lust and keep ourselves from the destructive path of sexual sin. When we keep ourselves in Christ – who purifies us from all sin – sin will have no dominion over us, since we are under grace.

Christ's holiness makes us holy. When we keep ourselves in His love, we will not seek to have the longing of our hearts inappropriately filled elsewhere. When we orient our lives toward Christ and rely on the inner working of His Spirit for our sanctification, we can be victorious!

God gives us the ability to live honourable, upright, and self-controlled lives. Lust is, ultimately, a heart issue. When we guard our heart, the wellspring of His life emerges and flows down to everything. We are able, with His help, to abstain from sexual immorality, to control our own bodies, to flee temptation, to turn from the wrong path, and put to death our sinful nature. Jesus said we need to take extreme action to battle lust and remain sexually pure. We can be victorious by keeping in step with the Spirit, by being watchful, and keeping our gaze straight ahead. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds, and we glorify God in our bodies. God promises a blessing when we are pure in heart, for we shall see God! Intimacy with God is the cure for misdirected sexual desire. Keep your gaze on God!

#### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- Is there an immediate scenario or temptation that you need to flee from? Who is a trustworthy person whom you can confide in and help you?
- Where could you volunteer (community or church) to help you keep busy and focused?
- What resource(s), groups(s), or ministries could help you get free from pornography & sexual addiction and remain sexually pure? (Freedom Session, Doing Family Right recovery groups, accountability software for electronic devices)

## WEEKLY FAST

**Fast from all Media and/or Triggers that would lead you to Lust and sexual temptation rather than away from it.**

- Filter your digital space – set up restrictions or accountability software.

**Practice the Kingdom Virtue of Chastity through Self-Control.**

- By controlling your lusts through the spiritual disciplines of prayer, reading the following Scripture passages throughout the week.
- Start/utilize godly accountability to confess, pray for, and encourage each other in your pursuit of purity.
- Be wise and intentional about what you expose yourself to.
- Treat others with dignity as fellow Image Bearers of God and those in the family of faith like fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters (1 Tim. 5:1-2).

## ADDITIONAL READING

Genesis 39; Job 31; Psalm 42:1-2; Psalm 51; 119:9-11; Proverbs 4; 6:20-35; Matthew 5:27-30; Romans 6:14; 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Colossians 3:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 Peter 2:11-12

Ray Ortlund, Jr., *The Death Of Porn: Men of Integrity Building A World of Nobility*

Heath Lambert, *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace*







# WEEK 4

WRATH // PATIENCE

# WEEK 4

## WRATH // PATIENCE

### COLOSSIANS 3:8-13

*But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

### JONATHAN PARNELL

*Anger makes the list of the seven deadly sins because for centuries people have witnessed its destructive power and influence. Understanding anger gets much more complicated than simply looking at its effects, though. Anger isn't merely a sin that causes chaos, it's an emotion that is indicative of something deeper –something in the subconscious desires of the human heart.*

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines anger as "a strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism" and wrath as a "strong vengeful anger or indignation." Whereas human wrath is sinful, what makes understanding anger complicated is that anger is not always wrong. Paul instructs the church in Ephesus to "be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger," (Eph. 4:26). What determines whether one's anger is righteous or sinful is the reason for and the object of our anger. Righteous anger is motivated by true injustice and is directed towards the sin. However, sinful anger is motivated by reasons that feel like legitimate injustices, but are actually selfish interests and it's directed not at sin, but at the person behind the sin. Anger can often be complicated and therefore, as followers of Christ, it's important to discern the motivation of our hearts when we are angry (Ps. 139:23-24).



When that anger is founded in legitimate injustice, we can allow that to drive us to seek justice, and yet we must not hold on to the anger long, since doing so can give Satan a foothold (Eph. 4:27).

To some Christians' surprise, God himself experiences anger and wrath. Even Jesus himself became angry (Mark 3:5), but God's anger is always justified and His wrath is justly deserved (Rom. 1:18). The comforting truth about God's anger and wrath is that it is partnered with His grace and mercy. When God shows mercy to the city of Nineveh, the prophet Jonah becomes angry, because he wanted God to destroy the Ninevites. But Jonah's suspicions about God's character proved true. This led to Jonah's confession of God's character: *"I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster"* (Jonah 4:2b). This description of God's character is repeated time and again in the Old Testament.

