



Journey through Lent

Fasting

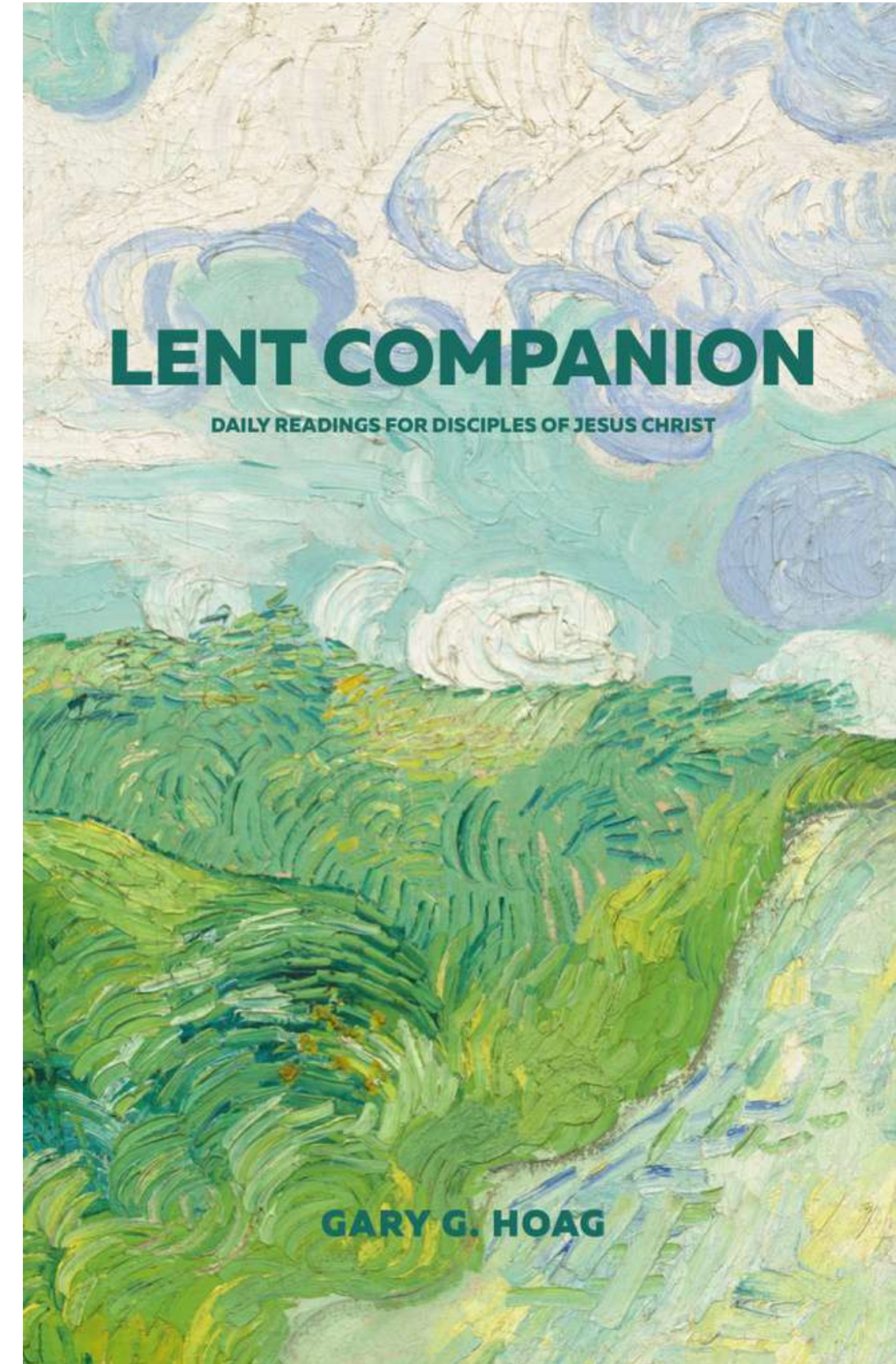
15 March 2024, 11 am GMT

What is Lent?

