



# A Good Enough Lent

A 40-Day Companion to  
Read, Reflect, and Pray

## WHAT IS LENT?

Lent marks the forty days leading up to Easter, mirroring the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. It is a practice that began during the 4th century as a way to prepare Christians for the holiest days of the year.

During Lent, we ask God to show us the world as it is. We begin with the reality of our finitude rubbed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday—from dust we were made, to dust we shall return. Then, we walk through that reality in a kind of dress rehearsal. It's the downward slope of God—the Great Descent, where the whole Church walks toward the cross.

Frankly, Lent is my favorite part of the church calendar because it is a time when the whole church is on the losing team. A time when we all get a minute to tell the truth: Life is so beautiful and life is so hard. For everyone.

Of course, the cross isn't the end of the story, but this season of grief is carved out to acknowledge the reality of Christ's sacrifice. And the reality of suffering that so many of our circumstances reflect too—our own pain and grief and despair. Easter is coming, yes. But for now, we sit in the ashes of our broken dreams and broken hearts, knowing that God sits here with us.

Many people practice Lent by giving something up—alcohol, meat, chocolate, social media. Some take up something new—a new prayer practice or swearing profusely like I did one year (you probably remember reading about this in *Everything Happens for a Reason (and Other Lies I've Loved)*).

This year, I'm inviting our Everything Happens Community to give up on the idea that life is always getting better and settle in for a life and a faith that is good enough. Together, we're going to take ourselves off the hook for perfection. Perfect lives. Perfect bodies. Perfect relationships. And realize that this is the beautiful work of being human... again today. Thank God we get to do it together.

So what do you say? Do you want to commit to a "Good Enough" Lent?



Kate

# HOW TO USE THIS COMPANION GUIDE

Each of the following forty entries is meant to be read alongside our new book of spiritual reflections, *Good Enough: 40ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection*. Of course, you can just use this free guide or just read *Good Enough* on its own, but you might find the most richness and depth when used together.

## EACH DAY INCLUDES:

- An entry to read from *Good Enough*
- A scripture to read and reflect on, based on that day's theme
- Little checkboxes to indicate what you've read ☐
- Reflection questions that are meant to be all-play—accessible whether you are practicing Lent solo or using this book with your church, in a book club, or around the dinner table with your family.
- A prayer to close your time
- Feel free to print this booklet out and write your answers on these pages, in a journal, or simply meditate on your responses.

## A NOTE ON SUNDAYS

Lent lasts for a full 40 days, but Sundays don't count. They are a day off from whatever you are abstaining from during Lent, a day to remind us that we are made for both—grief and joy, sorrow and delight. Strangely, this might feel like a hard thing to do—to make yourself stop working or worrying or checking off your day's reading—and really rest.

But over the next six weeks, you're invited to press against that part of your wiring that tells you that you must always be accomplishing, producing, processing—that everything must be *for* something. And take a day off from the Lent-y feelings to practice the discipline of Sabbath. Rest! Feast! Enjoy!

Before we begin, we wholeheartedly believe in blessing the crap out of each other. So here is a blessing for you, my dear.

## A BLESSING FOR A MEDIUM-SAD JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

Blessed are you  
who have found yourself—yet again—  
among the fellowship of the afflicted.  
Making the long, long walk toward the cross.

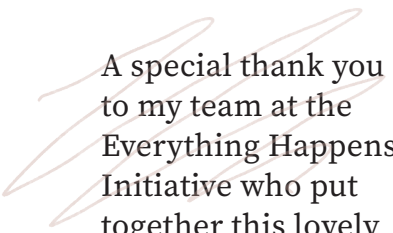
Blessed are you,  
who are tired of pretending  
that raw effort is the secret to perfection.  
That that which breaks your heart  
is overcomeable.  
It's not. And you know that now.

Blessed are you  
who need a gentle reminder that  
even now, even today,  
God is here,  
walking with us,  
meeting us in our places  
of sorrow and despair,  
desperation and grief.  
Slowing lifting our chin toward hope.  
Not promising to erase the pain.  
But to carry it with us.

Blessed are we who realize  
we are never—were never—alone.  
And somehow,  
That is good enough.



To learn more about the work of the Everything Happens Initiative, listen to podcast episodes, or download additional resources, visit [katebowler.com](https://katebowler.com).



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# Being Honest About Disappointment

MONDAY, MARCH 28

☐ *Good Enough*, 134-139 ☐ Psalm 55

01

Psalm 55 pulls no punches and the words tumble out in their searing honesty. You won't often hear this kind of raw anger given voice in the context of spiritual writing. But it's there. Look over the psalm and pull out the words that let us know the writer's complaints. And what does he wish for his enemies?

02

"I cry out in distress, and God hears my voice." What does the psalmist need? The first thing is simply to be heard. What does your heart cry out for? Short or long, tell God all of it. "Cast your cares on God" means to throw these heavy things right off of you. Put your back into it.

