

# 40 Days of Meditation & Memorization of God's Word



The Chicago International E. Free Church  
February 26 – April 11, 2020  
(Lent – with Sunday rest)

## Theme Verse – Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active.  
Sharper than any double-edged sword, it  
penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit,  
joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and  
attitudes of the heart. NIV

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Welcome to the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of our Lent devotional! This is an attempt to have us as a church family experience God's holy word penetrating our hearts and minds during each day of Lent and especially that we might join together in daily prayer for one another and the workers we support. We will not count Sundays as part of the 40 days – they are days of celebration. Read each verse of

Scripture prayerfully and make it a matter of prayer to God. If you don't know the suggested song you might be able to listen to it on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Another great resource is: <http://www.lifewayworship.com/findAndBuy/alpha?searchAlpha=A>. The electronic version has a HYPERLINK you can click on. Or you can make up your own melody or sing something entirely different. You can also just ponder the words. This guide is meant to be a **HELP** in seeking the Lord during the 40 days **not** something to constrain you in your seeking Him. Try to keep your regular devotional practice going. The main task in the 40 days is to spend time in prayer seeking God. Perhaps this guide will help you but make your aim to have intimate time with the Lord. Lent has been a time in the regular calendar of the church (in history) to renew devotion, seek the Lord in a more focused way, and to prepare our hearts for Good Friday & Resurrection Sunday. You **MAY** want to make a few special commitments during the 40 days and see what God does in your life as you seek Him.

**During our 40 days, I commit myself, with the help of the Holy Spirit to:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

These may be things from which you will fast (for example – I commit to FASTING every Thursday or fasting lunch and dinner on Monday – or I will abstain from watching TV/surfing the internet on Mondays and Fridays during the 40 days and spend that time in prayer or Bible study) or THINGS THAT YOU ARE COMMITTED TO DO (I commit to go through this guide each day during the 40 days – or I commit to getting up each day at \_\_\_\_ a.m. so that I can spend 15 minutes in prayer). You can include some personal discipline areas such as exercise and diet if you want. If you miss a day or fail to keep something you committed to doing, just start up again the next day! We want to **FIND JOY** in this time of focusing on growing in prayer with Jesus **not** be self-condemned during it. It is important, however, to **ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT'S HELP** in keeping your commitments because Satan will not be pleased as we seek to draw near to God. (James 4:7-10). A great promise for seeking the Lord: Isaiah 66:2 **But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.**

May the Lord of life bless you abundantly over these 40 days of seeking Him afresh!!

### Day 0 – before Feb. 25

This year I want to encourage you to spend time memorizing and meditating upon God's word which, as our theme verse tells us, is LIVING & ACTIVE – it's powerful! Give your mind and heart something wonderful to chew on each day and your mind will be renewed! The Holy Spirit will have His truth as a ready weapon to warn you when you are tempted, to encourage you when you are down, to instruct you when you need direction, to revive you when you are exhausted, and much more. This year's format will be simpler. A verse or two to meditate upon and/or memorize each day with some comments. Test yourself at the end of each week or simply review the verses and where they are found. We also want to focus on prayer – individually and with the needs in our church family. Here's a most precious promise: *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."* (NAS John 15:7-8) Some of the fruit we bear as Jesus' disciples is in asking of the Father (as we abide in Jesus & His word abides in us) and then seeing Him answer! How simple is that?!! He does not always answer, of course, just as we desire, but rather according to His perfect wisdom, love, knowledge, and plan. However, IF you give yourself, even for a short time each day, to seeking Him in prayer, you may experience great and mighty things that you didn't anticipate, even beyond what you can ask or imagine!

Have faith! Believe God! Spend time before His throne! Trust His promises! Know that you have access right into His almighty, holy presence because of the blood of Jesus!! Know that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us and through us!

Write down some of the things that are on your heart as we enter this Lent season for which you would like to see God answer. They may be for another person, for some growth in your life (like overcoming a troubling habit/sin), large things or small things (like – "Lord, teach me to draw near to you in prayer.")

Review the list often during Lent.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Now begin to think on God's greatness, power, & ability to answer.

Thank Him for His willingness to open His throne room for you!

Remind yourself that you do NOT earn your way in because you are trying very hard but because of His grace in Christ Jesus. Praise Him that His power is at work IN you!

