



# Lent Devotional Plan

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

# For Families

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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.**



# *week three*

Job 1

Psalms 23

Psalms 51

Psalms 139

Proverbs 1

Isaiah 53



# 11 | Making Sense of Your Suffering



**"Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, 21 saying: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." Job 1:20-21**

Why do we suffer? Some will call the book of Job the theology of suffering. This is the question Job wrestles with. Perhaps a question that many of us have heard and even struggle to answer is, Why does God allow suffering? Why does he allow bad things to happen to good people? For many of us this becomes a stumbling block for our faith. What's interesting is that in the entire 42 chapters, God doesn't answer the question.

Instead as Job continues on his journey, he hears many rational answers from his friends. One friend argues that Job had some hidden sin in his heart. Another argues that no one is truly good in the eyes of God. All of us deserve punishment. And like these friends, many of us try to reason our way of understanding suffering. We try to answer with Christian platitudes, such as "God is using this suffering for your good and His glory." And yet, we don't find any comfort or peace in such responses. Perhaps suffering is one of the mysteries only privy to God's divine understanding.

But here's what we do see in the story of Job. The nature of Job's question begins to shift. The question is no longer about "Why does God allow suffering or why is this happening to me?" Instead, you find that he begins to ask "Who are you, God? Where are you? Are you here with me?" In Job 19, he calls out to God as His Redeemer. That though he suffers, surely he knows His redeemer lives. And as you read Job, you see that what Job suffers the most with is not the physical pain or loss, but what he suffers the most with is that he feels abandoned by even God Himself.

And it's here God answers Job. It wasn't a logic-proof answer, it wasn't some eloquent response, but it was His presence. Because here's what we learn. More than fixing Job's problems, God is far more interested in revealing Himself to Job. We often think having an answer to our suffering will help us heal and recover. However, experience will tell us otherwise. When dealing with some sort of loss, what is far more effective than a reason for it, is the presence of simply being there with one another. Someone to grieve and lament the loss. As Deron Spoo writes, "presence is powerful, more powerful than an answer." For in his presence, Job learned that even though he didn't have a clear answer, he could put his trust in the Lord.

## Reflection

Being present for one another can be if not the most powerful way to be there for one another. When you hear somebody suffering, what is your response? More than the words or even the things we can do for one another, how can we simply be present with one another?

# 12 | Forget the Funeral, This is Life!



**"The LORD is my shepherd; I have what I need." Psalm 23:1**

Psalm 23 is often recited at funerals. We pair this psalm with passing away. We assume this psalm is about death, but instead life welcomes us—pure, joyful, boundless life.

"The LORD is my shepherd" (v. 1). We can imagine that on one long day in some nondescript desert, David made a mental leap, connecting his occupation to the care of God. Just as David served as the protector of his sheep, God serves as the provider of care and compassion for his people. Sheep are unable to provide for themselves. Using this picture of utter helplessness, Psalm 23 gives particulars on how God provides for his people.

God provides resources. "I have what I need" (v.1). God is the giver of all good things—emotionally, physically, spiritually, mentally, and relationally. The apostle Peter agreed when he wrote, "His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). If we lack any resources, we're encouraged to ask God.

God provides rescue. "Your rod and your staff—they comfort me" (v. 4). Shepherds are equipped with a club-shaped weapon called a rod to protect the sheep. In a world of predators, it seems we need the protection of God more than ever. God often provides rescue for his people, whether from circumstances of our own making or from situations that are no fault of our own.

God provides restoration. "He renews my life" (v. 3). Life is exhausting. Life promotes weariness. Whether it's the difficulties of our job, the challenge of raising children, or a critic who is never satisfied with our best efforts, life has a way of wearing us down and whittling at our efforts. No matter how much life dings or damages us, we're never beyond God's restorative reach.

God provides righteousness. "He leads me along the right paths [paths of righteousness] for his name's sake" (v. 3). In the simplest terms, the word righteousness means "to be in the right relationship" with another person.

How do we remain in the right relationship with God? One thing is sure: we don't have to guess. God guides. "He leads me along the right paths for his name's sake" (v. 3) Ultimately, God the Father leads us to his Son, Jesus. It is Jesus who equips us—through his death, burial, and resurrection—to relate rightly to God. God himself provides righteousness—the right relationship with himself through Jesus.

