

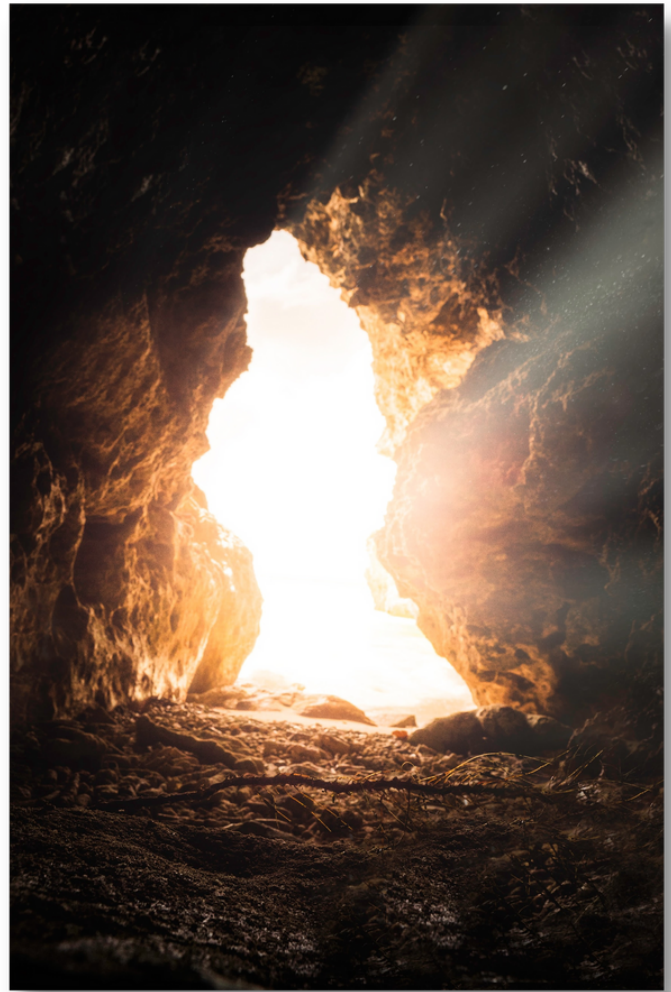


Lent Devotional Plan

Adapted from Deron Spoo's
"The **Good** Book"

Hello church!

We are excited to begin our journey of lent for the next 40 days in preparation for Easter. Lent is a time of remembrance and renewal as we draw closer to Him in prayer, His word, and in fasting.



This year we will be going through a 40-day Lent devotional plan through Deron Spoo's, "*the **Good Book***". We'll specifically focus on 40 chapters of the Bible that speak directly to our identity in Christ and the story of His redemption throughout the Scriptures. May we spend the next 40 days diving deeper into His word to build a lasting foundation for our church and our lives.

Special thanks to our sister church, Radiance Church for compiling this devotional.

For Families

You will find a family specific devotional at the end of each booklet. Please choose whatever day and time to do them with your family (*over a meal, before they sleep, etc.*).



There is no specific day that each devotional corresponds with. **All devotionals have been tailored to be relevant for your children.**

things to consider:

Be intentional.

When God encountered Moses in the burning bush, Scriptures show us that Moses intentionally paused from his daily routine and work to encounter God. Set aside a time and place to spend it with him.

Make a commitment

All of us may be at different points in our walks with God. We encourage you to start where you are. Be open to how God may lead and what he may show you. Whether it be the 4 minute journey or 14 minute journey, commit to one that is both feasible and challenging for you.

Conviction over content

Hebrews teaches us that the Word of God is living and active. It is easy to read merely for content, but the focus of this journey is for the *Word of God to become transformative in your life*. Be open to how He may speak to you and even challenge you.

Seek intimacy, not religiosity

It's easy to make this another religious duty. Remember our prayer is to become more intimate with Him.

For those of you who may be new to this, here are some suggestions on how to get started.

01 — find a consistent time and place

i.e. when you wake up, over lunch, before you sleep.

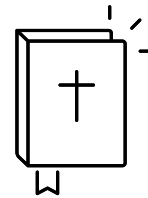


02 — begin in prayer

"Lord, open my eyes, ears, and heart to your Word. I submit myself to the power of your Holy Spirit. Speak to me and may I listen carefully."