God, I am worn out from problem-solving and this never ending spiral of sorrow. I need shelter. Solace. Comfort. This Lent, give me room for more honesty with You. Honesty with my hopes and dreams and fears and disappointments. And help me do the little human things for right now, and trust you with the rest. God, you have sustained me in times past. Come, and do it again.

*Amen.*

# Kindness Boomerangs

**TUESDAY, MARCH 29**

☐ *Good Enough*, 140-144   ☐ Luke 6:27-38

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01

“Give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:38). Think of a time when the strange math of blessing has had its effect on you as a receiver or a giver.

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02

Giving reminds us who we are meant to be: made by God in love, for love. Jesus shows us what God’s self-giving looks like. He calls us to “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). What if we could show up fully to that call today?

Bless me, God, so I can be a blessing. Set me straight where I have gone wrong. Heal me where I hurt. And draw me more and more into Your life of love. For that is my heart’s desire.

*Amen.*

# Give Up Already

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

☐ *Good Enough*, 145-149    ☐ Matthew 6:16-21

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01

What has your experience been with fasting?

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02

Whenever our bodies get involved, we move beyond the cerebral. And that's God's jam – reaching us right where we live. Perhaps a food-related fast will be the doorway for you into the cheerful discipline and freedom that Bonhoeffer speaks of. Or maybe your fast will be turning from bitter thoughts. Or even from the niceness that is a form of avoidance. Pick a fast, and try it out for the next four days. See if it creates more room for the Divine.

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03

So maybe you've found that your fast has created more room. What has come in to take up that space?

God, help me clear out the clutter of ugly thoughts and useless things, so I can store up what is beautiful, useful, and of lasting value. Throughout this Lent, as I keep on exploring what fasting is about, show me what I truly love, that I might love and do what is truly good.

*Amen.*



THURSDAY, MARCH 31

☐ *Good Enough*, 150-155 ☐ Galatians 6:1-5

01

Jeffrey A. Hall, a communication-studies professor at the University of Kansas estimates that it takes 200 hours over six weeks for a new-to-you person to become a friend. Think of a few of your closest friends. How long have you known them? Are you surprised by how long or how short a time it took for you to become one another's people?

02

What qualities in a friend do you value the most? What special qualities do you offer your friendships?

03

Paul says that we should "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). Is there something you are carrying that is too heavy to bear alone right now?

04

Perhaps there are ways you can be a better friend to the people in your life. Reach out to a friend today, ask them: "How can I be a better friend to you?"

God, I need a friend, one that can weather the bad times and celebrate the good. You know me inside and out. Help me become the kind of person who can take responsibility for what is mine to change, so that I can be a good friend to others. So there's a mutual give and take in each relationship. God, strengthen me. Help me.

*Amen.*

# To My Body

FRIDAY, APRIL 1

☐ *Good Enough*, 156-160   ☐ 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

01

Today's devotional reading is a letter to a body. What aspects of this love-hate relationship with our flesh and bone do you identify with? How so?

02

Jesus, by His very nature, was incarnate—experienced life with a body. What comfort or, perhaps, confusion does that bring you to know that the God of the universe was embodied, too?

03

Paul says, "We have this treasure in jars of clay," (2 Cor. 4:7) and goes on to talk about an inner renewal that goes on unseen, day by day, even though our bodies break or come undone. What is the treasure you hold within?

Make me content to settle into this imperfect body. In the stillness I look to You. Call me once again into wholeness, that I might draw from You the grace and mercy I need to be content. And live a life of love, from a grateful heart.

*Amen.*

# Mediocrity for the Win

**SATURDAY, APRIL 2**

☐ *Good Enough*, 161-166 ☐ Psalm 19

01

“The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1). The glory of creation is supposedly everywhere, but these days, it may be hard to notice even one lovely created thing. When was the last time beauty stopped you in your tracks? Describe what you experienced.

02

“The perfection that we can never achieve, but that has been lavishly given” (*Good Enough*, 165). Kintsugi is a Japanese art form where broken pottery is repaired with gold, rendering it beautiful in a new way, not in spite of its cracks, but because of them. Are there imperfections, cracked and broken places, that have been for you a source of discouragement or shame? Look long, that God’s restoring love “that reaches to the heavens” might touch you even there.

God, I bring to You my whole self, opening to Your loving eyes all that I am—Your creature, made in love, for love. May Your gaze upon me be the gold that heals me, and infuses all the cracked and broken places with Your beauty and strength. Soften my heart, and mold me into someone who reflects Your glory.

*Amen.*



**“The heavens are  
telling the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim  
the work of his hands.  
Day after day they  
pour forth speech.  
Night after night  
they reveal knowledge.”**

Psalms 19:1-2