Because of God's just character and mighty power, King David challenged his readers to refrain from anger and patiently wait for God to execute vengeance (Ps. 37:7-9). In this text we see how patience is one virtue that can replace the vice of sinful anger or wrath. When we are tempted to become sinfully angry at an individual, rather than seek to take control of the situation and play the roles of judge, jury and executioner, God calls us to patiently trust Him to establish justice (Rom. 12:19).

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- As you reflect on the past week, did you experience any feelings of anger? What injustice caused you to feel that way? Was that injustice real, or really more of a self-centered, unmet desire?
- Was the anger you felt a righteous anger against sin, or was it wrongly directed at a person?
- As you reflect on times you've become sinfully angry, what does that anger expose in your heart? What is the root sin that causes you to choose wrath?
- How easy is it for you to release your anger and trust God's justice and work in the situation? Are you able to patiently trust God enough to forgive those who have wronged you?

## WEEKLY FAST

**Fast from Words & Actions that Tear Down rather than build up.**

**How often in your anger have you said things that you later regretted? As the saying goes: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."**

- Tactfully excuse yourself from the conversation, and if possible, don't come back to the conversation until you have settled your emotions and understood the injustice that is causing your anger.

**Instead Practice the Kingdom Virtue of Patience through Prayer & Reconciliation.**

- Trust in God's justice. Vengeance is His, so you don't have to seek it yourself.
- Pray for those you are angry at and notice how your heart changes toward them and the circumstances.
- Consider reaching out to those you may have broken relationships with because of sinful outbursts of anger and seek to make amends.
- As far as it is up to you, live at peace with all and overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:14-21).
- Use your words to build others up this week in meaningful and intentional ways (Eph. 4:29).
- When stuck in traffic or waiting in a long line, use it as an opportunity to practice patience.
- To avoid the practice of writing emails, texts, etc. from a place of anger, pause, and create space for reflection before sending.

## ADDITIONAL READING

James 1:19-20; Psalm 37:7-9; Matthew 5:22; Proverbs 14:29, 15:18; Jonah 4; Ephesians 4:1-2; 1 Corinthians 13:4

Edward Welch, *A Small Book About a Big Problem: Meditations on Anger, Patience, and Peace*

Gary Chapman, *Anger: Taming a Powerful Emotion*







# WEEK 5

GLUTTONY // TEMPERANCE

# WEEK 5

## GLUTTONY // TEMPERANCE

### PHILIPPIANS 3:18-21

*For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

### JONATHAN EDWARDS, THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL REPRESENTED BY A FEAST

*There is no such thing as excess in our taking of...spiritual food. There is no such virtue as temperance in spiritual feasting.*

Food is wonderful – and powerful. Given by God, it is essential to life. It sustains us. We crave it, consume it, and are comforted by it. And that's why, in excess or restriction, it can easily control us. Interestingly, food restriction was the first "do not" command of God (in the garden, Gen. 2:17).

Food can literally become our god, leading us away from the God who provides it. Obsession with food squanders what God has given us to bring Him glory – our bodies! Gluttony, derived from a Greek word meaning "a person who habitually eats excessively," stemming from the root word "to eat," has traditionally been defined as "excessive or unrestrained consumption of food or drink, often to the detriment of one's health or well-being." This divides our loyalty and dishonours God. The Hebrew word "glutton" brings even deeper meaning: "to shake out," "to squander," and hence one who is a prodigal, who wastes his means by indulgence. "Glutton" is translated in various places as "wasters of their own body" or "riotous men." Gluttony has also been defined as "food worship". We are to worship God with our bodies, not food to the detriment of our bodies. Excessive indulgence in anything is rebellion to God. Gluttony, which also leads to other addictive vices such as alcoholism and laziness, make us enemies of God (Phil. 3), enemies with people (Luke 16:19-21 ff.), and an enemy of self (1 Sam. 2:13-17).

