Lenten Journal

40 days of inspirational sayings and Bible verses with room for you to record your responses, thoughts, and prayers.

Yvon Prehn

Lenten Journal Introduction

Lent helps us to put the Christian life into a biblical perspective.

Traditionally it is a time to focus on fasting, prayer, and service to others. It is a time to practice saying "no" to ourselves in little things so we can say a bigger "yes" to God in the larger dimensions of life.

We know the value of discipline to achieve our goals in every other area of life and this time of year reminds us of the importance of discipline in the Christian life.

The discipline of fasting during Lent has broadened to mean fasting from harmful mental and emotional practices or those things that keep us from deepening our Christian lives. To discover the areas that need work takes honest self-evaluation.

Lent is a time to dig deeper, to think about my walk with the Lord, and what needs to go in my heart and mind to make me more pleasing to Him.

To help us all do that, I looked up inspirational quotes and verses appropriate for Lent and put them into a journal format I am sharing with you. It is for 40 days. Traditionally you can take off Sundays because as the Catholic Church puts it:

Sundays, even during Lent, are a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and are not part of the penitential season. We rejoice in the resurrection of the Lord on Sundays. If you feel that forsaking your Lenten sacrifices on Sundays is like cheating then you are encouraged to maintain your sacrifices. A person is certainly free to continue one's Lenten sacrifices on Sundays, but the Catholic Church does not require anyone to do this.

You can start using this journal on Ash Wednesday and use it until Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. My prayer for all of us during this time is that we grow closer to our Lord and more pleasing to Him as we forward to celebrating His resurrection.

Grace & peace,
Yvon Prehn
www.Bible805.com

Day 1

Have patience with all things, but first of all with yourself.

St. Francis de Sales

Commentary

Lent will last for 40 days (plus the Sundays) and if we apply ourselves to spiritual examination and renewal, we will make changes. But they might only be the start of changes and we must be at peace in knowing that.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 2

But as He who called you is holy,
you also be holy in all your conduct,
because it is written,
"Be holy, for I am holy."
1 Peter 1:15-16

You cannot study the Bible diligently and earnestly without being struck by an obvious fact—the whole matter of personal holiness is highly important to God.
A.W. Tozer

Commentary

To be holy means to be set apart. Today that might mean some very different attitudes and actions than the people around you. Consider the ways your life might be different if you considered yourself set apart for God's service.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 3

I do not consider myself to have
"arrived", spiritually, nor do
I consider myself already perfect.
But I keep going on . . . . .
I leave the past behind and with hands
outstretched to whatever lies ahead
I go straight for the goal–
my reward the honour of being
called by God in Christ.
Phil. 3:13-14 Phillips

Commentary

One of the MOST important things we can do to improve our spiritual and relational lives is to "leave the past behind." Our future is glorious, tomorrow and forever with Jesus and we need to focus on that.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 4

Lent comes providentially awaken us, to shake us from our lethargy.

Pope Francis

Commentary

Do you ever feel like you are sleep-walking in life? Or maybe numb? Use Lent to feel even if it hurts and to allow Jesus to work on issues in your life that may be too painful to tackle on your own.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 5

But be on your guard.
Don't let the sharp edge of your expectation get dulled by parties and drinking and shopping. Otherwise, that Day is going to take you by complete surprise, spring on you suddenly like a trap,. . . Pray constantly that you will have the strength and wits to make it through everything that's coming and end up on your feet before the Son of Man."
Luke 21:34-36 msg

Commentary

We will all face Jesus someday. That meeting should be the North Star of our lives. That meeting should inform our dreams, shape our desires, guide our work. Consider how you can keep that North Star in focus as you travel in life.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 6

"Good and evil both increase at compound interest.
That is why the little decisions you and I make every
day are of such infinite importance.
The smallest good act today is the capture of
a strategic point from which, a few months later,
you may be able to go on to victories
you never dreamed of.
An apparently trivial indulgence
in lust or anger today is the loss of a ridge
or railway line from which the enemy may launch an
attack otherwise impossible."
C.S. Lewis

Commentary

Our life is built moment by moment, decision by decision. Don't rush unthinkingly through your days. Be deliberate, good, and godly in your actions, no matter how small they seem and you'll build a life pleasing to God.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 7

Lenten practices of giving up pleasures are a good reminder that the purpose of life is not pleasure.

Fulton J. Sheen

Commentary

That the purpose of life is not pleasure would be a big surprise to many. But to the Christian, the greater emotion of joy is the reward when the purpose of our life is to please God.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 8

Only changed people can change the world.