### Day 1 – Wed. Feb. 26 Hebrews 4:12

**For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.** NIV 神的道是有生命的，是活泼的，比一切两刃的剑更锋利，甚至魂与灵，骨节与骨髓，都能刺入剖开，也能辨明心中的思念和欲望。

This is a great place to start as we seek to memorize and meditate upon God's word. Just knowing the truth about what you are putting into you heart & mind is encouraging! There are so many books in this world, so much information but none of it is "living and active" – "alive and powerful" like God's word. However, it is not some sort of magical formula to be ordered about to do our will. It is God's living and active word. He wants it to penetrate deeply into our lives – exposing the darkness and bringing His light. It is double-edged so that it both convicts us of sin and also instructs us for life. As you read it, your thoughts and attitudes will be laid open IF you approach it humbly and prayerfully while depending upon the Holy Spirit for illumination. Read the verse several times more and then try to see how much you can remember. You may want to write it on a small card and put it in your pocket and bring it out throughout the day. Think of God handing you a sharp, double-edged sword that is living and active – see it penetrating, even dividing soul and spirit, right down to the joins and marrow of your bones. Then see it cutting right into your thoughts and attitudes.

PRAYER: Ask the Lord to bless our 40 Days of Lent. Think about two or three others in our church family and pray for them that they will find the time and space in their lives to memorize and meditate upon God's word. For whom did you pray?

Quote: In Bible study, you dissect the text; in Scripture meditation, you savor it and enter into it. In Bible study, you ask questions about the text; in meditation, you let the text ask questions of you. In Bible study, you examine how biblical facts relate to each other; in meditation, you let God speak to you in light of the facts you've already considered. Meditation is about absorbing scriptural truth.  
Jan Johnson

SONG: [\*Speak, O Lord\*](#) By Keith Getty & Stuart Townend © 2005 Thankyou MusicUsed by permission CCLI #355798

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You To receive the food of Your Holy Word. Take Your truth, plant it deep in us; Shape and fashion us in Your likeness, That the light of Christ might be seen today, in our acts of love and our deeds of faith. Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us All Your purposes for Your glory.

2. Teach us, Lord, full obedience, Holy reverence, true humility; Test our thoughts and our attitudes In the radiance of Your purity.

Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see Your majestic love and authority. Words of pow'r that can never fail— Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

3. Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds; Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us— Truths unchanged from the dawn of time That will echo down through eternity.& by grace we'll stand on Your promises, & by faith we'll walk as You walk with us Speak, O Lord, 'til Your church is built and the earth is filled with Your glory.

Day 2 Thursday Feb. 27 Isaiah 66:2 b

**But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.** 但我所眷顾

的，就是谦卑痛悔、尊重我话的人 Have you ever wanted to get God's attention? Here is one way. It comes through having the right attitude of heart and the right value of & approach to God's word. Obviously, God is the only one who can truly judge these qualities. That is why He resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). The humble are ever looking to receive His grace, wisdom, truth, rebuke, leading, and empowering. The proud think they already have what they need because they think they are so wise, talented, knowledgeable, smart, clever, connected, etc. The humble always approach God's word with a desire to discover their sin, learn, grow, change, and draw close to Him. The proud collect more knowledge to puff them up (1 Cor. 8:1). The contrite in spirit are those who know they need God's grace and forgiveness which keeps them humble. Read the verse a few more times. What does the Lord see of your heart as He looks down upon you? What is your attitude when you pick up His word? Pray asking to be this kind of person.

Quote: "A humble man has this advantage over a proud man, for he cannot fall." Edward Marbury "God's choice acquaintances are humble people." Robert Leighton

Prayer: Mike & Liz Schulte were part of our church family for 10+ years. Liz is expecting their first child in May but there are some serious issues that are keeping the baby boy small. Please pray for this little one to develop greatly in the coming weeks and for God's peace to be upon Mike & Liz.

SONG: [Build my life](#)

Worthy of every song we could ever sing, Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring, Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe, We live for You, we live for You.

2. Jesus the name above every other name; Jesus the only one who could save; Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe.

We live for you, we live for You.

