

WHEN JESUS PRAYED

AN INSIDE LOOK AT JESUS UNDER PRESSURE

STUDY GUIDE

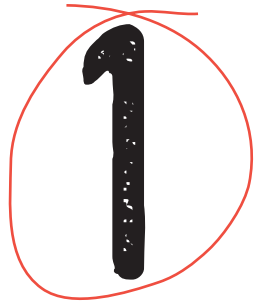
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LENT IS NOT A SELF-IMPROVEMENT PROJECT. IT'S AN INVITATION TO MAKE ROOM. Over the next six weeks in When Jesus Prayed, we're walking with Jesus from Lent to Easter, paying attention to what He does when pressure rises. Sometimes he steps away. Sometimes he speaks hard truth. Sometimes he weeps. Sometimes he asks for help. Sometimes he surrenders. And in every moment, he stays connected to God. This guide and related resources will help you do the same, so Easter feels less like a holiday we attend and more like a resurrection we're ready to receive.

Whether you're using this in a House Church, with a spouse, or on your own, the goal isn't to get it perfect. It's to show up. This is a season we can commit to growing closer to God, and closer to each other.

HERE'S HOW TO USE THIS WELL: keep it small and steady. Choose a quiet place and a realistic time you can protect (even 15 minutes). Watch the weekly video, read the Scripture slowly, and answer the questions with honesty, no performing. If you're doing this with others, listen well, don't rush to fix, and remember: being present is often more loving than being impressive. Each week, pick one "next right step," try the fast, and notice what changes in you. And if you miss a day, don't spiral—no guilt, no catch-up. Just restart. Lent is a journey, and God meets us in faithful small steps.



WHEN THE IS ALREADY UNDER PRESSURE:

DAY TOO LOUD: THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Lent is not a self-improvement project. It's an invitation to make room: to tell the truth about our pressure, our limits, and our need for God.

In Mark 1, Jesus is in demand. People are sick. The crowds are growing. Everyone wants His attention. And Jesus does something that can look irresponsible in a hurry-driven world: He walks away. Not to avoid people, but to stay anchored in love, clarity, and purpose.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA: Things like prayer, solitude, and rest are not an escape from real life. They are how we return to real life with God at the center.

WATCH. READ. REFLECT.



- Watch the Week 1 video.
- Read Mark 1:32–39 once, slowly.
- Reflect with one honest answer to this question:
"Where do I feel pressure right now?"

A LENTEN RHYTHM

FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. BEGIN WITH QUIET

No music. No talking. Settle and breathe. One to two minutes centering on God.

Opening Prayer

*God,
We live in a loud world—externally and internally.
Meet us in the quiet.
Disentangle us from hurry.
Help us listen to You, not just react to the world.
And in this Lenten season, lead us closer to You and closer to each other.
Amen.*

2. NAMING OUR LOUD AND HEAVY THINGS

Have each person share (keep it simple):

- **One pressure point** I'm carrying this week is _____.
- **One place** I feel stretched thin is _____.

3. SCRIPTURE IN THE CENTER

Read Mark 1:32–39 out loud. Then ask:
What word, phrase, or detail stood out to you?

UNDER PRESSURE: THE CONVERSATION

WITH OTHERS OR WITH GOD

- The passage moves from evening crowds to early morning solitude. What does that contrast tell you about Jesus?
- Mark is specific: “very early while it was still dark.” Why do you think Jesus chose that time?
- The disciples say, “Everyone is looking for you.” What emotions do you hear in that line? (*urgency, anxiety, pride, panic, expectation*)
- Jesus doesn’t rush back. He says, in effect, “We’re going somewhere else.” What does that reveal about his priorities?
- If Jesus healed and helped so many, why not stay and keep meeting demand? What do we learn from Jesus about limits and purpose?
- What does “Everyone is looking for you” sound like in your real life?
- When you feel pressure, what’s your default response? (*accelerate, numb out, become irritable, try to control everything, disappear, something else*)
- Jesus didn’t let urgent needs set his agenda. Where do you feel your agenda is being set by urgency instead of wisdom?
- What is the cost of being constantly available? (*to your soul, your relationships, your ability to do things you love*)
- What would it look like, practically, to create time and space for solitude, prayer, and reflection in your current season? (*Not ideal life, but in real life.*)

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Name one small boundary that would create space for solitude, prayer, or reflection this week, circle one:

Time Technology Conversation Calendar

Share or write about the specific boundary:

Who could help you keep it? (*a spouse, friend, group member*)

What kind of help do you actually want:

Reminder Accountability Encouragement

SENDING OUT

You’ve named the pressure and listened to the Word. Now close this time by turning what we heard into a small, faithful practice.

This week I need God’s help with _____.

This week I’m making space by _____.

For Groups and Couples: Finish the sentence. After each person shares, the group can simply respond, “You’re not alone.”

Solo: Finish writing those two above sentences.

CLOSING PRAYER

God,
We bring You what is loud and heavy in us.
Meet us in the quiet, and steady us in Your love.
Give us wisdom for what to say yes to—and courage for what to set down.
As we walk into this week, draw us closer to Jesus and closer to each other.
Amen.