We need food. We also need God! That's the point. Food (and other forms of excess) reveal where our true dependence and loyalty lies. It can lead us away from God or nearer to God. Gluttony looks to the physical to satisfy some deeper craving, whether for comfort, purpose, or control. That's why food is inextricably tied to worship. All Old Testament sacrifices involved food. What do we crave more: food and excess, earthly pleasure, or God and His pleasure? Are you a "slave to your stomach" or a "slave to Christ?" Physical appetite is meant to whet our appetite for God. Jesus declared Himself as *"the bread of life...living bread which came down from heaven,"* and commanded us to eat of Him (John 6). We are to offer our bodies to Him in worship. We are to put God and others first at the Lord's Table (communion). We are to eat together with glad and sincere hearts (Acts 2), exercising moderation and temperance/self-control (1 Cor. 11; Gal. 5), given to generosity and sharing (2 Sam. 9:1-13), not hoarding. Temperance = Freedom. Gluttony = Bondage. Contentment is found in plenty or in want (Phil. 2:11-12). We are to eat, with thanksgiving, to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How can you turn to God for comfort instead of turning to food, or other physical things, for comfort?
- How can you implement a plan that includes food that will enhance, not deter, your health?
- Ask God to point out an area of your life where you lack self-control. Who could you ask to help you bring this area under God's control?

## WEEKLY FAST

**Fast from Excess (anything that you are given to consume, food or otherwise, in excess).**

Suggestions:

- Eat half of what normally would per sitting. Or fast from a meal (or two) per day.
- Consider fasting from snacking between meals or in the evening.
- Give up (or moderate) food or drink.
- Fast from whatever immoderate activity (gaming, exercise, leisure, shopping, effort & attention related to your appearance, etc.) that you find addictive or tends to control you.
- Fast from your "food vice" (fast food, junk food, comfort food, eating out).

**Practice the Kingdom Virtue of Temperance by Forging Patterns of Self-Control in key areas of your life this week, and feast on God's Word and Prayer.**

- Reprioritize your appetites and put God first, forgoing food/excess food in order to feast on Christ (John 4:34, 6:53-56)

## ADDITIONAL READING

Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Psalm 34:8-10; 63:1-8; Proverbs 21:23; 23:20-21; 28:7; Matthew 4:1-4; Galatians 5:16-26; James 5:1-6 (cf. 1 Timothy 5:6); 1 Peter 2:1-3









# WEEK 6

ENVY // CHARITY

# WEEK 6

## ENVY // CHARITY

### **JAMES 3:13-16**

*Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.*

### **HENRI NOUWEN, SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

*Resentment and gratitude cannot coexist, since resentment blocks the perception and experience of life as a gift. My resentment tells me that I don't receive what I deserve. It always manifests itself in envy.*

The word "schadenfreude" in German means "pleasure at seeing other's misfortune." While we don't have an exact equivalent in English, you are still probably familiar with the feeling. Probably the closest word we could point to is, Envy.

Envy is the pleasure at seeing other's misfortune and the frustration at seeing other's joy. Like many of these vices, envy is intertwined with several others. Envy comes with a host of other sins in tow like jealousy, covetousness, resentment, hatred, and most especially pride. Envy cannot stand the blessing of others, for envy poisons our ears with thoughts of "why not me?" And while coveting is focused more on the object, envy is an opposition to the person. We are envious of people, and we want to see them fall. Perhaps the most devious scheme of envy is the way it hides from our attention. We might think that envy is for those who are widely successful, musicians, actors, or politicians. While we might desire their life, true envy hides in our personal relationships.

It is not the success of Taylor Swift that makes us envious, but the success of our sibling. It is the success of those closest to us that whispers in our ear, "that should have been me." It is our coworker who is promoted above us that forms the root of envy. Not those who are outside of our realm of reach, but those who we know, intimately connected with us. It is the other mom in the playgroup, the other couple from church, or church across town. Our closest relationships have the potential of being a great encouragement or a breeding ground for envy. In the dark, envy poisons our mind towards others, embitters our souls, and causes us to act out our frustration on others.

This is exactly what happened to Jesus. It was envy that drove the crowd to deliver Jesus over to Pilate to be crucified (Matt. 27:18). The root of envy had grown strong and they delivered him over to death. But Jesus went willingly to the cross to pay the debt of our sin, and to break its power over us (1 Cor. 15:56-57). It is in the unmerited favour of Jesus that we find our freedom from envy. Grace is a gift that we have not deserved; no one has earned or deserved the forgiveness of Jesus. In Christ we already have been given more than we have ever deserved, we have gained forgiveness, a place in God's family, and eternal life with Him. When we have gained so much in Christ, why would we spend our time worrying about what others have gotten? We can respond to all things with gratitude towards God.