Chorus: *Holy there is no one like you There is none beside you  
Open up my eyes in wonder*

*And show me who you are And fill me with your heart*

*And lead me in Your love to those around me (to v.2)*

And I will build my life upon your love it is a firm foundation; And I will put my trust in you alone and I will not be shaken; And I will build my life upon your love it is a firm foundation

And I will put my trust in you alone and I will not be shaken (to chorus)

Songwriters: Pat Barrett / Kirby Kaple / Karl Martin / Matt Redman / Brett Younker Build My Life lyrics ©  
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Day 3 Friday Feb. 28 Psalm 90:14

**Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.** 求你使我们早晨饱得你的慈爱，好叫我们一生一世欢呼喜乐！

When you got up this morning, what was the best hope that you had for the day? That your project would go well? That your health would be better? That your relationship with someone would improve? These are good but we can ask for something even better! A heart full of satisfaction with something that the LORD is willing to give – it's really what He only can give. His unending love – lovingkindness – steadfast love (*hesed*). This word is one of the best because it describes God's kind of faithful love. It's new every morning (Lam. 3:23), it extends to the heavens (Ps. 36:5), it is better than life (Ps. 63:3), and it's everlasting (Ps. 138:8). Our hearts can be saved from much trouble, heartache, anguish, and foolish pursuit if we will find our satisfaction in God's lovingkindness. The things of this world cannot satisfy the deepest needs of our heart, yet we often spend so much time and energy pursuing them. God's love is unending because He cannot fail. As we find satisfaction in His lovingkindness each and every morning, what is the result? A heart full of song and gladness that goes on and on. Take some time to memorize this verse and then spend the rest of the day meditating upon it and asking for it in prayer. Remember it as you arise each morning and pray for it as you seek the Lord who willingly gives it.

Quote: "God's unending love for us is an objective fact affirmed over and over in the Scriptures. It is true whether we believe it or not. Our doubts do not destroy God's love, nor does our faith create it. It originates in the very nature of God, who is love, and it flows to us through our union with His beloved Son." Jerry Bridges

Prayer: Pray for our younger children: Jennah, David, Yo-yo, Elisa, Anna, Claire – that they will learn to trust in God as they see His truth lived out in their parents' lives. Pray for their parents!

SONG: [Hallelujah, I have found Him](#)

1. All my life long I had panted For a draught from some cool spring,  
That I hoped would quench the burning Of the thirst I felt within.

(chorus) **Hallelujah! I have found Him**

**Whom my soul so long has craved!**

**Jesus satisfies my longings;**

**Through His life I now am saved.**

2. Feeding on the husks around me, Till my strength was almost gone,  
Longed my soul for something better, Only still to hunger on.

3. Poor I was, and sought for riches, Something that would satisfy,  
But the dust I gathered round me Only mocked my soul's sad cry.

4. Well of water, ever springing, Bread of life, so rich and free,  
Untold wealth that never faileth, My Redeemer is to me.

Day 4 Saturday Feb. 29 Prov. 18:18

**The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.**

和華的名如堅固台，義人奔入，便得安穩。

Let the truth of this verse sink deep into your soul! Spend time praising the LORD for being your refuge and strength. Know that Yahweh, the name of the LORD, is indeed the greatest, strongest, most powerful name in the universe for it is the name by which God Almighty has revealed Himself. When we “run to it” – take refuge in Him, make Him our defense, depend upon His protection, we can find that place of safety and protection. Too often, however, we run to other places for help. Some of us have comfort foods that we turn to when we’re feeling down. Other times we turn to entertainment to pick us up. We often depend upon our own strength and wisdom rather than flee to the safety of the LORD’S name. His name is not something that we throw around like a good luck charm but rather we think about who He is, what He is like, and what He has promised. His name is “faithful and true” (Rev. 19:1) and He does not lie (Num. 23:19). The righteous, those of us who are depending upon the righteousness of Jesus as our own (2 Cor. 5:21) can always find shelter in our Father’s lovingkindness as long as we run to Him. Take some time to visualize a strong tower with the LORD’S name on it and see yourself running to it and finding safety. Repeat the verse throughout the day.

QUOTE: “Jesus Christ is God spelling Himself out in a language that man can understand.” S.D. Gordon

Prayer: Pray for Angie Velasco in Mexico. Pray for those she has trained in Bible storytelling that they will remember what they have learned and put it into practice often. Pray for the Lord’s leading in Angie’s life as she is considering a move to a different city but wants to know it is the Lord’s will.

SONG: [O Praise the Name \(Anastasia\)](#)

I cast my mind to Calvary; Where Jesus bled and died for me. I see His wounds, His hands, His feet.