FINDING YOUR QUIET PLACE

JESUS CONNECTED TO GOD MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK

Jesus didn't spend all his time reading Scriptures, praying, and reflecting. But he made it part of his regular routine. We are at our best when we resemble Jesus. The goal is not perfection. It's progress. Faithful daily steps.

A STEP TOWARD GOD

READ. REFLECT. RESPOND.

(If you miss a day: no guilt, no catch-up. Just restart.)

Day 1: Mark 1:32–39

Reflect: What does Jesus do with pressure—and what do you do?

Respond (prayer): "Jesus, teach me Your rhythms."

Day 2: Matthew 6:5–13 (focus on 6:6)

Reflect: What does "pray in secret" mean in your life?

Respond: Choose a place this week that becomes your "quiet place."

Day 3: Psalm 62:1–8

Reflect: What does it mean for your soul to "wait in silence" before God?

Respond: Name one thing you're carrying that you need to release.

Day 4: Luke 5:15–16

Reflect: Jesus often withdrew to pray. What pattern does that suggest—especially when demand increases?

Respond: What's one repeatable rhythm you could adopt?

Day 5: 1 Kings 19:9–13

Reflect: God's voice is not always loud. Where might you need to turn down the volume to hear God?

Respond: Sit in silence for a few minutes and listen to God.

Day 6: Psalm 139:23–24

Reflect: Lent is honest. What might God want to "search" in you this week—anxiety, resentment, control, exhaustion?

Respond: Pray, "Lead me in Your way."

A STEP TOWARD WHOLENESS THE WEEKLY FAST

For one day this week, fast from noise. Pick a practice that will challenge you or create your own fast:

- No music/podcasts/talk radio during your commute
- No television news or sports
- No scrolling during idle moments

Replace it with this simple practice. During one commute, a 15-minute walk, or in your solitary place, pray:

- God, here is what I'm carrying...
- Here is what I can't control...
- Here is what I need...

A STEP TOWARD OTHERS LOVING OTHERS WELL

Jesus goes back out into the world after prayer—more loving, not less engaged. Choose one of the following this week, or come up with your own.

- Send a short "I'm with you" text to someone who is under pressure.
- Bring a meal/gift to someone who is depleted.
- Write a note of encouragement to a teacher, nurse, neighbor, coworker, or somebody else who needs it.
- Have one conversation this week where your phone is out of sight, and you're not multitasking.

2 WHEN THE WON'T UNDER PRESSURE:

Lent is not a self-improvement project. It's an invitation to make room—especially when life feels complicated, and choices feel heavy.

In Luke 6, Jesus is under pressure. Crowds are gathering. His ministry is expanding. And before he makes a defining decision; who will walk with him and carry his mission—Jesus spends the night in prayer. He doesn't decide in hurry or out of fear. He chooses from communion with God.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA: Prayerful discernment doesn't erase hard decisions. It helps us choose with love, honesty, and courage—so pressure isn't the loudest voice in our lives.

WATCH. READ. REFLECT.



- Watch the Week 2 video.
- Read Luke 6:12-16 once, slowly.
- Reflect with one honest answer to this question:
"What decision is weighing on me right now?"

DECISION DECIDE ITSELF: THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

A LENTEN RHYTHM FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. BEGIN WITH QUIET

No music. No talking. Settle and breathe. If a decision is on your mind, picture placing it in God's hands. You don't have to solve it right now. Just bring it. One to two minutes centering on God.

Opening Prayer

*God,
So many voices compete for our attention. Quiet the anxiety within us. Give us wisdom we can trust and courage we can live by. Help us listen for Your voice—not just the loudest. And in this Lent season, lead us closer to You and to each other.
Amen.*

2. NAMING OUR LOUD AND HEAVY THINGS

Have each person share (keep it simple):

- **One decision** I'm carrying this week is _____.
- **One thing** that makes it hard to choose is _____.

3. SCRIPTURE IN THE CENTER

Read Luke 6:12-16 out loud. Then ask:
What word, phrase, or detail stood out to you?

UNDER PRESSURE: THE CONVERSATION

WITH OTHERS OR WITH GOD

- Jesus prays through the night before choosing the twelve. What does that tell you about the weight of this moment?
- What do you notice about Jesus' order: prayer first, decisions second? What might that protect him from?
- Luke says Jesus went to a mountain to pray. What might the setting communicate—distance, perspective, focus, surrender?
- Jesus chooses imperfect people—people who will misunderstand and fail. What does that teach us about discernment versus certainty?
- How would you describe the difference between discernment and control? Between wisdom and a guarantee?
- What kinds of decisions tend to land on your shoulders right now? (*family, work, finances, schedules, health, boundaries*)
- When you're under pressure, what voices get loud in you? (*fear, people-pleasing, scarcity, pride*)
- Where do you tend to look for clarity first (*Google, friends, social media, overthinking*)? What might it look like to look to God first?
- What is one "next right step" you could take this week instead of trying to solve the whole future today?
- If you felt anchored in God's love, how might that change what you choose—or how you choose it?

