



# *Learning In, Letting Go*

## **LENTEN GUIDE 2026**

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Proverbs 3:5



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*Leaning In,  
Letting Go*



## Lenten Season's Greetings,

Lent 2026 has arrived! Our church family is journeying together through *Leaning IN, Letting GO*, a devotional by Dr. Nicole Massie Martin that invites us to slow down, refocus, and realign our lives with God's purpose — one day at a time. Dr. Martin is a national leader in spiritual formation and has just recently been appointed CEO of Christianity Today Magazine. Her devotional guide demonstrates that Lent is not simply about sacrifice, it is about spiritual formation. It is about learning what it means to lean fully into God while releasing the habits, mindsets, and distractions that hinder the fruit God desires to produce in our lives.

In Judges 13:21–25, we meet the parents of Samson — Manoah and his unnamed wife — a couple standing at the intersection of promise and preparation. Before Samson ever displays his iconic strength; his parents are called into consecration. Through the message of an angel, they are instructed to change daily habits, to prepare their lives for what God was about to bring forth. Their obedience required both trust and transformation. They had to lean into the Word of God even when they did not fully understand it, and they had to let go of practices that were once normal in order to make room for something sacred. The Nazirite commitment was public, intentional, and different — a reminder that spiritual growth often requires us to embrace contrast and resist cultural norms.

Their story reminds us that God's greatest work often begins quietly through our daily decisions. Manoah feared judgment, but his wife recognized grace — God was not seeking to destroy them but to develop them.

The same is true for us. God does not call us into Lent to grieve us but to grow us. When we release unhealthy habits and lean toward divine discipline, we position ourselves for blessings that extend far beyond the present moment.

Days turn into decades, and small acts of obedience shape a lasting legacy.





The difference between strength and struggle is rarely a single moment; it is the accumulation of choices made one day at a time. This year, we are setting aside 300 Lenten Guides specifically for young adults ages 18 to 35 around the world. For 40 days, we invite you into a spiritual reset — not simply to give something up, but to build something stronger within your faith. Through daily devotionals, journaling, weekly check-ins, and intentional community gatherings, we believe God will shape a generation willing to lean into God's presence and let go of anything that pulls them away from purpose. Gideon changed history with an army of 300; imagine what God can do through a committed community walking faithfully together.

Wherever you find yourself today, remember this: every day matters. Lean into God's voice. Let go of what is ungodly. Trust that the disciplines you embrace now will prepare you for the destiny God is unfolding. Do not let this be another Lent that passes by unnoticed — this is your season to grow, to reset, and to walk closely with the One who is shaping your future.

Yours in Christian Service,

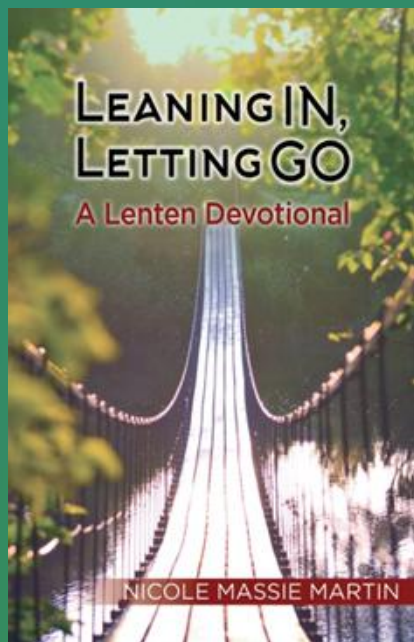
*Rev. Dr. Eric W. Lee, Sr.*  
Senior Pastor,  
Rev. Dr. Eric W. Lee, Sr.



# *Bible Study Focus*

## DEVOTIONAL LEANING IN, LETTING GO

BY NICOLE MASSIE MARTIN



Sometimes, you need to let go in order to lean in closer to God.