My Savior on that cursed tree

2. His body bound and drenched in tears; They laid Him down in Joseph’s tomb.; The entrance sealed by heavy stone; Messiah still and all alone

(chorus) O praise the name of the Lord our God

O praise His name forever more

For endless days we will sing Your praise

Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

3. Then on the third at break of dawn, The Son of heaven rose again. O trampled death where is your sting? The angels roar for Christ the King

(to chorus)

4. He shall return in robes of white, The blazing Son shall pierce the night.

And I will rise among the saints, My gaze transfixed on Jesus’ face

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Sunday March 1

Review the verses from the week.

Hebrews 4:12

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神的道是有生命的，是活潑的，比一切兩刃的劍更鋒利，甚至魂與靈，骨節與骨髓，都能刺入剖開，也能辨明心中的思念和欲望。

Isaiah 66:2 b

**But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.** 但我所眷顧

的，就是謙卑痛悔、尊重我話的人

Psalm 90:14

**Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.** 求你使我們早晨飽得你的慈愛，好叫我們一生一世歡呼喜樂！

Prov. 18:18

**The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.**

和華的名如堅固台，義人奔入，便得安穩。

How has the Lord spoken to you as you have hidden these verses in your heart and meditated upon them?

SING:

HYMN: [Rejoice the Lord is King!](#) Listen to the link for an upbeat version!

Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore;

Mortals give thanks and sing, and triumph evermore;

(chorus) **Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;**

**Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!**

2. Jesus, the Savior, reigns, The God of truth and love;

When He had purged our stains He took His seat above;

3. His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o’er earth and heaven,

The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus given;

4. He sits at God’s right hand Till all His foes submit,

And bow to His command, And fall beneath His feet:

5. Rejoice in glorious hope! Jesus the Judge shall come,

And take His servants up to their eternal home

Day 5 Monday March 2 Isaiah 41:13

**For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.** 因为我耶和华你的神必搀扶你的右手，对你说，不要害怕！我正在帮助你。

This section of Isaiah is full of great encouragement to God's people. Verse 14 goes on to say: *Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you,*" declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. The phrases used may likely help Israel to think back upon the time of Exodus when the LORD redeemed them from the bondage of slavery. Israel, the nation of slaves, walked out of powerful Egypt free and full of treasure. The very same God still speaks to Israel hundreds of years later and also speaks to us today. We belong to Him if we belong to Christ, His Son (Rom. 8:9, 16). We also then have the right to hear this great word of comfort and assurance. Spend time listening to the LORD, your God speak this into your life. Reach out your right hand to Him and sense Him grasping it. Tell fear to go away because the LORD your God is your redeemer and has a hold of you (John 10:28,29). Praise Him for promised help that comes in time of need (Heb. 4:16). Write down any thoughts as you meditate upon this verse:

QUOTE: "We are secure, not because we hold tightly to Jesus, but because he holds tightly to us." R.C. Sproul

PRAYER: Ida, Loyan, & Elijah are teenagers in our church family. They face a lot of challenges as followers of Jesus in a world that does not hold Christian values. Pray for them today that they will not fear what those around them think about them but instead find the LORD helping them and taking hold of their right hand.

SONG: Be unto Your name

1. We are a moment, You are forever. Lord of the ages, God before time. We are a vapor, You are eternal. Love everlasting, reigning on high.

**Holy, holy Lord God Almighty, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. Highest praises, honor, and glory, Be unto Your name, be unto Your name.**

2. We are the broken, You are the healer Jesus Redeemer, mighty to save.

You are the love song, we'll sing forever Bowing before You,

blessing Your name. By Lynn DeShazo & Gary Sadler © 1998 Integrity Music Used by permission CCLI #377598