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Name one decision (big or small) that needs prayerful discernment this week, circle one:

Work Family Money Relationship Health Purpose

Share or write the decision clearly:

Choose one "discernment step",
you will take before you decide circle one:

Pause 24 hours and pray Read Scripture first

Seek wise counsel Reduce input noise

Share or write the specific plan (when + what you'll do):

SENDING OUT

You've named the pressure and listened to the Word. Now close this time by turning what we heard into a small, faithful practice.

This week I need God's wisdom about _____.

This week I will take one discernment by _____.

For Groups and Couples: Finish the sentence. After each person shares, the group can simply respond, "You're not alone."

Solo: Finish writing those two above sentences.

CLOSING PRAYER

God,

We bring You the choices in front of us. Meet us in the quiet, and steady us in Your love. Give us wisdom that is rooted in You—not driven by fear. And as we walk into this week, shape our decisions into love.

Amen.

FINDING YOUR QUIET PLACE

JESUS CONNECTED TO GOD MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK

A STEP TOWARD GOD

READ. REFLECT. RESPOND.

(If you miss a day: no guilt, no catch-up. Just restart.)

Day 1: Luke 6:12-16

Reflect: What do you notice about Jesus' pace and posture before a defining decision?

Respond (prayer): God, teach me to choose with You.

Day 2: James 1:5-8

Reflect: What does it look like to ask for wisdom without being pulled in two directions?

Respond (prayer): God, give me some wisdom I can trust and courage that I can live.

Day 3: Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10

Reflect: Where do you need God to teach you a way forward instead of you forcing one?

Respond: Write one sentence: "God, lead me in Your truth about _____."

Day 4: Proverbs 3:5-6

Reflect: Where are you leaning on your own understanding right now?

Respond: Name one thing you will stop trying to control today.

Day 5: Philippians 1:9-11

Reflect: Paul links love and discernment. How might love guide your decision this week?

Respond (prayer): God, grow my love and sharpen my discernment.

Day 6: Romans 12:1-2

Reflect: What patterns are shaping your thinking right now—and what needs renewing?

Respond: Choose one small habit to change for one week to help you think more clearly.

A STEP TOWARD WHOLENESS THE WEEKLY FAST

For one day this week, fast from other people's opinions. This isn't about going it alone—it's about limiting the noise so you can listen for God. Pick a practice that will challenge you, or create your own fast:

- No social media (or news commentary) for the day
- Do not ask more than one person for advice about the decision you're facing
- No impulse purchases or quick "escape decisions" (*pause 24 hours before buying or committing*)

Replace it with this simple practice. During one commute, a 15-minute walk, or in your quiet space, think about the decision you're facing and then pray:

- God, here is the decision I'm facing...
- Here is what I'm afraid of...
- Give me wisdom and courage for the next right step...

A STEP TOWARD OTHERS LOVING OTHERS WELL

Discernment is rarely a solo sport. We learn to listen better when we love others well. Choose one of the following this week, or come up with your own.

- Listen to someone who is facing a decision. Ask good questions. No fixing unless they ask.
- Send a note or text that says, "I'm with you as you sort this out. You're not alone."
- Have one conversation this week where your phone is out of sight, and you're not multitasking. Ask, "What decision is on your mind right now?"



WHEN IT'S YOUR UNDER PRESSURE:

NOT GOING WAY: THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Lent is not a self-improvement project. It's an invitation to make room—especially when you're worn out, discouraged, or starting to wonder if any of this is working.

In Matthew 11, Jesus has reason to feel frustrated. Towns have seen his works and still refuse to let those works change them. The pressure is real, and disappointment is close. And yet Jesus prays a surprising prayer: "I thank you, Father..." Then he turns toward the exhausted and offers rest: "Come to me, all you who are weary..." Under pressure, Jesus stays connected to God—and keeps his heart open.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA: Gratitude isn't pretending everything is fine. It's staying connected to God when things are hard—so weariness doesn't harden us, and we can receive rest for the road ahead.

WATCH. READ. REFLECT.



- Watch the Week 3 video.
- Read Matthew 11:20–30 once, slowly.
- Reflect with one honest answer to this question: *"Where am I weary, discouraged, or disappointed right now?"*

A LENTEN RHYTHM

FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. BEGIN WITH QUIET

No music. No talking. Settle and breathe. If you're carrying disappointment or weariness, name it without trying to fix it. You don't have to force gratitude right now. Just be honest. Picture placing it before Jesus. One to two minutes centering on God.

Opening Prayer

*God,
Some of us are tired. Some of us are discouraged. Some of us are carrying more than we can hold. Meet us where we actually are. Keep our hearts soft. Teach us to receive Your rest. And in this Lent season, lead us closer to You and closer to each other.
Amen.*

2. NAMING OUR LOUD AND HEAVY THINGS

Have each person share (keep it simple):

- **One thing** I'm weary from this week is _____.
- **One thing** that makes it hard to be grateful is _____.

3. SCRIPTURE IN THE CENTER

Read Matthew 11:20–30 out loud. Then ask:
What word, phrase, or detail stood out to you?

