

Thursday— Our reading from Matthew 4:1-11 recalls the Temptation of Jesus in the desert wilderness. Read the passage through 2-3 times slowly, take notes about details that capture your attention—write out any questions that come to your mind as you read. What do you think about the opening of the reading; “Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil...”? Take time to compare the gospel parallels from Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13. Do you find any details from these alternate accounts that bring greater insight? If so, what did you find? How might you compare your spiritual journey with the experience of Jesus in the desert wilderness? What might you learn from this encounter that is, or can be, helpful to your Christian experience? What does Jesus’ desert temptation mean to you?

Friday— Review your devotional notebook from this week. Try as best as you are able to recall the memories, emotions, and thoughts that were stirred in you as you participated in each exercise. If you were able to reflect and pray on the Psalm during your days, how did that exercise impact you? Was this week a positive experience or a negative experience? Have you felt as though you experienced the nearness of God’s Presence with you? How do you feel now? With consideration to your thoughts, feelings, and memories at this moment, write out a personal Psalm of praise or lament (let the Psalm reflect how you truly feel). Do not try to use flowery language or phrasing that is not how you normally write or speak—be you. Write honestly, passionately, and authentically your heart and what you would speak to God about this week and this moment.

2017 Weekly Lenten Devotional Guide



First Week of Lent (March 5-11, 2017)

Suggestions for your devotional weeks:

- ◆ Set aside a minimum of 30 minutes to work the reflection exercise.
- ◆ Purchase a small composition notebook to work in and journal your thoughts and prayers.
- ◆ Consider joining a group or starting a small group to work through the devotional exercises together in community.



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Prayer for the week: You may wish to begin and end your devotional time with this prayer.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Scriptures for reading and reflection this week:

- Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7
- Psalm 32
- Romans 5:12-19
- Matthew 4:1-11

Daily Reflection Questions and Exercises:

Monday– Read the Genesis passages of Scripture for this week (Gen. 2:15-17, 3:1-7).

Imagine yourself receiving the instruction from God not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. Why do you eat of the Tree? What is it that compels you to doubt God and/or His goodness and good intention for you? While we might consider that we “certainly would not have eaten of the Tree...” there may be circumstances in our life today that parallel the distrust and disobedience of Adam and Eve. Consider your present life circumstances; being as honest as you possible can, where might you presently distrust God and where might you be withholding your complete obedience to Him? What is your Tree of Knowledge in your life today? (Areas to consider: health, finance, relationships, employment, hobbies, entertainment, personal discipleship to Jesus, etc.). Write down your thoughts and any words of confession to God.

Tuesday– Yesterday’s exercise might have been a difficult reflection; confronting our frailty and confessing our sin can invite guilt, shame, and condemnation. Today, let us celebrate the goodness of God’s grace and forgiveness with a proclamation and confession to God from Psalm 32:1-5. Take a piece of paper and write out the Psalm verses (32:1-5). After you have written the passage down, read it aloud to yourself. Take time to pause through each verse and reflect on the truth of the Psalm and how it impacts you. If particular words or thoughts come to you during this reflection, write them down. Fold the paper at the close of your devotional time and carry it with you during the day. Schedule and remember to revisit the Psalm passage 2-3 times during your day (lunch, coffee break, supper, before bedtime). Read the passage aloud if you are able. Remember and reflect on the emotions and words that are stirred in you as you read. Give thanks to God for His immeasurable grace and forgiveness to you.

Wednesday– Today, let us consider the writing of the Apostle Paul in his Letter to the Romans (Romans 5:12-19). In this passage, the Apostle compares and contrasts the works of Adam and the works of Jesus. What details from this reading stand out to you? In what ways do you find that you are impacted by Adam? In what ways do you realize the impact of Jesus in your life? Can you provide specific examples?

Return to Psalm 32 (Psalm 32:6-11); read this portion of the Psalm slowly 2-3 times. After you’ve read and taken a minute or two of silent reflection, return to the Psalm (verses 6-11) and write down on a piece of paper the two verses that stir a response in you the most. Carry these verses with you and read them aloud to yourself several times through the course of your day.