Day 6 Tuesday March 3 Psalm 86:11

**Teach me Your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear Your name.** 耶和华啊，指教我如何活着，就要遵从你的命令，使我专心委身于你！

Have you ever bowed your head in prayer and weren't sure what to ask for? Here is a verse that fits all occasions! We ALWAYS need the LORD'S instruction. We ALWAYS need to walk in His truth. "Walk" in the Older Testament is a term describing one's manner of life – how one conducts his/her life. We know that Yahweh's way is the absolute best way to live because He is the Creator, Designer, & Author of life so He knows what is best for us. We should ALWAYS pray that we won't be divided in our heart or mind (double-minded James 1:8, 4:8 is a picture of compromise, one who doubts God's goodness, one who can't make up his mind to commit). An undivided heart (NAS says: "Unite my heart to fear Your name") is one that is sure that the LORD answers prayer, that He is willing to teach us His way, that doesn't allow other affections to gain first place in one's heart. When we fear the LORD'S name, we have that sense of awe concerning His holiness, His hatred of sin, His zeal for His truth and His unwillingness to let us stay as we are. As you seek to memorize this verse, find yourself praying it throughout the day and then LOOK for times in which the LORD answers by His teaching you His way in a particular situation. Ask Him to bring to your mind His truth whenever you need it – in a meeting, while conversing, when listening to others, etc. Let Him know of your desire to LEARN from the Holy Spirit and ask for that undivided/united heart that lives in holy fear of God.

QUOTE: "Do nothing you would not like God to see. Say nothing you would not like God to hear. Write nothing you would not like God to read. Go to no place where you would not like God to find you. Read no book of which you would not like God to say, 'Show it me.'" - J.C. Ryle

PRAYER: Colby is in Israel studying for the next month-and-a-half. Pray that he will be learning some wonderful truths and help others to learn to walk in the way of Christ. Ask for God's protection to be upon him. Pray with him about his summer internship in Andreas' home country – God's provision, that he'll be a help to those he is staying with, and that it will be a further assurance of God's will for his life.

HYMN: Teach me Thy way, O Lord (Sing as a prayer!)

Teach me Thy way, O Lord, teach me Thy way! Thy guiding grace afford, teach me Thy way! Help me to walk aright, more by faith, less by sight; Lead me with heav'nly light, teach me Thy way!

2. When I am sad at heart, teach me Thy way! When earthly joys depart, teach me Thy way! In hours of loneliness, in times of dire distress, In failure or success, teach me Thy way!

3. When doubts and fears arise, teach me Thy way! When storms o'erspread the skies, teach me Thy way! Shine through the cloud and rain, through sorrow, toil and pain; Make Thou my pathway plain, teach me Thy way!

4. Long as my life shall last, teach me Thy way! Where'er my lot be cast, teach me Thy way! Until the race is run, until the journey's done, Until the crown is won, teach me Thy way!

Day 7 Wed. March 4 Proverbs 25:28

**Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.** 人不制伏自己的脾气，就好像毁坏的城邑，没有墙垣。

The picture that this verse draws for us is pretty clear, isn't it? In ancient times, a city was only as safe as the walls protecting it. High, strong walls meant that it could withstand an attack. Walls that were broken down invited trouble. Bandits, murderers, rapists, those looking for slaves could walk right in and pillage. When we lack self-control, we are open to all manner of trouble. We are likely to say hurtful things or things that get us into trouble. We may have difficulty stopping sinful urges and can find ourselves under the control of bad habits. We may jeopardize those we love the most or we may ruin years of our lives. Galatians 5:23 tells us that self-control is part of the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit when we are yielded to His control. Spend some time today evaluating the state of your walls at the present time. Are there areas of your life in which self-control is lacking? Are the walls of self-control produced by the Holy Spirit strong and protective? Picture a city with broken down walls – see its vulnerable state. Then ask the LORD to teach you about self-control and ask the Spirit to see it come forth from your life. Pray about any areas being threatened by a lack of self-control.

QUOTE: “Of all forms of deception, self-deception is the most deadly, and of all deceived persons, the self-deceived are the least likely to discover the fraud.” A.W. Tozer

PRAYER: Pray for someone today that you may know who is wrestling with a lack of self-control. Ask the LORD to open their eyes to see clearly what the issues truly are and find the help of the Holy Spirit.

SONG: [Stronger](#)

There is love that came for us; Humbled to a sinner's cross  
You broke my shame and sinfulness;  
You rose again victorious  
2. Faithfulness none can deny  
through the storm and through the fire  
There is truth that sets me free, Jesus Christ who lives in me  
(chorus) You are stronger, You are stronger;  
Sin is broken, You have saved me  
It is written Christ is risen;  
Jesus you are Lord of all  
3. No beginning and no end You're my hope and my defense  
You came to seek and save the lost,  
You paid it all upon the cross (to chorus)  
(Bridge) So let Your Name be lifted higher  
Be lifted higher Be lifted higher

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