UNDER PRESSURE: THE CONVERSATION

WITH OTHERS OR WITH GOD

- In Matthew 11, Jesus names disappointment (v. 20–24) and then prays gratitude (v. 25–26). What does that tell you about holding honesty and trust together?
- Jesus thanks God for revealing “these things” to “little children” rather than the “wise and learned.” What do you think he means by “these things”? What kind of posture is he describing?
- What gets in the way of that posture for you? (*control, image, overthinking, needing to be right, needing to be impressive*)
- “Come to me, all you who are weary...” What kind of weariness do you think Jesus is talking about—physical, emotional, spiritual? Where do you feel it right now?
- How would you describe the difference between gratitude and denial? Between rest and avoidance?
- Jesus doesn’t say, “Try harder.” He says, “Come.” Why is receiving help (or receiving rest) difficult for so many of us under pressure?
- Jesus describes himself as “gentle and humble in heart.” When you picture God, is that what you picture? If not, what do you picture and why?
- A “yoke” is a tool for shared work and shared pace. What “yokes” are you carrying right now? (*expectations, perfectionism, schedules, comparison, self-reliance*)
- What might it look like for Jesus to be “yoked” with you in that area: sharing the weight and setting the pace?
- What is one small “come to Jesus” moment you could practice this week—one place you could receive rest instead of pushing through?

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Name one place where you feel weary, discouraged, or disappointed right now, circle one:

Work Family Money Relationship Health Schedule

Share or write why:

Choose one “rest-and-gratitude step”
you will practice this week, circle one:

Tell the truth to God (one sentence) Name 3 gifts

Take a real rest (15–60 minutes; phone out of reach)

Ask for help (from one person)

Share or write the specific plan (when + what you’ll do):

SENDING OUT

You’ve named the pressure and listened to the Word. Now close this time by turning what we heard into a small, faithful practice.

This week I need Jesus’ rest in _____.

This week I will receive it by _____.

For Groups and Couples: Finish the sentence. After each person shares, the group can simply respond, “You’re not alone.”

Solo: Finish writing those two above sentences.

CLOSING PRAYER

God,

We bring You our weariness and our disappointment. Meet us in the quiet, and steady us in Your love. Teach us the gentle way of Jesus. And as we walk into this week, give us rest that makes us more loving.

Amen.

FINDING YOUR QUIET PLACE

JESUS CONNECTED TO GOD MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK

A STEP TOWARD GOD

READ. REFLECT. RESPOND.

(If you miss a day: no guilt, no catch-up. Just restart.)

Day 1: Matthew 11:20–30

Reflect: What do you hear in Jesus' invitation to the weary?

Respond (prayer): Jesus, teach me Your gentle way.

Day 2: Psalm 13

Reflect: Where do you need to be honest with God about disappointment?

Respond: Write one sentence to God that begins, "How long...?"

Day 3: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Reflect: What does it mean to give thanks without pretending everything is fine?

Respond: Write down three gifts from today—one small, one surprising, one relational.

Day 4: Exodus 16:1–5, 13–18

Reflect: God gives manna one day at a time. Where do you need "daily bread" trust right now?

Respond: Name one thing you will stop trying to stockpile or control today.

Day 5: Isaiah 30:15

Reflect: "In repentance and rest is your salvation." What would rest look like in your real life this week?

Respond: Put a 15-minute rest block on your calendar—and guard it.

Day 6: Psalm 131

Reflect: What might it look like for you to be quiet and trusting before God?

Respond: God, I trust You with _____.

A STEP TOWARD WHOLENESS THE WEEKLY FAST

For one day this week, fast from complaining and comparison.

This isn't about pretending everything is fine—it's about noticing what we rehearse—and choosing a truer, gentler voice. Pick a practice that will challenge you, or create your own fast:

- No venting texts / "hot takes" for the day (if you need to process, talk to one trusted person face-to-face)
- No comparing your life to someone else's (social media, neighborhoods, parenting, work wins, vacations)
- No impulse purchases or quick "escape decisions" (pause 24 hours before buying or committing)

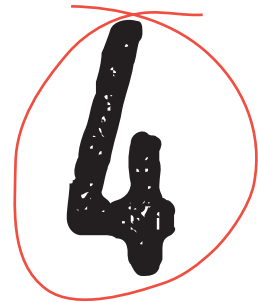
Replace it with this simple practice. During one commute, a 15-minute walk, or in your quiet space, write down: what feels heavy, what is good, and what you need from Jesus. Then pray:

- Jesus, here is what feels heavy...
- Here is one gift I can name...
- Teach me Your gentle way today...

A STEP TOWARD OTHERS LOVING OTHERS WELL

When we're weary, we get short. When we receive rest, we become gentler—and people around us feel it. Choose one of the following this week, or come up with your own.

- Thank someone specifically (a teacher, coworker, spouse, neighbor) and tell them what you appreciate.
- Sit with someone who is worn out. Ask, "What are you carrying?" No fixing unless they ask.
- Be gentle on purpose: choose one relationship and refuse sarcasm, criticism, or the last word for the day.



WHEN WON'T UNDER PRESSURE:

Lent is not a self-improvement project. It's an invitation to make room—especially when life hurts, when loss is close, and when we don't have the strength to pretend we're fine.