Rick Warren

Commentary

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Cor.5:17)." You are a changed person!
What changes do you want to make in your world for Jesus' sake?

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 9

If we confess our sins,
he is faithful and just
and will forgive
us our sins and purify us
from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:9

Commentary

When we confess we have sinned and specifically name that sin we are acknowledging that there is Someone above us who sets the standard for what is right and what is wrong. And when we do that, He makes us clean.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 10

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;
Proverbs 28:13

Commentary

Lent should be a time of great refreshing, a spring cleaning of our lives and souls. We can clear out burdensome grudges, mental messiness, and hoarded bad habits. When we do that, we can then breathe.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 11

"Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants [us] to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store."

N.T. Wright

Commentary

How would your life be different if you lived a carefully disciplined life? 2 Timothy 1:7 says "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." Live into that reality.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 12

Lent is like a long 'retreat' during which we can turn back into ourselves and listen to the voice of God, in order to defeat the temptations of the Evil One.

Pope Benedict XVI

Commentary

God does speak to his people. He speaks with a clear inner voice if you quiet yourself enough to listen. The boy Samuel said, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening (2 Sam. 3:9)." When we pray that, we must be prepared to obey.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 13

A Christian is not a man who never goes wrong, but a man who is enabled to repent and pick himself up and begin over again after each stumble.

C. S. Lewis

Commentary

Remember that Jesus told Peter he had to forgive 7x70--which meant an infinite number of times. That is how much God will forgive you--when you fall again and again and again--he is always ready to forgive.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 14

You can't live on amusement.
It is the froth on water –
an inch deep and
then the mud.

George MacDonald

Commentary

Take some time to evaluate what in your life is froth and what is the mud that underlies it after the froth floats away. What is an exchange you can make for an activity that has eternal value?

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 15

"I imagine Lent for you and for me as a great departure from the greedy, anxious anti-neighborliness of our economy, a great departure from our exclusionary politics that fears the other, a great departure from self-indulgent consumerism that devours creation.

Walter Brueggemann

Commentary

Being greedy at its core means we aren't trusting God. We can be greedy with possessions, with time, with love. As you think about this statement, think about when you may have been greedy and how to change that.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 16

A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is... A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in.

C. S. Lewis

Commentary

What would it be like to resist a temptation that you easily give in to? God says he will always provide a way to escape and I imagine we might take it more if we thought ahead of time what those escapes might look like.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 17

And so, dear brothers, I plead with you
to give your bodies to God.
Let them be a living sacrifice, holy—
the kind he can accept.
When you think of what he has done for you,
is this too much to ask?
Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world,
but be a new and different person with a fresh
newness in all you do and think.
Then you will learn from your own experience how
his ways will really satisfy you.

Romans 12:1-2 tlb

Commentary

One of the great surprises of the Christian life is that whenever we think we are giving up something for God and fear we will be empty, God fills us in ways we didn't expect. Not with what we wanted, but what we needed.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 18

During these 40 days,
let me put away all my pride.
Let me change my heart and
give up all that is
not good within me.
Let me love God with all that
I am and all that I have.

Genesis Grain

Commentary

Loving God is not a mushy emotion or a feeling we work up during times like Lent. Jesus very clearly told his disciples in john 14:23 "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching." Obedience is truly loving God.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 19

Great holiness consists in carrying out the 'little duties' of each moment.

Saint Josemaría Escrivá

Commentary

Every little action makes a difference in the direction of our lives. Being quiet when we want to be mean or accepting when we want to be picky, each turning towards God's way instead of our own sets our course more surely.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 20

No amount of falls will really undo us
if we keep on picking
ourselves up each time.
We shall of course be very
muddy and tattered children
by the time we reach home.
But the bathrooms are all ready, the
towels put out, and the clean clothes are
in the airing cupboard.
C.S. Lewis

Commentary

How wonderful it is to know we don't have to clean up ourselves for God. "Muddy and tattered" He loves us and will welcome us every time we turn to Him and ultimately into His forever home.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 21

The Fasting Life, part one

Fast from judging others;
Feast on Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from fear of illness;
Feast on the healing power of God.
Fast from words that pollute;
Feast on speech that purifies.
Fast from discontent;
Feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger; Feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism;
Feast on hope.
Fast from negatives;
Feast on encouragement.