Lent is a season when followers of Christ focus on understanding and practicing the formational disciplines of giving, prayer, and fasting. We observe it from 14 February to 31 March 2024.

Journey with GTP

By reading Lent Companion and joining 4 Zoom meetings on Giving, Prayer, Fasting, and Life After Lent.





Sermon on the Mount

Jesus gives us specific instructions

When you give...

When you pray...

When you fast...

He wants us to practice these disciplines for our good and His glory.

We will look together at His instructions from Matthew 6 in these Zooms meetings.



Warning Label for Lent

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 6:1

**Be careful.
Do Lent for
yourself and
for God,
not for people.**



Matthew 6:16-18 and Fasting

16 "And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.



Matthew 6:16 and Fasting

16 "And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

Don't mark your face to show others you are fasting. Don't fast to be seen.



Matthew 6:17-18 and Fasting

17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The application of oil and the washing implies that fasting is both a spiritual and physical experience.



Matthew 6:17-18 and Fasting

17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Fasting is more than not eating food. It's setting aside our desire for something good to gain something better.



John Climacus on Fasting

In his famous work, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, John Climacus writes, "Fasting is the coercion of nature and the cutting out of everything that delights the palate, the prevention of lust, the uprooting of bad thoughts, deliverance from dreams, purity of prayer, the light of the soul, the guarding of the mind, deliverance from blindness, the door of compunction, humble sighing, glad contrition, a lull in chatter, a means to silence, a guard of obedience, lightening of sleep, health of body, agent of dispassion, remission of sins, the gate of Paradise and its delight."

Breakout Discussion

Let's reflect together.

Take notes to share in the chat.

Why do you think Jesus instructs us to fast in secret and invites us to experience both physical and spiritual impact?



Five Practical Tips for Fasting

1. Make yourself “weak” so that you can know and rely on the strength and power of God. (2 Corinthians 12:9–10).

Fast from a specific food. For example, coffee, chocolate, sweets, meat, or other food that you feel we need each day.

Fast from a specific food and enjoy it on feast days.



Five Practical Tips for Fasting

2. "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Acts 13:2

When we focus on God instead of video games, social media, TV, or other things that "consume" us, it gets our hearts ready for service.

**Fast from
whatever
seeks to
consume
you.**



Five Practical Tips for Fasting

3. “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?” Isaiah 58:6. Fast from comforts linked to yourself and that do not bless others and instead give yourself in service to others.

**Fast from
comforts to
which you
get attached.**



Five Practical Tips for Fasting

4. "I had eaten no rich food, no meat or wine had entered my mouth, and I had not anointed myself at all, for the full 3 weeks." Daniel 10:3. The "Daniel Fast" is living on water and vegetables. See the 10-day test in Daniel 1:8-14. See also Nehemiah 1:1-2:1 where Nehemiah fasted, prayed, and confessed the sins of his people to God for 4 months. In difficult situations, the one fasting seeks discernment or deliverance.

**Fast for
a span
of time
alone.**



Five Practical Tips for Fasting

5. "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish."
Esther 4:16 (see also Ezra 8:21)

Fast for three days with others in community.

Breakout Discussion

- 1. Fast from a specific food and enjoy it on feast days.**
- 2. Fast from whatever seeks to consume you.**
- 3. Fast from comforts to which you get attached.**
- 4. Fast for a span of time alone.**
- 5. Fast for three days with others in community.**

Pick one of the tips. What if you did it?



Journey through Lent

Read *Lent Companion* daily. Download it at www.gtp.org/resources/ebooks/lent-companion/

Join us for the last Zoom meeting this Lent:
On Life after Lent – 2 April at 11 am GMT

Do Lent with GTP and invite a friend.



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