03 — read the passage and devotional



04 — reflect on the questions

It's easy to make this another religious duty. Remember our prayer is to become more intimate with Him.



05 — end in prayer

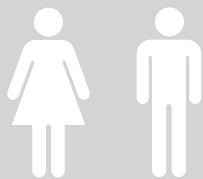
"Lord, thank you for speaking to me. I confess my own ways. Help me to submit to your truth so that your will may be done in my life. Help me love others as you have taught us to."



06 — spend the rest of the day reflecting

Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you in small moments.





week one

Genesis 1

Genesis 3

Genesis 6

Genesis 12



1 | You're More Like God Than You Think



"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27

You're more like God than anything else he created. At times you might feel worthless. Perhaps this is why the first chapter of the Bible sends the unmistakable message that you are priceless. Even on days when you feel barely human, you are, in fact, more like your Creator than anything else in existence.

Genesis 1 is clear: the pinnacle of God's creative work was man and woman. In God's eyes, nothing in the created order was more impressive. Nothing else could serve as the ultimate fruit of his forming power. Genesis 1:27 offers this observation: "So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female."

Externally we bear God's image because of our capacity to experience relationships. That reflects God's own desire to be in relationship with us. We have a built-in need and desire to relate to God and other humans because we were created in his image. That's what allows us to enjoy intimacy with him.

Genesis 1 reveals two essential truths about who you are. First, you are not an accident. You are not the result of cosmic chance; you're an intentional and individual creation of God. Second, God created you as an act of love. God is far from indifferent when it concerns you.

We share ourselves with only those we care about. Just as we share ourselves with only those we care about, God shared the best part of himself with you and me. Nothing else in all creation can make this claim.

So relish this life, knowing that when God sees you, he can't help but see a reflection and resemblance of himself.

Reflection

What one action or attitude can you change today that will help you better reflect the image of God, your true identity?

2 | When Everything Broke, Including You



"But the Lord called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'" Genesis 3:9

Adam and Eve's problem with evil affects us all. Genesis 3 doesn't merely record Adam and Eve's fall into sin. The chapter also highlights the failure of the entire human race to live up to God's original intent of an intimate, obedient relationship with him. Adam and Eve were damaged goods, a trait they passed on to us.

Sin has affected and infected every area of life. You won't be able to find one area that has escaped sin's negative impact. Power struggles, manipulation, and suspicion mark our relationship (v. 16). Work is more difficult because of sin (v. 17). Sin has shattered the perfect alignment of creation (v. 18). And not to be overlooked, the most devastating result of sin was the introduction of death into God's created order (v. 19). Anyone who has dealt with the death of a loved one will tell you that the event feels unnatural. That's because it is! God created us to experience ultimate life. Instead, we've settled for disobedience and its irreversible consequence, death.

Yet even amid the devastation and depression of Genesis 3, there is hope. God walked through the garden in search of the humans in hiding. When confronted and questioned, Adam replied, "I was afraid" (v. 10). Humans respond to fear in one of three predictable ways: we flee, fight, or hide. By running, we try to escape the fear. In fighting, we attempt to overpower our fear. When we hide, we admit the problem won't go away, so we try to go away. Consumed with the fear of being found disobedient, Adam and Eve hid from God, hoping to avoid his penetrating gaze.

Which tactic are you using to avoid God today? Are you running from him? Are you wrestling with God for ultimate control of your life? Or are you simply in hiding?

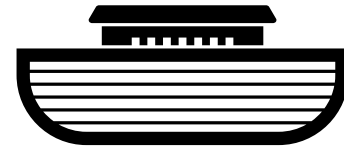
Whatever your tactic, God's presence in the garden sends us a clear message: God hasn't left us alone in our brokenness. He continues to search for hiding humans even today.

Reflection

Over the course of history, Christian leaders produced a list called the Seven Deadly Sins. While this list isn't found in the Bible, there is wisdom in listening to the voices of the past. The Seven Deadly Sins are pride, lust, greed, gluttony, envy, anger, and sloth.