It is the grace of Jesus that allows us to, "*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep*" (Rom. 12:15). When we recognize how much we have been given, we can respond to others with the same grace that God has given us. This is the source of Christian charity. When I have received what I have not earned, I do not hold back the same grace to others. The death of envy is found in thankfulness to God, and charity towards others.

**JERRY BRIDGES, RESPECTABLE SINS**

*The cure for the sin of envy and jealousy is to find our contentment in God.*

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Is there someone in my life that I don't want to see succeed? How do I respond when they get something and I don't get it?
- How can I focus more on the blessings of Christ this week? How can I grow in my thankfulness? Write down a list of all the blessings Christ has given you and how you can be thanking God for them.
- What are ways that I can go out of my way to show charity towards others? Who can I encourage? Is there someone I need to apologize to and ask forgiveness?

## WEEKLY FAST

### **Fast from Social Media.**

- The easiest way to allow envy to grow is to keep our eyes on what other people are doing. Remove that reality from your observation as much as possible this week.
- While Social Media can help us connect or appreciate one another, more often than not it breeds envy and jealousy.

### **Practice the Kingdom Virtue of Encouragement and providing Help to others.**

- Spend the time you would use on social media or seeing and assessing what others are doing and what they have, giving yourself to intentional encouragement and help of others.
- Show charity toward others by celebrating their accomplishments and seeking to truly wish them well from the heart.
- Preach and pray the gospel into your heart, reminding yourself of all that you have in Christ, and pray for contentment.

## ADDITIONAL READING

Proverbs 23:17, Mark 7:20-23; Galatians 5:19-25; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7;  
1 Peter 1:22-2:1

R.T. Kendall, *Jealousy – The Sin No One Talks About: How to Overcome Envy & Live a Life of Freedom*









# WEEK 7

SLOTHFULNESS // DILIGENCE

# WEEK 7

## SLOTHFULNESS // DILIGENCE

### 2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-12

*Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.*

### KEVIN DEYOUNG, CRAZY BUSY

*Busyness, as I've been diagnosing it, is as much a mind-set and a heart sickness as it is a failure in time management. It's possible to live your days in a flurry of hard work, serving, and bearing burdens, and to do so with the right character and a right dependence on God so that it doesn't feel crazy busy. By the same token, it's possible to feel amazingly stressed and frenzied while actually accomplishing very little. The antidote to busyness of soul is not sloth and indifference. The antidote is rest, rhythm, death to pride, acceptance of our own finitude, and trust in the providence of God.*

Sloth may be one of the most misunderstood of the vices on this list. While we normally think about sloth as laziness, sloth is more a condition of the heart than the hands. We may be slothful in terms of avoiding work, but we may also be slothful in over-work. Sloth is the vice of avoiding what God has called us to do, whether in busyness or laziness.

Perhaps one of the most common complaints that people have is that they are "too busy." While it is true that modern life has plenty to keep us busy, often our busy lives can be a cover for a reluctance to do what God calls us to do. We busy ourselves with work or pleasure, we indulge ourselves in binge watching TV shows, all to avoid what must actually be done. Sloth is the pursuit of pleasure to numb our hearts and minds to avoid God. We watch our TV's not to enjoy it, but to numb and distract ourselves from life. Sloth can lead us to extreme busyness or laziness, all while following our desires and avoiding what is required of us. The slothful man is just as guilty avoiding his family at work, as he is in front of the TV all night. Both avoid doing what God calls him to do as a husband, father, and Christian.

The greatest problem of sloth is that it numbs our hearts to the beauty of God. In relentless avoidance and numbing behaviours we fail to see the incredible greatness of God and what he has done in the gospel. God has created us for work (Gen. 1:28-30) and call us to work our jobs for the Lord (Col. 3:22-24). God created us with a purpose and prepares us to pursue it with all our might (Eccl. 9:10). God created us to know Him and see others around us come to know Him (Matt. 28:18-20). He has gifted us with spiritual gifts for the building up of the church (1 Cor. 12:7). God has called us to use our time, our relationships, and our gifts for the purpose of seeing Him glorified. It is through the grace of Jesus that God transforms our hearts to use the gifts that he has given us for his glory!