## Reflection

Have you allowed Jesus to bring you into a restored, right relationship with God or are you still trying to do it all on your own? What evidence can you provide to support your answer? Righteousness in Jesus comes when we stop trying and begin trusting.

adapted from Deron Spoo's "The Good Book"

# 13 | Guilty but at Peace



**"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10**

In Psalm 51, David demonstrates how to pray in repentance. He was just rebuked by the prophet Nathan after committing adultery with Bathsheba and killing her husband, Uriah. David comes before the Lord to confess his sin and ask for forgiveness. What can we learn from David's prayer for our own journey with sin and redemption?

David starts by appealing to God to have mercy on him (v1). He understands that God is the ultimate judge and executor of justice and realizes God's great power. But God is also loving and merciful, and He takes the time to listen to us even in our darkest moments. We just need to be vulnerable and come to Him.

Next, David confesses his sin. He knows what he did. He owns up to what he has done against the Lord (v4). We are all sinners (Romans 3:23). We are inherently evil. David does not excuse what he has done or try to justify his actions. He understands the consequences of his actions and that God is perfectly just in how he executes his justice.

Then, David comes to repentance. He asks for forgiveness and to be cleansed of his sin. He doesn't try to do this of his own accord by trying to do better or work harder. David knows that forgiveness comes from the Lord. Only God can transform our hearts and lead us back to Him (v10). At the end of the day, David realizes that seeking the Lord and being in His presence is the ultimate reward. The temporary pleasures of this world that cause us to sin are nothing in comparison to His great glory.

David completes his journey of repentance in praise. God's deepest desire is for our hearts - to love and to glorify Him. In David's great joy and praise, he wants to show others God's redemptive power to save and forgive (v13). David starts this prayer in a place of deep sorrow and sadness for displeasing God but comes out with an overwhelming peace that results in love and praise for Our God.

## Reflection

What is God asking you to confess to Him today? God knows us deeply and knows our hearts. He wants us to be vulnerable. What have we been hiding? Are we too ashamed of our actions? Are we making excuses or justifying our actions?

# 14 | God Is Closer Than You Think



**"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." Psalm 139:14**

Psalm 139 examines not only the miracle of the human body but also the majesty of God's love for humanity. Love, as we all know, brings out the best parts of our personalities. As Psalm 139 unveils God's love for us, the richest regions of his character are also revealed.

God is all knowing (vv. 1-6). "Lord, you have searched me and known me" (v. 1). We fear that knowing someone completely may lead to boredom. But God assures us that his full knowledge of us isn't only an expression of his love but also results in an ever-deepening affection.

It's worth recognizing that God's intimate awareness of our identity and actions doesn't negate our freedom of choice. At the same time, our freedom to choose doesn't diminish God's perfect knowledge of who we are. He is all knowing yet ever allows us to determine the direction and decision of our lives.

God is ever present (vv. 7-12). "Where can I go to escape your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?" v. 7. Psalm 139 leads us to the inescapable conclusion that God himself is inescapable. At times we're unable to sense his presence. This failure to feel his nearness may result from circumstances beyond our own control. The death of a loved one comes to mind. In this dark time, God's presence may be difficult to sense. For the most part, feelings of estrangement from the Almighty are just that—feelings. The promise of scripture is grounded in the fact that God is ever present.

God is all seeing (vv. 13-18). "My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret... Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began." (vv. 15-16). Your heavenly Father's watchfulness is an expression of intense love. His love is intimate and infinite. His care is deeper than you can imagine and larger than you'll ever know. No one cares for you as he does. No one can and no one will. No one.

Psalm 139 concludes with the beautiful prayer acknowledging God's never-ending desire for our development: "Search me. God. and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way" (vv. 23-24).

## Reflection

In what area of your life—perhaps a relationship, your job, or financial stress—do you need God's help? Name it before him today. Ask for relief. Ask God to provide you with refuge—the safety that comes from knowing that you're never out of his loving sight of separated from his watchful protection.

# 15 | Words of Wisdom



**"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline."**

**Proverbs 1:7**

One word summarizes the book of Proverbs: wisdom. One of the great lessons of life is learning the difference between what feels right and what is right. The book of Proverbs, like the rest of the Bible, points us in the correction direction. Proverbs helps us understand and apply God's will, which is true north for followers of Jesus.