Commentary

We can't focus on a behavior or attitude we want to give up or it will take up more and more space in our minds. Instead, focus on the options in this list. Take one or two and pray about them, think of them until they are a part of your life.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 22

The Fasting Life, part two

Fast from bitterness;
Feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern;
Feast on compassion.
Fast from suspicion; Feast on truth.
Fast from gossip;
Feast on purposeful silence.
Fast from problems that overwhelm;
Feast on prayer that sustains.
Fast from anxiety;
Feast on faith.

Author Unknown

Commentary

We are the result of our thoughts and our thoughts are under our control. Choose to think of the positive things on this list. Consider how your life would look if they were a consistent part of it and pray it will be so.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 23

If you've gotten anything
at all out of following Christ, if his love has
made any difference in your life, . . .
Agree with each other, love each other,
be deep-spirited friends.
Don't push your way to the front,
don't sweet-talk your way to the top.
Put yourself aside,
and help others get ahead.
Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage.
Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.
Philippians 2:1-4 msg

Commentary

Lent has not been a time of punishment, but a time to live into what we are called to be as God's special possession. Lent has given us the opportunity to consider what in our lives keeps us from doing that, to learn, and prayerfully change.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 24

Lent is a time of going very deeply
into ourselves...
What is it that stands between us
and God?
Between us and our brothers and sisters?
Between us and life,
the life of the Spirit?
Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it
out, without a moment's hesitation.

Catherine Doherty

Commentary

What are those things for you? You've been journaling, praying, and meditating for over three weeks of Lent now. Pray for wisdom to see what barriers mentioned in this challenge are in your life and how to remove them.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 25

God acts mercifully,
not indeed by going
against His justice,
but by doing something
more than justice.

St. Thomas Aquinas

Commentary

Grace is God's substitute for justice. His unmerited favor to us. As the song says, "amazing love, how can it be, that thou my God would die for me."
Today, simply be thankful for what you don't deserve but that God delights to give.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 26

*Make sure
you don't take things
for granted and go slack
in working for the common good;
share what you
have with others.*

Hebrews 13:16 (MSG)

Commentary

What is the "common good?" What does it mean to you? To your community? What can you share with others? Money aside, share your love, prayers, encouragement, hope in Jesus. People need these gifts.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 27

Now is our chance to choose the right side.
God is holding back
to give us that chance.
It won't last forever.
We must take it or leave it.

C. S. Lewis

Commentary

Our world is at war with the powers of darkness and we can't choose to sit on the sidelines. To do nothing means to choose darkness. To choose the right side, God's side, takes continual, purposeful action. Be brave and choose to do right.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 28

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which sincere and meaningful repentance must be built. If we truly seek to put away sin, we must first look to Him who is the Author of our salvation.

Ezra Taft Benson

Commentary

We can't repent on our own. We can't even see where we need to because, truth be told, far too often when we compare ourselves with others, we think we look pretty good. But to look at Jesus first--that changes everything.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 29

As a prisoner for the Lord, then,
I urge you to live a life
worthy of the
calling you have received.
Be completely humble and gentle;
be patient, bearing
with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:1-2

Commentary

These verses seem impossible to fully obey. But what goals to strive for! Today we may not feel worthy, but if we intentionally are a bit more humble, a little more gentle, patient a few more minutes, these virtues will grow.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 30

Jesus promised
his disciples three things–
that they would be
completely fearless,
absurdly happy,
and in constant trouble.

Gilbert K. Chesterton

Commentary

Bravery in the midst of challenges--John 16:33 TLB puts it this way, "I have told you all this so that you will have peace of heart and mind. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows; but cheer up, for I have overcome the world."

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 31

If we do not die to ourselves,
we cannot live to God,
and he that does not
live to God
is dead.

George MacDonald

Commentary

And yet the wonder of wonders is that when we feel we have died and given all to God, He turns everything around and we realize that this is what we were created for, this is what will give us true joy and satisfaction in life and forever.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 32

May this time be one
of outward focus;
seeking you in those we often ignore.
Help us live a Lent focused on
freedom, generosity, and encounter.
Give us hearts hungry
to serve you and those who need
what we have to give.
Anon

Commentary

It is tiresome to always be thinking about yourself and ultimately not fulfilling. Outward focus, generosity, and encounter--if during Lent we try a focus on those things we will find real fulfillment.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 33

This is my command:
Love one another
the way I loved you.
This is the very best way to love.
Put your life on the line
for your friends.
You are my friends when you do the
things I command you.