In John 11, Jesus walks into a moment of grief. Lazarus has died. Mary and Martha are heartbroken. The people are weeping. And Jesus does something both holy and human: he weeps. Then he prays, out loud, and calls his friend back to life. Under pressure, Jesus doesn't bypass grief. He enters it. He prays inside it.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA: Grief doesn't mean your faith is failing. It means you're human. Prayer in grief is not about rushing to answers, it's about bringing your pain into the presence of Jesus, so sorrow doesn't isolate you and hope can slowly return.

WATCH. READ. REFLECT.



- Watch the Week 4 video.
- Read John 11:17-44 once, slowly.
- Reflect with one honest answer to this question:
"Where am I grieving right now?"

GRIEF HURRY UP THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

A LENTEN RHYTHM FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. BEGIN WITH QUIET

No music. No talking. Settle and breathe. If grief is present in you, recent or old, name it without trying to fix it. You don't have to explain it. You don't have to rush it. Picture placing it before Jesus. One to two minutes centering on God.

Opening Prayer

*God,
Some of us are carrying loss. Some of us are carrying fear. Some of us are carrying sadness we can't put into words. Meet us in our grief. Hold what we cannot hold. Give us courage to be honest—and grace to be gentle with ourselves. And in this Lent season, lead us closer to You and closer to each other.
Amen.*

2. NAMING OUR LOUD AND HEAVY THINGS

Have each person share (keep it simple):

- **One loss or sorrow** I'm carrying right now is _____.
- **One thing** that makes grief complicated for me is _____.

3. SCRIPTURE IN THE CENTER

Read John 11:17-44 out loud. Then ask:
What word, phrase, or detail stood out to you?

UNDER PRESSURE: THE CONVERSATION

WITH OTHERS OR WITH GOD

- In John 11, Jesus waits, arrives, listens, weeps, prays, and acts. What do you notice about his pace in the middle of grief?
- Martha says, “Lord, if you had been here...” (v. 21). What’s underneath that sentence—faith, disappointment, anger, hope?
- Jesus doesn’t correct their grief. He meets it. What does that teach you about how God responds to our pain?
- “Jesus wept.” Why do you think that detail matters enough to be in Scripture?
- Jesus asks, “Where have you laid him?” (v. 34). What might it look like to let Jesus get close to the specific place that hurts?
- What’s the difference between grief and hopelessness? Where do you feel either of them or both of them tugging on you?
- Jesus prays out loud (v. 41–42). Why might Jesus choose to pray where others can hear it? What does that say about community in grief?
- Jesus says, “Roll the stone aside.” (v. 39). What ‘stone’ might be in your way—avoidance, numbness, isolation, busyness, pretending?
- If you could say one honest sentence to God about your grief, what would it be?
- What is one small step toward presence this week (toward God, toward a person, or toward your own heart) instead of rushing past your grief?

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Name one place where grief is present for you right now, circle one:

Loss Family Relationship Health Work Future

Share or write why you chose this answer:

Choose one “grief-and-hope step”

you will practice this week, circle one:

Tell the truth to God Practice lament (write it out)

Reach out to one person

Take a real rest (15-60 minutes; phone out of reach)

Share or write the specific plan (when + what you’ll do):

SENDING OUT

You’ve named the pressure and listened to the Word. Now close this time by turning what we heard into a small, faithful practice.

This week I need Jesus’ comfort around _____.

This week I will take one small step forward by _____.

For Groups and Couples: Finish the sentence. After each person shares, the group can simply respond, “You’re not alone.”

Solo: Finish writing those two above sentences.

CLOSING PRAYER

God,

We bring You our grief and our questions. Meet us in the quiet, and steady us in Your love. Give us courage to be honest—and strength to take the next right step. And as we walk into this week, keep us from isolation and draw us toward hope.

Amen.

FINDING YOUR QUIET PLACE

JESUS CONNECTED TO GOD MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK

A STEP TOWARD GOD

READ. REFLECT. RESPOND.

(If you miss a day: no guilt, no catch-up. Just restart.)

Day 1: John 11:17-44

Reflect: Where do you see Jesus meeting grief—with presence, tears, prayer, and hope?

Respond (prayer): Jesus, meet me where it hurts.

Day 2: Psalm 34:17-18

Reflect: Where do you need to be honest with God about disappointment?

Respond: Write one sentence to God that begins, “How long...?”

Day 3: Psalm 42

Reflect: The psalmist is honest and still reaching for hope. Where do you need that kind of honesty?

Respond: Write a short lament to God (2-5 lines).

Day 4: Romans 8:26-39

Reflect: What stands out about God’s help when we don’t have words?

Respond: Spirit of God, pray in me what I cannot say...

Day 5: 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Reflect: How does comfort move through community? Not just to you, but through you?

Respond: Name one person you could encourage or check on this week.

Day 6: Revelation 21:1-5

Reflect: What kind of hope does “He will wipe every tear” offer—not denial, but promise?

Respond: God, hold my grief and grow my hope.