In this daily devotional for the Lenten season, bestselling author Nicole Massie Martin takes us on a hope-filled journey of letting go of all that keeps us from experiencing the joy of resurrection. Daily reflections and prayers invite us to lean into God's grace and let go of our own agendas and practices that hold us back from the abundant life God calls us to enjoy and share with the world. Whether this is your first Lenten journey or one of many, *Leaning In, Letting Go* inspires lasting change for all your journeys to come.

**Leaning In, Letting Go helps you:**

- Lean into God's grace and let go of our sense of control
- Lean into God's perspective and let go of our own preconceptions
- Lean into God's healing and let go of our pain
- Explore God and ourselves with greater clarity

*Leaning In, Letting Go* includes 40 days of scripture readings, reflections, and prayers, beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through the Easter season.

**[Purchase Paperback or Kindle copies of the devotional here.](#)**



# *What is Lent?*

Lent has its origins in the 4th century AD in the Catholic Church. Lent is a season on the Christian calendar that spans 40 weekdays beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on Resurrection Sunday. It is distinguished as a time of prayer and preparation prior to the Resurrection.

Lent connotes that there can be no complete appreciation or celebration of Resurrection without acknowledging the process of discipline, sacrifice and faith that Christ exhibited during crucifixion.

The number 40 is connected with many biblical events, but most aptly with the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness facing temptations that sought to persuade him to abandon his mission and calling.

Christians today use this period of Lent as a time for introspection, self-examination, self-denial and repentance. Many Christian churches engage in prayer, fasting and penance, contemplating the need for God's grace.

Lent is a journey of preparation that allows believers to celebrate God's marvelous redemption at Resurrection and to recommit to living a victorious life. It's the perfect opportunity for G.R.O.W.T.H.

# *Lent Instructions*

## **FASTING**

### **WHAT WE EAT!**

During Lent, the focus is clean eating. What is considered clean eating? A clean diet may include whole fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats while limiting highly processed snacks and other packaged foods with added sugar and salt.

## **LIMIT ADDED SUGAR**

Most people eat too many added sugars. The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons per day for women and 9 teaspoons per day for men. The average American gets about 4 times that amount—28 teaspoons of added sugar per day. To clean up your diet, reduce added sugars by limiting sweets like soda, candy and baked goods. Look for foods without sugar as an ingredient, or make sure it's listed towards the bottom, which means less of it is used in the food.

## **LIMIT PROCESSED FOODS**

Cutting back on processed foods will help you reduce your salt intake, as most packaged foods contain more sodium than homemade versions.

# Clean Eating Chart

## VEGETABLES

Carrots	Corn
Spinach	Peas
Kale/Collards	Onions
Broccoli	Mushrooms
Cauliflower	Avocados
Asparagus	Tomatoes
Peppers	Potatoes
Squash	All Vegetables
Eggplant	
lettuce	
Cucumbers	

## FRUIT

Berries	Oranges
Cherries	Clementine
Cantaloupe	Peaches
Lemons	Watermelon
Honeydew	Pineapple
Melons	Pears
Papaya	Kiwi
Nectarines	Mango
Grapes	

## PROTEIN

Black beans  
Garbanzo Beans  
Edamame  
Chia Seeds  
Lentils  
Seitan  
Grass-fed chicken  
Fish (mercury-free)  
Eggs

## DAIRY

\*Limit as much as you can for a clean diet.

Plain yogurt (Greek or regular)  
Milk  
Cheese (no processed cheese slices)  
  
Unsweetened non dairy milks

## FRUIT

Almonds  
Cashews  
Pistachios  
Walnuts  
Peanut Butter  
Almond Butter  
Cashew Butter  
Brown Rice  
Farro  
Oats (not pre-flavored)  
Quinoa

## PANTRY ITEMS

Chickpea Pasta	Tomato Sauce
Whole Wheat	Diced Tomatoes
Flour	Tomato Paste
Coconut Flour	Vegetable Broth
Almond Flour	Chicken Broth
Chickpea Flour	Coconut Milk
Honey	
Breads - organic	
sprouted or whole	
grain bread	