But this does not mean that we are called to work relentlessly; God also created us for rest (Gen. 2:2). Perhaps the biggest problem of sloth is that it has destroyed our ability to rest properly. Our resting is too often apathetic self-indulgence, rather than time enjoyed in the presence of God. True rest is found in Christ, in the trust that He is taking care of us, providing for us, and by His grace we are secure (Heb. 4:10). We are called to rest in the presence of God, rightly enjoying the gifts He has provided. It is only in Christ that we can properly work, for the glory of God, and properly rest, in our enjoyment of Him.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When you are busy, what do you find occupies most of your time? Is it occupied with the things that God calls you to do?
- What part of your life do you find difficult to motivate yourself? How does the gospel give us true motivation?
- How can you practice proper rest this week?

## WEEKLY FAST

### **Fast from TV, Movies, Scrolling on your Phone, and Procrastination.**

- While we often think we rest while watching something, often times we can end up more tired at the end of it.
- Screens can often be avoidance mechanisms that keep us from doing what we should be doing and giving us the real rest our souls need.

### **Practice the Kingdom Virtue of True Rest this week.**

- Enjoy the goodness of God's creation and thank Him for it.
- Spend your time using your spiritual gifts to build up the church, or encourage another believer in their faith.
- Read your Bible slowly and give yourself time to pray more than a few words.
- Allow yourself to rest truly in the completed work of Jesus.
- Get up early this week to spend time in Bible reading and prayer.
- Slow down and simplify. Being perpetually "Busy" with unimportant tasks is a way to identify Sloth.

## ADDITIONAL READING

Proverbs 6:9, 10:4, 26:13-16; Matthew 25:24-29; Colossians 3:22-24; Hebrews 6:10-12

Kevin DeYoung, *Crazy Busy: A (Mercifully) Short Book About a (Really) Big Problem*







# GOOD FRIDAY

IT IS FINISHED

*It is finished.*  
**JOHN 19:30**

*We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

**ROMANS 5:6-8**

## REFLECTION

On Good Friday, we commemorate the death of Jesus, the event at the centre of the mystery of redemption.

Our Good Friday services are crafted to help us contemplate, revere, and even embrace the cross. As we approach Easter, it can be tempting to rush past Good Friday or turn away from the cross in discomfort. But we must see the cross as the precursor of joy, an inseparable part of the triumph that we celebrate at Easter.

## GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES | APRIL 18

**CHILLIWACK: 9.00AM | 10.45AM**

**PROMONTORY: 10.45AM**

**HARRISON: 10.45AM**



## PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, for years I struggled with calling the day of your crucifixion “good.” How presumptuous on our part. That there had to be a day when you, the eternally glorious Son of God, would be made sin for us is not good at all. But at the same time, that you would freely and gladly give yourself for us on the cross is never-to-be surpassed goodness—quintessential goodness.

Oh, the wonder of it all. From the cross and from your heart came these two impassioned cries: “Father forgive them” (Luke 23:34) and “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). The first required the second. The second secured the first. Together they humble our hearts and fuel our worship.

And then there’s the third cry: “It is finished.” Nothing is left undone concerning our salvation and for the transformation of our world. Once and for all, perfectly and fully, we have been reconciled to God. You became sin for us that in you, we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21)—the Just for the unjust, the Beautiful One for the broken ones, the Lamb of God for the rebels from God.

Lord Jesus, a million years into our life in the new heaven and new earth, we will still be stunned with awe, worship, and gratitude for the greatness of your sacrifice and love for us. Because you were fully forsaken, we are forever forgiven. Because you exhausted God’s judgment against our numberless sins, we now live by the gift of your perfect righteousness. Bow our heads in humility and raise our hands in praise. We pray in our all-glorious, all-grace-full name.

Amen.

# HOLY SATURDAY

## A DAY OF IN-BETWEEN

Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

LUKE 23:50-56

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."

MATTHEW 27:62-64

### REFLECTION

*Easter Saturday. A day of in between. A grave is about to be emptied, but not yet. The joy of knowing what's coming; the pain of having to wait for it. An analogy for the whole Christian life.*

**Sam Allberry**

Written on the walls of an easement in Köln by someone hiding from the Nazis: "I believe in the sun even when it is not shining. I believe in love even when feeling it not. I believe in God even when God is silent." This is Holy Saturday.