A STEP TOWARD WHOLENESS THE WEEKLY FAST

For one day this week, fast from rushing grief. This isn’t about getting stuck—it’s about refusing the pressure to “be fine” or “move on.” Pick a practice that will challenge you, or create your own fast:

- No numbing (binge-watching, doom-scrolling) for the day—notice what you reach for when you feel sad or anxious.
- No fixing-talk for the day—if someone shares pain, practice presence before advice.
- No avoidance—name one hard thing honestly, instead of pushing it down.

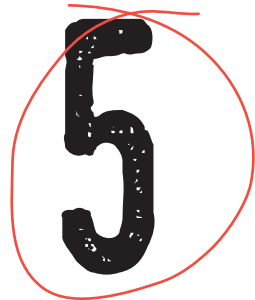
Replace it with this simple practice. During one commute, a 15-minute walk, or in your quiet space, think about what you’ve lost, what you miss, and what you need from Jesus. Then pray:

- Jesus, here is what I’ve lost...
- Here is what I miss...
- Meet me with Your presence and the next right step...

A STEP TOWARD OTHERS LOVING OTHERS WELL

Grief can shrink our world. Love gently expands it again. We don’t fix each other—we show up. Choose one of the following this week, or come up with your own.

- Sit with someone who is grieving. Ask, “What are you carrying?”
- Send a text that communicates presence: “I’m with you. I don’t have answers, but I’m here.”
- Do one practical thing that lightens someone’s load (*a meal, childcare, an errand, a ride*).



WHEN FEEL UNDER PRESSURE:

RELATIONSHIPS FRAGILE THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Lent is not a self-improvement project. It's an invitation to make room—especially when relationships feel strained, when conflict is close, or when loneliness settles in.

In John 17, Jesus is under pressure. It's the night before the cross. He knows his friends are about to face fear, confusion, and division. And instead of giving a last lecture or trying to control the outcome, Jesus prays. He prays for protection. He prays for joy. He prays for unity. He prays that love would hold them together. Under pressure, Jesus prays for his people.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA: Unity isn't uniformity. It's a way of belonging to each other in love (even when we disagree) so pressure doesn't turn into contempt, and we learn to live the prayer of Jesus in real life.

WATCH. READ. REFLECT.



- Watch the Week 5 video.
- Read John 17:6–26 once, slowly.
- Reflect with one honest answer to this question: *"Where do I feel relational strain, distance, or loneliness right now?"*

A LENTEN RHYTHM FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. BEGIN WITH QUIET

No music. No talking. Settle and breathe. If a relationship is on your mind: someone you miss, someone you're frustrated with, someone you're worried about... hold that person before God. You don't have to solve it right now. Just spend one to two minutes to bring it to and center on God.

Opening Prayer

*God,
So many voices compete for our attention. So many relationships feel complicated. So many conversations feel tense. Meet us in what is fragile. Soften what is hard in us. Give us courage to tell the truth, and love to stay present. Jesus prayed for us to be one—teach us what that means. And in this Lent season, lead us closer to You and closer to each other.
Amen.*

2. NAMING OUR LOUD AND HEAVY THINGS

Have each person share (keep it simple):

- **One relationship** that feels strained or distant is _____.
- **One thing** that makes unity hard for me is _____.

3. SCRIPTURE IN THE CENTER

Read John 17:6–26 out loud. Then ask:
What word, phrase, or detail stood out to you?

UNDER PRESSURE: THE CONVERSATION

WITH OTHERS OR WITH GOD

- John 17 is prayed the night before the cross. What stands out about Jesus spending his last free moments praying for others?
- Jesus prays for protection, joy, unity, and love. Which part of his prayer feels most needed in your life right now, and why?
- Jesus says he's not asking God to take his followers "out of the world," but to protect them in it (v. 15). What does that say about faith under pressure?
- When Jesus prays "that they may be one," what do you think he means? How is unity different from sameness?
- Jesus prays that the world will recognize God through the love and unity of his followers (v. 21–23). How does that challenge or encourage you?
- Where do you feel division showing up in your world right now: home, work, school, politics, church, online? What does it do to you?
- When tension rises, what's your default under pressure—avoid, appease, argue, withdraw, over-explain, go silent? How does that shape relationships?
- What makes it hard for you to pursue unity: fear, pride, old hurt, exhaustion, needing to be right, wanting to win, not trusting the other person?
- What is one "next right step" toward love this week: listening, apology, forgiveness, reaching out, or setting a healthy boundary with honesty and kindness?
- If Jesus is praying for you right now, what do you imagine he is asking God to grow in you?

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Name one relationship or community space that needs prayerful attention this week, circle one:

Family Friendship Work Church Neighborhood Online

Share or write why you chose this answer:

Choose one "unity-and-love step"

you will practice this week, circle one:

Pray for one person Set one honest boundary (with kindness)
Reach out first Listen without defending Take one repair step

Share or write the specific plan (when + what you'll do):

SENDING OUT

You've named the pressure and listened to the Word. Now close this time by turning what we heard into a small, faithful practice.

This week I need Jesus' love in the way I relate to _____.

This week I will take one step toward love by _____.