## CONDIMENTS AND OILS

Hummus	Herbs and spices
Salsa	Olive Oil
Apple Cider Vinegar	Coconut Oil
Vinaigrettes	Avocado Oil
Mustard (sugar-free)	



# *Lent Instructions*

## **WHEN WE EAT (INTERMITTENT FASTING)**

During Lent (for everyone that is able), we encourage you to try intermittent fasting. This involves only eating during a specific time. Research shows fasting for a certain number of hours each day or eating just one meal a couple of days a week may have health benefits as well. There are a number of methods of intermittent fasting. However, the most popular method is the 16/8 method. This method is also called the Leangains Protocol. It involves skipping breakfast and restricting your daily eating period to 8 hours, such as 1–9 p.m. Then you fast for 16 hours in between. During the times when you're not eating, water and zero-calorie beverages such as black coffee and tea are permitted.

## **COMMITMENT**

During the Lenten Season Commit to the following:

- Pray in the morning, noon, and evening.
- Drink at least 64 oz of water daily.
- Dedicate daily reading of your bible.
- Commit to 30 minutes of exercise per day.



# 40 Day Guide

Leaning In, Letting Go, A 40-Day Guide to amplifying our Lenten theme. Each week commit to completing one or more items on the list. If you took the Devotional Challenge you should complete items 1-3 weekly.

**AS WE JOURNEY THROUGH LENT, WE FOCUS ON OUR THEME OF  
LEANING IN AND LETTING GO.**

## **WEEK 1: LEANING IN, LETTING GO**

1. Daily reading of Leaning In, Letting Go.
2. Complete the SBC Lenten Companion Journal daily.
3. Attend an SBC Fitness Class or complete 5000 steps in daily.

## **WEEK 2: LEANING IN, LETTING GO**

1. Daily reading of Leaning In, Letting Go.
2. Complete the SBC Lenten Guide Companion Journal daily.
3. Attend an SBC Fitness Class or complete 5000 steps in daily.
4. Attend Black History Academy's Live Game Show. Feb 25<sup>th</sup> | 7pm.

## **WEEK 3: LEANING IN, LETTING GO**

1. Daily reading of Leaning In, Letting Go.
2. Complete the SBC Lenten Guide Companion Journal daily.
3. Attend an SBC Fitness Class or complete 5000 steps in daily

## **WEEK 4: LEANING IN, LETTING GO**

1. Daily reading of Leaning In, Letting Go.
2. Complete the SBC Lenten Guide Companion Journal daily.
3. Attend an SBC Fitness Class or complete 5000 steps in daily.

## **WEEK 5: LEANING IN, LETTING GO**

1. Daily reading of Leaning In, Letting Go.
2. Complete the SBC Lenten Guide Companion Journal daily.
3. Attend an SBC Fitness Class or complete 5000 steps in daily. (TBD)

## **WEEK 6: LEANING IN, LETTING GO**

1. Daily reading of Leaning In, Letting Go.
2. Complete the SBC Lenten Guide Companion Journal daily.
3. Attend an SBC Fitness Class or complete 5000 steps in daily.
4. End Lent by writing down what God has taught you and how you will continue growing.

**We pray this Lenten season strengthens your faith and helps us all grow together as we Lean In and Let Go.**





## LENT: A RESET FOR YOUR SOUL

Lent is a historic season of the Christian church that prepares us for Easter. For forty days, believers around the world intentionally slow down to remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The number forty shows up throughout Scripture as a time of testing, preparation, and transformation. Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness. Israel wandered for forty years before entering the Promised Land. Lent follows that same rhythm. It is not about punishment or earning God's love. It is about formation.

During Lent, the church practices repentance, self-control, and reflection not to feel guilty, but to grow spiritually. By becoming more aware of what we consume, how we use our time, and what has our attention, we learn how easily good things can distract us from the best things. Limiting sugar and social media during this season helps train our hearts and minds to notice God's presence more clearly and to stop taking His gifts for granted. Lent teaches us that discipline is not about restriction. It is about learning what truly leads to freedom.

