



What?

Lent is a 40-day period of time before Good Friday when Christians fast from different types of food and/or entertainment to focus on nurturing their relationship with God. Lenten observance is very ancient, and its current forty-day format dates back to around AD 300. The forty-day period follows the examples of Moses (Ex 34:28), Elijah (1 Kin 19:18) and the Lord Jesus (Mt 4:2)

Why?

Because fasting is a proven method of enabling us to focus on what matters most. By voluntarily abstaining from certain things we enjoy, our hearts are drawn to God in love. Also, fasting humbles us, because we see how dependent we become on "things." So, fasting is a powerful tool that enables us to focus on what matters most. And fasting together builds our unity as a church family.

Who?

The vast majority of the world's 2.5 billion Christians observe Lent, including Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Copts, Nestorians, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists and Presbyterians. Therefore, as we observe this season, we are joining with hundreds of millions of our brothers and sisters in Christ as we say to God: "Lord, we love and need you now more than ever."

When?

In the western Church, Lent runs from Ash Wednesday to Easter and excludes Sundays. This year, that means February 27 through April 4. The season begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 17th**.

How?

Historically, Christians abstained from meat, fish, eggs and dairy products during Lent. But each Christian has the freedom to do what they feel will best prepare their hearts. The choice is yours, as is the decision to participate or not. You may want to fast from some combination of the following:

- Food: caffeine, sodas, chocolate, candy, desserts, pleasure foods
- Entertainment: TV, the Internet, gaming and other electronic media, Facebook and other social media
- Sinful or unhelpful habits: texting too much, talking too much, gossiping, compulsively checking emails or Facebook

And you may also want to explore some new spiritual habits: journaling your confessions and prayers, taking a private retreat, reading through all the Psalms, observing an extended fast from all foods.

Finally...

The point of Lent is not to earn spiritual brownie points or divine kudos: Jesus paid the price for our salvation, and we can't add to it! Rather, the point of Lent is to put ourselves in a place where we are humble and honest about our sin, hungry for God, and open to His refining work in our lives. May this time of preparation be deeply transformative for you as you 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ!' (2 Peter 3:18).



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