For Groups and Couples: Finish the sentence. After each person shares, the group can simply respond, "You're not alone."

Solo: Finish writing those two above sentences.

CLOSING PRAYER

God,

We bring You our relationships—what's strained, what's fragile, what feels lonely. Meet us in the quiet, and steady us in Your love. Give us humility, truth, and mercy. And as we walk into this week, teach us to live the prayer of Jesus: that we would be one in love.

Amen.

FINDING YOUR QUIET PLACE

JESUS CONNECTED TO GOD MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK

A STEP TOWARD GOD

READ. REFLECT. RESPOND.

(If you miss a day: no guilt, no catch-up. Just restart.)

Day 1: John 17:6–26

Reflect: What stands out about what Jesus asks God for—protection, unity, joy, love?

Respond (prayer): Jesus, teach me how to love well under pressure.

Day 2: Ephesians 4:1–6

Reflect: What does Paul say helps “maintain the unity of the Spirit”? What part feels most challenging right now?

Respond (prayer): Choose one posture for today: humility, patience, or gentleness—and practice it on purpose.

Day 3: Philippians 2:1–5

Reflect: How does humility change the temperature of a relationship? Where do you need that kind of humility?

Respond: Write one sentence:

“Today I will lay down _____ so I can love better.”

Day 4: Colossians 3:12–15

Reflect: What does it look like to “clothe yourself” with compassion and forgiveness?

Respond: Pray: God, clothe me with compassion in _____.

Day 5: Romans 12:9–18

Reflect: Paul describes love that is sincere and peace that is pursued. What is one line you need today?

Respond: Take one small step toward peace: a text, a call, an apology, or a kind act—do it.

Day 6: John 13:34–35

Reflect: Jesus says love is how people will recognize his followers. Where could love be more visible through you this week?

Respond: Name one act of love you will do today—and follow through.

A STEP TOWARD WHOLENESS THE WEEKLY FAST

For one day this week, fast from contempt (the inner eye-roll that treats someone as less than) and quick reactions. This isn't about avoiding hard conversations—it's about refusing to turn people into enemies. Pick a practice that will challenge you, or create your own fast:

- No gossip or triangulation for the day (talking about someone instead of to them).
- No sarcasm, eye-rolls, or cutting remarks for the day: practice gentleness instead.
- No outrage scrolling or comment wars for the day: limit input that inflames you.

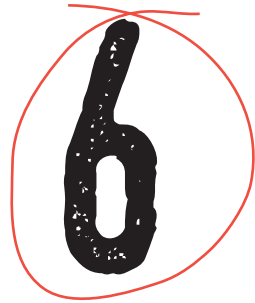
Replace it with this simple practice. During one commute, a 15-minute walk, or in your quiet space think about how you're feeling, what you're assuming, and what love would look like. Then pray:

- God, show me where my heart is hard...
- Give me humility and courage for the next right step...
- Teach me to love like Jesus today...

A STEP TOWARD OTHERS LOVING OTHERS WELL

Unity isn't built by big speeches. It's built by small acts of love and honesty, especially under pressure. Choose one of the following this week, or come up with your own.

- Practice one phone-out-of-sight conversation. Listen longer than you speak. Ask two good questions.
- Take one repair step: apologize, clarify, or ask forgiveness (even if it's awkward).
- Include someone on purpose: invite a neighbor, coworker, or friend into a meal, coffee, or a walk.



WHEN YOU WHAT'S UNDER PRESSURE:

Lent is not a self-improvement project. It's an invitation to make room—especially when the pressure feels crushing, when anxiety rises, and when you're facing something you can't control.

In Mark 14, Jesus is under pressure. It's late. It's dark. The cross is close. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is overwhelmed—and he doesn't hide it. He asks his friends to stay near. He falls to the ground. He prays with raw honesty: "Take this cup from me." And then he prays the hardest prayer: "Yet not what I want, but what you want." Under pressure, Jesus doesn't escape. He surrenders in love.

THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA: Surrender isn't giving up. It's trusting God with what we can't control while taking the next right step in love—so fear doesn't make the decisions for us, and we can walk into Holy Week with courage.

WATCH. READ. REFLECT.



- Watch the Week 6 video.
- Read Mark 14:32–42 once, slowly.
- Reflect with one honest answer to this question: **"What am I trying to control right now because I'm afraid?"**

CAN'T CONTROL COMING THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

A LENTEN RHYTHM

FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

1. BEGIN WITH QUIET

No music. No talking. Settle and breathe. If fear or anxiety is loud in you, name it without trying to fix it. You don't have to be brave right now. Just be honest. Picture placing it in Jesus' hands. One to two minutes centering on God.

Opening Prayer

*God,
Some of us are anxious. Some of us feel overwhelmed. Some of us are facing things we can't control. Meet us in the garden. Quiet what is frantic in us. Give us courage to tell the truth—and strength for the next right step. Teach us to trust You with what we can't hold. And in this season of Lent, lead us closer to You and closer to each other.
Amen.*

2. NAMING OUR LOUD AND HEAVY THINGS

Have each person share (keep it simple):

- **One thing I feel anxious** about right now is _____.
- **One place** I'm tempted to control the outcome is _____.

