

TRUST IN THE LORD

A LENTEN
PATH FOR
FAMILIES



DANIELLE BEAN

INTRODUCTION

As Lent begins, we should have a plan. Just as Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray for 40 days, we are called to spend these 40 days preparing ourselves for Easter. In what way will we make the coming days different from the rest of the year? How can we grow closer to God and one another as we journey together through Lent?

This booklet is meant to be a tool for you and your family this Lenten season. In it, we focus on the theme of trust in the Lord, taking our inspiration from Scripture:

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

We know we are called to trust God, but sometimes that is easier said than done. How can we trust that God sees us, knows us and loves us? How can we trust that he desires good things for us? How can we trust that he has a plan for our lives and that he will keep his promises? In the days ahead, we will be thinking about these questions and pondering them in our hearts.

Each day, we share a passage from the Gospel and a short reflection. We will recall Jesus’ sacrifice for us and his promise to forgive our sins and give us new life. At the end of each reflection, we share a prayer prompt and an idea for something you and your family can do together to live out the theme of each day. Our hope is that these will inspire conversations and deeper lessons about what it means to trust in the Lord.

So let’s get started! God has big plans for you and your family this Lent. He can’t wait for you to grow in love for one another and in understanding of his goodness and love. Let’s find out what joys await us as together we learn to trust in the Lord with all our hearts.

DANIELLE BEAN



ASH WEDNESDAY

But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

MATTHEW 6:6

Here's something to think about as we begin Lent on Ash Wednesday: We like to get credit for the things we do. We like for things to turn out fair. But sometimes the world is not fair. Other people may take credit for our work, or we don't receive the recognition we think we deserve. The worst is when we see people lie, steal or hurt someone we love, and they seem to get away with it.

Jesus' words challenge us to look at things differently, though. What if, instead of trying to control how much credit we get for the good things we do, we simply trust that God sees us and will take care of us? What if, instead of seeking revenge against people who hurt us, we forgive them and trust that God will give us everything we need?

God knows all of our secrets. He sees when we do wrong, but he also sees the loving things we do and the kind desires we have hidden in our hearts. Sometimes the challenge is simply to trust that "your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

PRAY TOGETHER Lord, though we are but dust and ashes, help us to trust that you see us in secret and to know that we find our reward in you. Amen.

DO TOGETHER What is something you can do in secret to bless someone else today? Maybe wash the dishes without being asked, or leave a surprise gift on a neighbor's porch? Trust that God sees what you do and will reward your actions to his glory.

THURSDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.

LUKE 9:24

Have you ever loved someone so much that you wanted to spend every minute with them? When you were a baby, you probably felt that way, especially about your mom or dad. Babies sometimes cry when their parents have to leave, even for just a little while. When we grow up, we still want to spend lots of time with the people we love.

Have you ever thought about what God wants from you? The answer is pretty simple—he wants *you*. He wants your presence and your love. God created you and gave you life, and he wants you to return that gift of life to him.

PRAY TOGETHER Dear God, we want to give ourselves to you completely. Help us to see where we are holding back. Amen.

FRIDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

And Jesus said to them, "...The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."

MATTHEW 9:15

Fasting helps us to trust in God and lean on Jesus. In fasting from food, we recall that God gives us everything we need and that is Jesus, the Bread of Life. Fasting from television or video games reminds us that God is the source of all we enjoy, that Jesus is the joy of our life. Let's ask: "What things do I turn to for comfort instead of God?" or "What things make us forget about Jesus?" God may be inviting us to let go of them and embrace him instead. When Jesus fasted in the desert, the devil tempted him to turn stones to bread. Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone." He knew the importance of feeding on God's Word and prayer and worship.

PRAY TOGETHER Lord, may we trust in you alone. May fasting teach us that in you we find everything we need. Amen.



SATURDAY AFTER ASH WEDNESDAY

Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."

LUKE 5:31-32

Have you ever been very sick and needed to go to the doctor? How did you feel when the doctors, nurses and others took care of you? It can be very frightening to be hurt or sick, but it is important to seek out help from the people who know how to make you well.

We sometimes have the mistaken idea that the church is a place for holy people who never do anything wrong. But the church is more like a hospital where sinners can be made well, and only God has the power to forgive our sins and make us well.

It might be hard to see sometimes, but when we do wrong things, we hurt not only other people but we hurt ourselves too. Sin hurts our minds, bodies and souls, and it separates us from God. When we are sick with sin, we need to turn to Jesus because he is the only one who can restore us and unite us with God through the cross. Will you trust him?

PRAY TOGETHER Jesus, we are sorry for the things we have done wrong. Please forgive us and heal our hearts. Amen.

DO TOGETHER Think of someone you have hurt in a big way or a small way. Tell them you are sorry, ask for forgiveness and do something kind for that person today.



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

MATTHEW 4:10

Life gets very busy sometimes. There is school and work, sports and lessons. Families might sometimes find themselves with very little time together at home, and many of us are continually on the go, even on weekends. It's important to remember, though, that God gave us Sunday as a day of rest. He did this because rest is good for us.

We are not made to be perpetually busy, and we can feel lost or distracted when we don't have enough time for peace and rest. One of the ways we can grow in love for God is by spending quiet time with him in prayer. The Bible says many times that Jesus went off by



himself to pray to God. Jesus knew the importance of resting in God. Some of the other ways we grow in love on the day of rest is by spending time together as a family, having fun and just enjoying one another's company. Can we trust God enough to let go of some of our "busyness" and distractions today and rest in him, as Jesus did?

PRAY TOGETHER Dear God, we offer this day to you. Please bless us with peace and joy together as a family. Amen.

DO TOGETHER Make some time for quiet togetherness today. Turn off the TV, phones and computers for at least 30 minutes, and enjoy a meal, a game or just conversation with one another.



MONDAY, FIRST WEEK OF LENT

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...

MATTHEW 25:35

When you read today's Scripture, who do you think of? What do you picture when you read the words "I was hungry and thirsty"? Many of us think about images we have seen of poor people suffering in third world countries, people without enough food to eat or clean water to drink. Certainly, those people are part of the hungry and thirsty Jesus is talking about, but there are people in our families and communities who are hungry and thirsty too.

There may be people in your life who hunger and thirst for love, friendship, attention and forgiveness. A girl who sits alone at school recess might be hungry and thirsty for friendship. A coworker who tends to get on everyone's nerves might be hungry and thirsty for understanding. A relative you haven't called in a long time might be hungry and thirsty for conversation. Jesus asks us to love him through these people too.



Hungry?

PRAY TOGETHER Jesus, show us who is hungry in our world today, and reveal to us how we can feed them. Amen.

DO TOGETHER Make something extra simple for dinner tonight, maybe just soup or sandwiches. Donate the money you save to a food pantry or other charity.

TRUST ^{IN} THE LORD

A LENTEN PATH FOR FAMILIES

In this Lenten booklet for families, popular author, podcaster and married mother of eight, Danielle Bean, brings encouragement, warmth and approachable conversations and lessons for families seeking to trust the Lord more. God has great plans for your family! Start by trusting him day-to-day, and see where this Lent leads!



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