## FOCUS SCRIPTURES

Return to me with all your heart with fasting weeping and mourning -Joel 2:12

Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom -Psalm 90:12





## WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE: WEEKLY PLAN

Here's a guide to help us walk this out together:

### Monday's – Awareness

Today is about noticing how fast life moves and how often we act on autopilot. Many of us reach for our phones without thinking. Lent invites us to slow down and recognize what is happening inside us before we react.

#### Scripture

Be still and know that I am God Psalm 46:10

#### Practice

Delay social media in the morning and take a moment to pray or breathe instead.

### Tuesday's – Gratitude

Gratitude shifts your focus from what you want to what you already have. Food water shelter and care are blessings we often overlook. Being mindful of what we eat including sugar helps us remember that provision is a gift not a guarantee.

#### Scripture

Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus 1 Thessalonians 5:18

#### Practice

Eat today without complaining and thank God before meals.

### Wednesday's – Self Control

Cravings often show up when we are bored, stressed or tired. Lent helps us ask who is really in control our impulses or our purpose. Learning to pause builds strength.

#### Scripture

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power love and self-control 2 Timothy 1:7

#### Practice

When you want sugar or to scroll pause and pray before deciding.



### Thursday's – Presence

Being present means giving people your full attention. When we constantly multitask or scroll, we miss moments that matter. Lent reminds us that love looks like focus.

#### Scripture

Love your neighbor as yourself Mark 12:31

#### Practice

Have one phone free conversation today.

### Friday's – Sacrifice

Jesus showed us that sacrifice is about love not loss. Giving something up helps us see what we depend on too much and what we trust too little.

#### Scripture

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me Luke 9:23

#### Practice

Choose a healthier option today as an act of discipline not pressure.

### Saturday's – Compassion

When we are less focused on ourselves, we notice others more. Lent opens our eyes to people who need encouragement kindness or simply to be seen.

#### Scripture

Carry each other's burdens and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ Galatians 6:2

#### Practice

Encourage someone quietly without posting it.

### Sunday's – Reflection

Lent is not about perfection it is about growth. Take time to reflect on what was hard what surprised you and where you felt God nudging you.

#### Scripture

Search me God and know my heart Psalm 139:23.

#### Practice

Spend five minutes journaling or praying about this week.

**Lent reminds us that spiritual growth happens through intentional choices. When we slow down, limit distractions and practice gratitude, we learn how to value God's presence and stop taking His gifts or His grace for granted.**





# KINGDOM KIDS

Children's Ministry

Lent is a prime time to introduce spiritual disciplines like prayer, fasting and remembering the sacrifice Jesus made for us. Beginning at about five or six years old, children can be encouraged to give something up, or to adopt a positive practice, as a way of entering the spirit of Lent. Download the Kingdom Kids Lenten Calendar. Follow the daily path and help your child complete the daily Lent inspired activities that lead up to Resurrection Sunday. Kingdom Kids has made it easy for you to include your children in the Lenten activities.

[Tap Here To Access The Kingdom Kids Calendar](#)

or visit [bit.ly/KingdomKids26](http://bit.ly/KingdomKids26)



## *Calendar of Events*

Ash Wednesday Services – February 18, 2026

7:00 am - 8:30 am | drive thru

12 noon | in-person service

7:00 pm | in-person service

Food Pantry – Feb 28, March 14 & 28

9:00 am - 12:00 noon

Daylight Savings Time - March 8, 2026

## *Holy Week & Resurrection Sunday Schedule*

Palm Sunday - March 29, 2026

10:00 am | Worship Service

Good Friday - April 3, 2026

7:00 pm | Worship Service

Resurrection Sunday - April 5, 2026

7:00 am | Sunrise Service

7:30 am | Early Morning Service

10:00 am | Resurrection Service