John 15:12-15 msg

Commentary

To be a friend of Jesus--it is incredible that is even possible. And to do that is not some out-of-reach, impossible goal--He simply asks we do what He commands--and He gave us a very big book--the Bible that tells us how.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 34

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Psalm 19:14, KJV

Commentary

What is in our hearts is what comes out of our mouths. During this time, let's focus on cleaning up the unspoken thoughts in us and what comes out of our mouths will be much more acceptable to our Lord.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 35

We can think of Lent as a time to eradicate evil or cultivate virtue, a time to pull up weeds or plant good seeds. Which is better is clear, for the Christian ideal is always positive rather than negative.
Fulton J. Sheen

Commentary

Jesus said he did not come into the world to condemn it but to save it. In all our Lenten meditations may we have a positive, joyful attitude to make the changes that reflect salvation and not condemnation to ourselves and others.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 36

As gifts increase in you,
let your humility grow,
for you must
consider that everything is
given to you
on loan.

St. Pio

Commentary

Spiritual gifts are always given to us to share with others, not as an award to be flaunted. That God would trust us with the opportunity to serve is a great privilege and an immense responsibility. How will you act, knowing that?

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 37

I think that if God forgives us we must forgive ourselves. Otherwise, it is almost like setting up ourselves as a higher tribunal than Him.

C. S. Lewis

Commentary

A danger in Lent is that in the pursuit of cleaning up our hearts and lives we can begin to wallow in our sins. We then focus more on our misery than God's forgiveness. If we do that our focus is in the wrong place. Forgive yourself and rejoice!

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 38

Strive to attain to the
greater virtues, but
do not neglect the lesser ones.
Do not make light of a
fall even if it be the most venial of faults;
rather, be quick to repair it by
repentance, although many others may
commit a large number of faults, slight and
grievous, and remain unrepentant.

Saint Basil

Commentary

It is in practicing the little, less-noticed virtues that true godliness grows. That's where we learn to play to an audience of one—our Lord Jesus. His knowledge of what we do and approval are what are by far the most important.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 39

"Even now," declares the LORD,
"return to me with all your heart, with
fasting and weeping and mourning."
Rend your heart and not your garments.
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and
abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.
Joel 2:12-13

Commentary

As Lent draws to a close, most likely there have been victories but also a sense of how far you have to go on your pilgrimage to please God. Remember He is always there waiting for you to take the next steps in holiness.

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Day 40

Unless there is
Good Friday
in your life, there can be no
Easter Sunday.

Fulton J. Sheen

Commentary

If you have taken it seriously, Lent has hopefully been one long Good Friday of self-examination, discipline, and spiritual growth. Now is time to look back and record the progress you have made and rejoice that Easter is coming!

Your response, thoughts, prayers

Additional encouragements and resources from Yvon Prehn

One of the most important things you can do during Lent and always is to read your Bible and make it the North Star and foundation for your life.

When Jesus was talking to people, whose lives were filled with challenges and questions, like ours are today, he summed up their core problem by saying, *"You are in error because you don't know the scriptures or the power of God." Matt. 22:29*

Just as it was for them, not knowing the scriptures—our Bible—is the core cause of our problems today and the answer to the deepest needs of the human heart.

To help you learn to know, trust, apply, and teach the Bible, I've got resources for you. Please go to www.Bible805.com where you will find links to social media, podcasts, videos, blogs, and other resources that will help you ground your life in God's Word.

Here are some of them—

- PowePoint lessons to watch and share on ***9 Reasons to Read or Listen to Your Bible in Chronological Order***, plus ***5 Reasons Why You Probably Haven't Read Your Bible in Chronological Order,*** and ***Why Your Bible Isn't in Chronological Order-the history & why it matters***
- Free, downloadable plans for you to read your Bible in chronological order, by day and by date; reading every word or reading selected passages.
- Teaching resources for the entire Bible that include editable PowerPoints, notes, questions, and related infographics all for free or pay-what-you-want at www.Bible805Academy.com.

Links to all and more are at www.Bible805.com. You can listen to the podcast on iTunes or anywhere else you listen to podcasts. There are videos of weekly lessons and encouraging shorts on the Bible 805 YouTube channel, (www.YouTube.com/Bible805).

Please sign up for the newsletter on the Bible805 site for news and links to new resources, and tell your friends about the many free sources available on this site.

My prayer for all of you is that during this Lent and always you will get into God's Word and allow it to change your life and help you become more and like Jesus.