Holy Saturday is a time of reverence, stillness, and expectation. On the eve of Easter, between death and resurrection, we confront the silence of the tomb. While Holy Saturday is a solemn day, it is also a day of great anticipation as the dawn of Easter is about to break.

## PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, how could your family and followers have slept the night of Good Friday? I can only imagine the depth of sadness that seized their hearts. And yet others were euphoric and relieved that you, “the deceiver,” could no longer threaten the status quo of the religious community.

As the sun rose on Saturday, no one understood that the most undeserved death imaginable would yield the greatest return calculable. As you were nailed to the cross, the written code—God’s law, with all its regulations and requirements—lost all its condemning power over us. With your last breath, you disarmed the powers of darkness, triumphing over all authorities marshalled against God’s kingdom (Col. 2:14-15).

No one realized that your mortal punishment would bring our eternal peace; that your fatal wounding would secure our everlasting healing; that your being crushed under God’s judgment would lead to our being cherished by the thrice-holy God (Isa. 53). Though they had the Scriptures, they had no clue.

And yet the chief priests and the Pharisees did remember your promise of resurrection. They weren’t sad about your death; they were mad with fear about the possibility of your life. Having planned to put to death a resurrected Lazarus (John 12:10), they weren’t about to indulge a resurrected Jesus.

Oh, silly, sinful men—they’d sooner hold back the rising of the sun than the rising of the Son of God. Resurrection Sunday was coming, and there was absolutely nothing they could do about it. The sadness of Saturday would soon be shattered with the shouts of Sunday: “The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!” In your triumphant and loving name we pray.

Amen.

# EASTER SUNDAY

HE IS RISEN!

*Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.*

**LUKE 24:5-9**

*Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

**ROMANS 5:9-11**

## REFLECTION

*"About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he wrought surprising feats. He was the Christ. When Pilate condemned him to be crucified, those who had come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared restored to life and the tribe of Christians has not disappeared."*

**Josephus (Jewish historian, 93AD)**

*If the resurrection is true, then it's all true. If the resurrection is not true, then none of it is true. If Christ literally was raised from the grave, then we have all the reason in the world to have hope and to live transformed lives. If he did not rise from the grave, then the Bible itself says we are to be pitied above all men.*

**Matt Chandler**

## RESURRECTION

O God of my Exodus,

Great was the joy of Israel's sons, when Egypt died upon the shore,  
Far greater the joy when the Redeemer's foe lay crushed in the dust.

Jesus strides forth as the victor, conqueror of death, hell, and all  
opposing might;

He bursts the bands of death, tramples the powers of darkness down,  
and lives for ever.

He, my gracious surety, apprehended for payment of my debt, comes  
forth from the prison house of the grave free, and triumphant over sin,  
Satan, and death.

Show me herein the proof that his vicarious offering is accepted, that  
the claims of justice are satisfied, that the devil's sceptre is shivered,  
that his wrongful throne is levelled.

Give me the assurance that in Christ I died, in him I rose, in his life I live,  
in his victory I triumph, in his ascension I shall be glorified.

Adorable Redeemer, thou who was lifted up upon a cross art  
ascended to highest heaven.

Thou, who as Man of sorrows wast crowned with thorns, art now as  
Lord of life wreathed with glory.

Once, no shame more deep than thine, no agony more bitter, no  
death more cruel.

Now, no exaltation more high, no life more glorious, no advocate more  
effective.

Thou art in the triumph car leading captive thine enemies behind thee.

What more could be done than thou hast done! Thy death is my life,  
thy resurrection my peace, thy ascension my hope, thy prayers my  
comfort.

## EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES | APRIL 20

**CHILLIWACK: 8.30AM | 9.45AM | 11.00AM | 5.15PM**

**AGASSIZ: 10.45AM**

**PROMONTORY: 10.45AM**

**LAKE ERROCK: 9.00AM**

**HARRISON: 10.45AM**

## PRAYER

Exalted and resurrected Jesus, we join the apostle Peter's bold declaration of living hope and great joy. For you have risen from the dead, and this good news changes everything.

