

Cross Connection

New Life in Christ Church

A Lenten Devotional Guide W3



✦ We all have a connection to the cross ✦ What's yours?

Lifecollectors and Friends,

It can seem like life is always moving at warp speed with little time for pause. We face so many challenges each day, that even our best efforts to remain peaceful can feel ineffective at best. This can leave our souls feeling weary and our spirits yearning for a deeper, more intentional connection with God. This year, we determined that in addition to focusing on inviting our friends and family to join us for Easter service, we would slow our pace and embrace Lent, the 40-day season leading up to Resurrection Sunday.

This Cross Connection Guide, will broaden understanding of our theme "Connected" by reflecting on how we *all* connect to the cross. This kind of deep dive is the remedy our souls long for. Remembering the **radical love** of Christ and the life-changing impact that has on how we can show up in the world.

Our devotional guides traditionally walk us through differing scriptures each day with prompts to write, ponder, and pray. This guide will slow the pace a little - guiding you one scripture per week and giving you simple practices each day that help the Scripture's weekly focus come to life in your time with God.

We anticipate hearing how this intentionality impacts your connection to Jesus during this Lenten season!

In Christ's Love,

Bishop, and the New Life Discipleship Team

CONNECTED
JOHN 15:5



What is Lent?

Lent is a sacred season the Church has observed for centuries as a consecrated time of prayer, fasting, and repentance, mirroring Jesus' forty days in the wilderness and the early Church's preparation for resurrection life. This is not about ritual — it is about realignment — as we corporately turn our hearts back to God and walk the road that leads to the cross. In this season, the cross does more than remind us of what Jesus has done; it reveals who we are becoming as we surrender, are renewed, and are drawn deeper into His will. And as we are transformed together, we are being prepared to live out our calling to change lives in our lifetime for the glory of God.

How to use this guide:

Set aside 10–15 minutes each day.

1. Begin by taking a slow breath and becoming aware that God is with you.
2. Follow the daily instructions.
3. End with the prayer.

You will read the same Scripture every day.

Do not rush. God will meet you in a different way each time.



Week 3

Purpose



Luke 5:1-2a, 3-6, 8, 10b-11

March 4 - March 10

The Cross is the Way to Purpose

This week's devotion invites us to consider how the cross gives our lives purpose. Every person, no matter their season of life, eventually wrestles with the age-old questions: "*What am I supposed to be doing on this earth?*" and "*What is my purpose?*" For those who are in Christ, the answer comes with great comfort. It is the death and resurrection of Jesus that ultimately defines our purpose, to love Him and, through our lives, share the good news with others. As we walk with Him, the Holy Spirit also reveals the unique ways each of us has been created to live out that calling.

Sin, however, distorts how we see ourselves and how we understand God's design for our lives. It convinces us that the emptiness we feel can be filled with other things, pleasures, achievements, and pursuits that are disconnected from God and His Word. In reality, these things can never satisfy the deeper purpose God has placed within us.

During Lent, God calls us to turn toward Him and allow Him to bring clarity, meaning, and fulfillment to our lives. The cross reminds us that Jesus did not simply save us *from* something, He also saved us *for* something. Because of His sacrifice and resurrection, our lives now belong to Him and are meant to participate in His mission in the world.

This week's passage from Luke 5 shows us a powerful moment when Jesus calls ordinary fishermen into extraordinary purpose. When Peter witnesses the miraculous catch of fish, he becomes aware of both Jesus' power and his own sin. Yet instead of pushing him away, Jesus calls him forward: "From now on you will fish for people." In that moment, Peter discovers that recognizing who Jesus truly is also reveals what his life is meant to be about.

Tap the link or scan the code to view a clip of this very story from the series, "The Chosen".

<https://youtu.be/hWGCkovAUWM?si=lZomvCHU1Azzr5jw>



Day 1

Week 3 Passage - Luke 5:1-2a, 3-6, 8, 10b-11 *5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. 2 He saw at the water's edge two boats...3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." 6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*

Today's Practice: Lectio Divina (this means "Divine Reading")

Our practice today is called "Lectio Divina". This may be a new term for you, but it is an easy practice to learn. It is a slow, intentional reading of this week's passage, noticing words or phrases that stand out to you, and prayerfully considering what God might be saying to you.

Step 1 – Become still: Sit quietly and pray - "Lord, let me meet You at the cross today."

Step 2 – Read this week's passage slowly: Read the passage out loud twice. Do not analyze – simply listen.

Step 3 – Notice the word or phrase that stands out and write the word down below. It may be "Put out into deep water", "Do not be afraid", "Follow me", "Fish for people"

Write down your word or phrase:

Step 4 – Cross Connection Reflection: At the cross, Jesus gave His life so that we could belong to Him and participate in His mission. How does the word or phrase you noticed point you toward the purpose Jesus may be calling you into?

Prayer: "Jesus, help me hear Your call."

