

Monday, Feb 23

“As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a Godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For Godly grief produced a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this Godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.” 2 Cor 7:9-11

FAST from perfectionism by not cleaning up your home or workspace today.

PRAY and thank God that his correction leads to change and not to shame.

GIVE a note of encouragement to someone who has been feeling bad about themselves.

Tuesday, Feb 24

“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.” Revelation 3:19

FAST from excess noise (TV running in the background, music playing, listening to the radio on your commute, etc).

PRAY that God will remind you of his great love. Ask him to make you focused in your repentance.

GIVE God 15 minutes of undivided attention.

Wednesday, Feb 25

“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 18:10-14

FAST from speaking outside of what is absolutely necessary; focus on listening instead of sharing.

PRAY that God will use the silence of your day to be a time of quiet, humble repentance.

GIVE the gift of listening; really focus on the words that others say to you today.

Thursday, Feb 26

“And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell...” Mark 9:43-48

FAST from something that has led you into sin before (alcohol, the internet, chatting with a gossipy friend, television, etc).

PRAY and ask God to tell you what it would mean to “cut off” the thing that leads you into sin.

GIVE honest confession to someone you trust; tell them about something that has gotten in the way of your obedience.

Friday, Feb 27

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

FAST from apathy or despair about what is going on in the nation.

PRAY for our country and leaders; not that they would be changed (try to avoid political prayer!) but that they and our nation would honor God.

GIVE 15 minutes to NBC or FOX or CNN; read the paper or watch the news as a way of engaging with what is going on in our nation. Pray along with the articles or new stories.

"As Lent is the time for greater love, listen to Jesus' thirst... 'Repent and believe' Jesus tells us. What are we to repent? Our indifference, our hardness of heart. What are we to believe? Jesus thirsts even now, in your heart and in the poor --

He knows your weakness. He wants only your love, wants only the chance to love you."

- Mother Teresa of Calcutta

ABIDE IN ME

Saturday | Week 2 | Lent Reflection

READ

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me, *you can do nothing.*”

John 15:4-5

REFLECT

-What does it mean to abide in God? How do we stay deeply connected to Him?

-What things do you try to accomplish in your own strength?

-What does it look like to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2) while not depending on your works to bring about holiness?

PRAY

-Admit your inadequacy to Him. Ask Him to name your sin, instruct your obedience, and empower you to change. Revel in your dependence.



When you combine two brothers, a sleepless night, and a veritable arsenal of plastic weapons, you know you’re bound for trouble. So I wasn’t overly surprised when screams shot out from the boys’ playroom. I ran in to find an inconsolable little brother curled up on the floor and a wide-eyed (and rather guilty looking) older brother standing with a ninja sword in hand. After hearing the sob-laden explanation of what happened, I turned to my oldest and firmly stated, “That was not kind. You are being very mean to your little brother. You have to be more loving to him than that.” And with a helpless sigh and an affected grunt, he whined, “I’ve tried, Mom! But I just can’t do it. It’s just not in me.”

I swear my kids catch on to things faster than I do. Because when my Father sits me down and speaks firmly to me about my sins, I don’t respond like my boy did. Instead of acknowledging my inadequacy, I take matters into my own hands. Develop an action plan? Check. Avoid these certain people? Check. Buckle down and just try harder to be good? Check, check, check. And my plan for obedience works.

Until, of course, it doesn’t.

Hours (or, more often, minutes) later, I’m back to where I started, beginning again the cycle of sinning and striving and failing. Because when you boil it down, I just can’t do it. It’s just not in me. (Romans 3:10-12)

Maybe repentance isn’t about trying harder or doing more. Maybe it’s simply about kneeling before our God, owning our need, and allowing the Vine to bring about the fruit of change.

So may we retreat from our striving until we’ve learned to abide in our Savior.