Because of your resurrection, we're neither afraid to die nor afraid to live; we're not hapless vagabonds on earth but hope-filled children of God. We're no longer enslaved to our sins; we're now wrapped in your righteousness. Those who have "gone to sleep" in you aren't slumbering in the void; they're rejoicing in your presence. Hallelujah!

Because of your resurrection, we're less to be pitied than anybody and more to be grateful than anybody (1 Cor. 15:14-19). You are the first fruits and guarantee of a whole new order—the "new creation" dominion of redemption and restoration. Everything sad will come untrue, and all things broken will be made new. How we long for that day!

Because of your resurrection, you are already reigning as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All evil dominions, wicked authorities, and malevolent powers now stand defeated, and one day they will be fully eradicated. Hallelujah, many times over!

Jesus, your death is the death of death, and your resurrection is the resurrection of all things. You died for our sins and have been raised for our justification. Oh, the wonder, marvel, and gratitude that fills our hearts today. We are forgiven, we are beloved, and we are yours!

In light of this living hope and compelling love, this measureless grace and eternal inheritance, free us for spending the rest of our days living and loving to your glory. We pray, Jesus, in your resurrected and reigning name.

Amen.



# NOTES

## REFERENCES

### BIBLE TRANSLATION

**The English Standard Version (ESV)**

### BOOKS

**Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Remedies**

Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung

**Killjoys: The Seven Deadly Sins**

ed. Marshall Segal

**Seven: The Deadly Sins and the Beatitudes**

Jeff Cook

### PRAYERS

**Every Season Prayers: Gospel-Centered Prayers for the Whole of Life**

Scott Smith

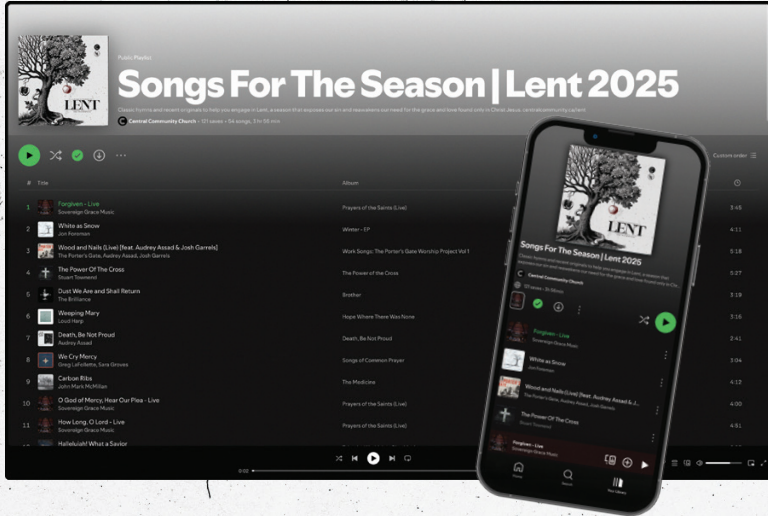
### REFLECTIONS

**The Valley of Vision: Puritan Prayers and Devotions**



# WORSHIP

## SONGS FOR THE SEASON



Classic hymns and recent originals to help you engage in Lent, a season that exposes our sin and reawakens our need for the grace and love found only in Christ Jesus.

Want to listen to Central's Lent Spotify playlist?

Search for **'Songs For The Season | Lent 2025'** in the Spotify App or visit [centralcommunity.ca/Lent](https://centralcommunity.ca/Lent) for a direct link.

Alternatively, open up the Spotify App on your mobile device, click on 'Search', and use the Camera Icon to scan the code below.





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**MISSION:**

WE EXIST TO BE **AUTHENTIC** FOLLOWERS OF **JESUS** WHO **LEAD** OTHERS TO **FOLLOW HIM**.

**VISION:**

WE AIM TO SEE THE ENTIRE EASTERN FRASER VALLEY **TRANSFORMED** BY THE **GOSPEL** FOR THE **GLORY OF GOD** AND GOOD OF **ALL PEOPLE**.

**VALUES:**

**CENTRED** ON THE **GOSPEL**  
**ROOTED** IN THE **BIBLE**  
**GATHERED** IN **COMMUNITY**  
**EMPOWERED** BY THE **SPIRIT**  
**EQUIPPED** FOR **MINISTRY**  
**SENT** ON **MISSION**