3. SCRIPTURE IN THE CENTER

Read Mark 14:32–42 out loud. Then ask:
What word, phrase, or detail stood out to you?

UNDER PRESSURE: THE CONVERSATION

WITH OTHERS OR WITH GOD

- Jesus says, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow...” (v. 34). What does it mean that Jesus names his anguish out loud?
- Jesus asks his friends to stay near and “keep watch,” but they fall asleep. What do you notice about human limits, and Jesus’ desire for companionship?
- Jesus says, “Keep watch and pray...The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Where do you feel that tension right now? Do you want to be faithful, but feeling exhausted or limited? What kind of help do you need with that?
- Jesus also prays, “Take this cup from me.” What do you hear in that line: fear, desire, honesty? What does it give you permission to pray?
- Then Jesus says, “Yet not what I want, but what you want.” How is surrender different from resignation? Different from avoidance?
- Jesus prays this more than once. What does repetition teach us about praying through pressure: not just once, but again and again?
- Where do you feel pressure right now to “be strong” or “have it together”? What does that pressure do to your soul and your relationships?
- When you can’t control the outcome, what’s your default: over-planning, people-pleasing, numbing, anger, withdrawal, perfectionism? How does it affect you?
- What might it look like to entrust one outcome to God this week while still doing your part faithfully?
- What is one “next right step” you can take this week that aligns with love, even if you can’t guarantee the result?

FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Name one place where the pressure feels crushing right now, circle one:

Work Family Money Relationship Health Future

Share or write why you chose this answer:

Choose one “**surrender step**” you will practice this week, circle one:

Name it honestly to God (one sentence) Entrust one outcome to God

Ask for strength for the next step

Reach out to one person for support

Share or write the specific plan (when + what you’ll do):

SENDING OUT

You’ve named the pressure and listened to the Word. Now close this time by turning what we heard into a small, faithful practice.

This week I need Jesus’ courage in _____.

This week I will practice surrender by _____.

For Groups and Couples: Finish the sentence. After each person shares, the group can simply respond, “You’re not alone.”

Solo: Finish writing those two above sentences.

CLOSING PRAYER

God,

We bring You our fear and what we cannot control. Meet us in the quiet, and steady us in Your love. Give us courage to be honest, and strength for the next right step. And as we walk toward Easter, teach us to trust You with our lives.

Amen.

FINDING YOUR QUIET PLACE

JESUS CONNECTED TO GOD MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK

A STEP TOWARD GOD

READ. REFLECT. RESPOND.

(If you miss a day: no guilt, no catch-up. Just restart.)

Day 1: Mark 14:32-42

Reflect: What do you notice about Jesus' honesty, and surrender, in the middle of fear?

Respond (prayer): Jesus, give me courage to be honest and trust You.

Day 2: Psalm 27:1, 7-8, 13-14

Reflect: What does it look like to seek God when fear is loud?

Respond (prayer): Write one sentence: "God, I am afraid of _____ . Help me wait with courage."

Day 3: Philippians 4:6-9

Reflect: What happens when we bring anxiety to God instead of carrying it alone?

Respond: Make two lists and pray over both.

WHAT I CAN CONTROL

WHAT I CAN'T CONTROL

Day 4: Hebrews 5:7-9

Reflect: Jesus prayed with loud cries and tears. What does that say about faithful prayer?

Respond: Tell God one thing you deeply want—and then add: "I entrust this to You."

Day 5: Luke 23:44-49

Reflect: Jesus entrusts himself to God at the end. What would it mean for you to place your life in God's hands?

Respond: Pray: "God, into Your hands I place _____."

Day 6: John 20:11-18

Reflect: Resurrection hope meets us personally. What do you need to hear from Jesus as Easter approaches?

Respond: Write one sentence: "Jesus, I need to hear _____."

A STEP TOWARD WHOLENESS THE WEEKLY FAST

For one day this week, fast from control moves and "what if" spirals. This isn't about doing nothing: it's about noticing how we try to manage fear, and choosing trust instead. Pick a practice that will challenge you, or create your own fast:

- No compulsive checking for the day (email, accounts, tracking, updates)—choose set times instead.
- No "what if" spiraling for the day—when it starts, write it down and hand it to God.
- No impulse decisions for the day—pause 24 hours before committing or buying (except essentials).

Replace it with this simple practice. During one commute, a 15-minute walk, or in your quiet space think about what you're afraid of, what you can do today, and what you need to entrust to God. Then pray:

- God, here is what I cannot control...
- Here is the next right step I can take...
- I entrust the rest to You...

A STEP TOWARD OTHERS LOVING OTHERS WELL

Under pressure, we can get self-protective and short. Surrender makes us steadier, and people around us feel it. Choose one of the following this week, or come up with your own.

- Do one practical thing that helps someone face a hard week (*a meal, childcare, an errand, a ride*).
- Be honest and gentle in one conversation: say what's true without trying to control the outcome.
- Invite someone into Holy Week or Easter (*a service, a meal, a walk*). Keep it low-pressure and sincere.



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