Oscar Wilde once said, "Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes." So the choice before us is an obvious one. We can learn from our own mistakes, or we can choose to learn from the mistakes of others. The difference between the two options is that of personal cost.

The book of Proverbs serves as a reliable and readable mentor. Though not a living, breathing person, Proverbs preserves the best thinking and the highest learning of great leaders. (Solomon, renowned for his wisdom, did the heavy lifting in this volume.)

Proverbs 1:7, a well-known line, is the source of some confusion. It says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline." We must take great care in understanding the phrase "the fear of the Lord." On the surface it seems to suggest that we should be afraid of God. However, emotionally speaking, we know that fear has a way of limiting instead of unleashing. Fear holds us captive instead of setting us free. It's impossible to completely love someone we consciously fear.

In the Hebrew sense of the word, fear is best understood as a "reverent awe" or "ultimate respect." God doesn't desire that we dread him; he asks that we have greater respect for him than anything else in our lives. Proverbs 1:7 teaches that only as we hold God and his commands in high regard do we see the great importance of our decision. Life is a gift from our Creator to be handled with great care. The caliber of relationship with God is the starting place for wise and smart living.

We require wisdom. For the Jesus follower, the book of Proverbs can serve as a reliable instrument panel. And we must learn to read it. The wisdom of God in its pages can be relied on for necessary course corrections in life.

## Reflection

In what area of your life do you need wisdom? At work? At home? In traffic? Write proverbs 3:5-6 on a card, and display it in a strategic place as a reminder of your need for God's guidance.



# 16 | The Real Face of Jesus



**"But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds." Isaiah 53:5**

We are taken to the book of Isaiah. He is one of the prophets whose stories are told in the latter part of the Old Testament. There are 16 books of prophecy split into Major and Minor prophets that were dealt mainly by the length of their books, for all of their messages carry equal weight and importance. We often assume prophets as those who tell the future, but as we see from many of the Biblical, they speak truth into the current events of their times.

This passage paints a very vivid image through its style and detail. Even though Isaiah wrote this passage 700 years before Jesus, it's hard to imagine he is writing about anyone other than Jesus. One area this chapter seems to skim over is Jesus' physical appearance (v2-3). In contrast to today's modern culture of worrying about appearance, the Bible goes into very little detail about His looks.

The chapter flows through Jesus' journey to the cross (v3-5), his burial (v9-10), finishing with the resurrection (v11-12):

Through the crucifixion, we can find peace knowing he was pierced for our iniquities. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:21) Sin is death and God put Jesus to death, the one man who knew no sin, so that we could all be made righteous before God. His love was written in Jesus' blood on the cross.

No one expected for Jesus to die, so they made no plans for his death. He was buried in the rich man's tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27). Laid to rest for what people had thought would be the last time.

But all of the Gospels end their accounts with the Resurrection. He appeared to Mary and the disciples. He was there then and He is still with us today.

## Reflection

All of us have wandered away from God. All of us are eligible for forgiveness. It is freely given to those who believe in Jesus.

How have you strayed from God? How have you fallen short in sin? Take some time today to reflect on how much you have been forgiven and how gracious God is.

# Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.





## Everything We Need

In the bible, we learn about the life of King David. Before becoming a king, David had a special job to take care of sheep. In other words, he was a shepherd. In today's bible passage, we get to read from King David's psalm while learning more about who God is.

In verse 1, David starts by saying, "The Lord is my shepherd."

What does it mean for God to be our shepherd? Well, it's simple! God is the one to take care of us. He helps us, leads us, and teaches us how to follow Him.

We don't need to do things alone. We can always ask God to help us. He is our shepherd!

Verse 1 doesn't end there too! David finishes the verse by saying, "I lack nothing." In other words, "I have what I need." At the end of the day, we have everything we need and that is because we have God! Because God is our shepherd, we can trust that we don't lack anything. All we need to do is love God and trust in Him to provide for all of our needs.

### Reflection/Prayer

1. What does it mean for God to be your shepherd?

2. How can you trust God as the shepherd of your life?

3. What do you think about God being everything you need? Share with your family.

Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for loving and guiding us as our kind shepherd. Help us to be thankful for

who you are in our lives. We have everything we need in this life because we have you."