Which of these sins is the greatest source of temptation in your life? What excuses do you make for not ridding your life of this sin? What stands in the way of you taking responsibility for your actions and opening yourself to God's restoration.

3 | Staying Afloat in Troubled Times



"Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him." Genesis 6:22

Genesis 6 teaches several powerful truths we would do well to apply to our lives. First, we capture a glimpse of authentic obedience in this chapter. Noah's story dispels the common myth that obedience to God makes our lives easier. The wishful thinking that following Christ automatically makes the rest of life convenient is a cultural concept, not a biblical one. But be assured, while following God may be hard at times, it's the best decision you'll ever make.

Second, the story of the flood is a profound picture of community. Ark has a subtlety of meaning that can be understood in two very different ways. First, it can mean "palace." When floodwaters rise, any dry boat will feel like luxury accommodations. Second, ark can also be understood as "coffin." Noah's ark was a big box, containing eight family members who lived together in tight quarters for more than a year. Yes, coffin comes to mind.

Such is the reality of community. In the floodwaters of life, people are a palace. But at the same time, the very people we love most will also demand our greatest patience. Community can make us feel like the wealthiest people alive and, at the same time, claustrophobic from close contact. The truth is that while community resembles both a palace and coffin, Christ followers need community to stay afloat in the floodwaters of life.

Finally, Genesis 6 gives us a glimpse of trust. In the details of constructing the ark, notice the one part left out that is standard for outfitting boats: the rudder. The ark was designed to drift, not for Noah to navigate. Noah and his family put themselves fully into the hands of God. And perhaps this is the grand lesson we can take from Noah's great challenge. We may not always be able to fix the problems that present themselves to us, but it is always wise to surrender ourselves to the care of God.

Reflection

How do you need God to rescue you today? Even if you feel adrift, it's all right to ask God for his help. Have you asked? Once you do, wait in simple trust for God's response.

4 | Faith isn't Safe



"I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Genesis 12: 3

The best way to capture the essence of Abraham's life and lifestyle is with the label faith. When God invites us into the adventure of following him, he rarely tells us where we'll end up. The only way to discover the end of the story is to take the first step.

New testament writers applauded Abraham for being a model of faith. James 2:23 says that "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend." Romans 4:20-21 adds. "[Abraham] did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, because he was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was also able to do."

If you take the time to read and reflect on the rest of Abraham's biography, you quickly discover he was a deeply flawed individual. In fact, you won't make it out of Genesis 12 without seeing Abraham's compulsion to lie. His life was potholed with errors and inconsistencies. More than once Abraham disobeyed God and disappointed the people closest to him. This man of faith also tended to repeat the same mistakes over and over.

Our faith doesn't instantly free us from our faults. The promises of God over our lives don't translate into instant perfection. The standard we live by as we follow God isn't immediate perfection but continual progress. To remain in the struggle against sin is a winning strategy. To continue to strive and refuse to settle is the pattern of people making headway in their relationship with God.

May we always endeavor to step out in faith, allowing God to lead us to a country on the far side of complacency. Following God involved taking chances. Blessings await us on the far side of risk. And it all begins with faith, which is anything but safe.

Reflection

Abraham was a model of stepping out in faith. As we take steps to follow God, we grow in our friendship with him. In what way is God currently prompting you to step out in faith and trust him?

Genesis 1

25 God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

27 So God created human beings in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.





Made in the Image of God

Did you know that God, the creator of the universe, was the one that created you?

Even though God created the beautiful sky and the amazing animals that we see outside, nothing is as special as His best creation: you!

You're His greatest creation and you might be thinking to yourself, "how?"

Well, God didn't make you like everything else that He made.

He made you special by making you in His image and that makes you more like God than anything else He created.

If God is our creator and He knows us better than anyone else, we can put all of our trust in Him. We can trust Him with our lives, families, and even friendships.

Reflection/Prayer

1. What do you love the most about yourself? How do you feel about being made in the image of God?

2. Do you believe that God has the best plans for you?

3. As a family, come up with one fun way to remind yourselves of this truth

(i.e. do a self portrait activity, come up with a phrase that everyone can remember)

Prayer: "Dear God, Thank you for creating us in your image. Thank you for making us special and knowing what's best for us. Jesus, help us remember that we can trust in you..."