Live it out today - Repeat your word or phrase throughout the day and ask God to shape your heart around it.

Day 2

Week 2 Passage -John 4:9-11, 13-14, 25-26 NIV

Today's Practice: Confession

Our practice today is confession. Confession simply means agreeing with God about our sin.

Step 1 – Begin with this prayer: “Jesus, because of the cross, I can be honest with You.”

Step 2 – Read this week’s passage. Focus on Peter’s response when he realizes who Jesus is: “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”

Step 3 – Practice agreement with God. Where have I been living without considering God’s purpose for my life? Have I allowed fear, comfort, or distraction to keep me from following Him fully? Write your answers below.

Prayer: “Thank You for forgiving me and calling me into something greater.”

Live it out today: When you feel convicted, simply say: “Yes, Lord.”



Day 3

Week 3 Passage - Luke 5:1-2a, 3-6, 8, 10b-11 *5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. 2 He saw at the water's edge two boats...3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." 6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*

Today's Practice: Surrender

Our practice today is surrenderance. To surrender means releasing control of our plans so we can follow where Jesus leads.

Step 1 – Read this week's passage: Focus on the moment Jesus says, "Put out into deep water."

Step 2 – Ask yourself: Where might Jesus be asking me to trust Him more deeply? Specifically, as it relates to your purpose.

Step 4 – Practice surrender: One by one, bring those areas before the Lord. Ask Him to help you to trust Him with each thing you wrote down.

Step 5 – Cross Connection Reflection: The cross proves that Jesus is trustworthy with our lives. Because He gave Himself for us, we can trust Him with our purpose.

Prayer: "I trust where You are leading me."

Live it out today: Take one small step of obedience in an area God has been speaking to you about.

Day 4

Week 3 Passage - Luke 5:1-2a, 3-6, 8, 10b-11

Today's Practice: Holy Imagination

We invite you to today's practice of imagination, which may be new to you. "Holy Imagination" is simply picturing yourself in the scripture. The imagery that you are prompted to visualize is a way to help you connect with God.

Step 1 – Read this week's passage slowly

Step 2 – Enter the scene

Imagine you are standing near the boats after the miraculous catch. The nets are full. Peter has fallen at Jesus' knees. Then Jesus turns toward you and says:

"Do not be afraid. From now on you will fish for people."

Step 4 – This is not only a call to Peter, it is an invitation for all who follow Him. What might Jesus be saying about the role you play in His mission? How does the cross shape the way you see your purpose?

Write your thoughts below:

At the cross, Jesus gave His life so that people everywhere could be brought back to God. When He calls us to "fish for people," He invites us to participate in the very mission He died to accomplish.

Prayer: "Jesus, help me follow You and participate in Your mission."

Live it out today: Look for one opportunity to show or share the love of Christ with someone.

Day 5

Week 3 Passage - Luke 5:1-2a, 3-6, 8, 10b-11

Today's Practice: Intercession

Today's practice is intercession. This simply means praying for others.

Step 1 – Read this week's passage. Focus on Jesus' words:

"From now on you will fish for people."

Step 2 – Who in your life might Jesus be drawing toward Himself right now? Write their names below:

Step 3 – Pray for them: Ask God to help them: encounter Jesus, recognize who He is, respond to His invitation to follow Him. This is a great time to pray for the person on your connection card or others the Holy Spirit might be prompting you to add.

Live it out today: Pray for those names again during your day.



Day 6

Week 3 Passage - Luke 5:1-2a, 3-6, 8, 10b-11

Today's Practice: Fasting

Today's practice of fasting means to make room for God by giving something up (typically food).

Step 1 – Choose something to lay down today. It can be food (a meal or all day), or something else that takes your attention away from God.

Step 2 – Read this week's passage. Notice the final response of the disciples: "They left everything and followed Him."

Cross Connection Reflection: Jesus left heaven, endured the cross, and gave His life to bring people to God. When we fast, we remind ourselves that His mission matters more than our comfort.

Prayer: "Jesus, help me desire Your kingdom more than my own comfort."

Live it out today: Each time you feel the absence of what you fasted, pray for someone who needs to know Jesus.

Day 7

Week 3 Passage - Luke 5:1-2a, 3-6, 8, 10b-11 *5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. 2 He saw at the water's edge two boats...3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." 6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*

Today's Practice: Reflection

Step 1 – Read the passage one final time and reflect. What did God reveal this week about the purpose He has for my life? Where might He be inviting me to participate in helping others know Him?

Step 2 – Cross Connection Reflection: Because of the cross, our lives now belong to Jesus.

Following Him means joining the mission He gave His life for, bringing people back to God. Write any final thoughts about the passage and your time with God this 3rd week of Lent below.



Prayer: Jesus, thank you that you give me purpose. My life has meaning because of your sacrifice. Help me live more fully in this truth." Amen.

