

# Cross Connection

New Life in Christ Church

## A Lenten Devotional Guide



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

## Lifetchangers 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 1

## Sin and Repentance



Psalms 51:11,3-4, 7 NIV

February 18-February 24

### Sin: The Elephant in the Room

Everyone's journey towards accepting Jesus is different. Whether you have had a relationship with Jesus for a long time, you are just beginning one, or you don't yet have one, the path to the cross must begin with identifying and acknowledging sin.

Sin is the "Elephant in the Room" because it is consuming, invasive, and regardless of how much one may try to act "normal", the elephant demands to be acknowledged. During Lent, we pause to acknowledge and repent of our sins, which means to turn from sin and towards God. Week 1 of this guide will help you recognize sin that may be present in your life, and turn towards Jesus, surrendering all to Him.

This week's passage from Psalm 51 is King David's prayer of repentance about his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah (2 Samuel 11-12), exposing both his personal failure and his need for deep inner transformation. Instead of offering excuses, David throws himself on God's mercy, acknowledging that his sin is ultimately against God and that only the Lord can cleanse and restore his heart.

Looking ahead to the New Testament, we see that Jesus demands a response to the good news that He has come (Mark 1:15 NIV). That response is repentance.



# Day 1

**Week 1 Passage - Psalm 51:1, 3-4, 7** *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Cleanse me with hysop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*



**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 us, 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 something like:

- mercy
- my sin
- cleanse me

*Write down your word or phrase:*

**Step 4 – Cross Connection Reflection:** How does the word or phrase you wrote down make you think of Jesus and his sacrifice on the cross?

**Prayer:** "Jesus, let me hear Your voice through Your Word."

**Live it out today:** Carry that word or phrase with you and repeat it throughout the day.

# Day 2

**Week 1 Passage - Psalm 51:1, 3-4, 7** *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

**Today's Practice:** Confession

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

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

**Step 2 – Read this week's passage (above)**

**Focus on the words:**

“I know my transgressions...” The word “transgression” means sin.

**Step 3 – Practice agreement with God. Name the attitudes, actions, and patterns you have in your life that are sinful or not in agreement with God's Word. How have these things affected others?**

There is no shame here; God loves you and desires your honesty.

**Step 4 – Cross Connection Reflection:** Remember this - Jesus already carried this. You are not confessing for punishment, you are confessing for freedom.

**Prayer:** Thank You for the cross that allows me to live in the truth.

**Live it out today:** When the Spirit convicts you, respond quickly: “Yes, Lord.”



# Day 3

**Week 1 Passage - Psalm 51:1, 3-4, 7** *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Cleanse me with hysop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*



## Today's Practice: Surrenderance

Our practice today is surrenderance. Surrenderance is a voluntary act of yielding one's will, desires, and life entirely to God's authority.

### Step 1 – Read this week's passage

#### Notice these words:

"My sin is always before me."

**Step 2 – Ask yourself:** What have I been trying to manage instead of surrender? Write it below.

**Step 3 – Pray with your body. Hold your hands open and say:** "I bring this to the cross." Name what you wrote for "Step 2" out loud.

**Step 4 – Cross Connection Reflection - Sit in silence for one minute:** You are placing it in His hands.

**Prayer:** "I surrender what I cannot fix to the One who already paid for it."

**Live it out today. Each time it comes to your mind, say:** "It belongs to Jesus."

# Day 4

**Week 1 Passage - Psalm 51:1, 3-4, 7** *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

## 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 – Picture yourself at the foot of the cross

You are holding the weight of your sin.

Jesus sees you – not with anger – but with love.

### Step 3 – Hear Him say: "I forgive you."

### Step 4 – Cross Connection Reflection - Respond to Him

What do you want to say to Jesus? If you can't think of anything, you can move to today's prayer.

**Prayer:** "Thank You for loving me at my worst and making me clean. I repent and turn away from my sins. Thank you for your deep love for me and the cross that allows me to do that."

**Live it out today:** Take a short walk or deep breath and thank Him for the cross.

# Day 5

**Week 1 Passage - Psalm 51:1, 3-4, 7** *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

## Today's Practice: Intercession

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

**Step 1 – Read this week's passage:** You have received mercy – now pray for someone else to receive it.

**Step 2 – Write down names. Who in your life needs mercy, freedom, or cleansing?:**

**Step 3 – Pray the Scripture for them:** "Have mercy on them ... cleanse them..."

**Prayer:** Thank God that the same cross that cleanses you is available to them. "Let the mercy I've received become mercy I extend."

**Live it out, today:** Show grace to someone who extended grace and mercy today.



# Day 6

**Week 1 Passage - Psalm 51:1, 3-4, 7** *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Cleanse me with hysop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*



## 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. Each time you feel the absence, pray: "Cleanse me, Lord."

### Step 2 – Read this week's passage

**Cross Connection Reflection:** Your deepest need is not comfort, it is cleansing and connection with God. The cross reminds us that Jesus gave up everything to make you clean.

**Prayer:** "My heart belongs to You. I'm making space for you and your presence. Please fill that space."

**Live it out today:** Turn every craving into prayer.

# Day 7

Week 1 Passage - *Psalm 51:1, 3-4, 7 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Cleanse me with hysop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

## Today's Practice: Reflection

**Step 1 – Read the passage one final time. What words or phrases stand out to you? If you completed day 1, how do these words compare?**

**Step 2 – Ask yourself these questions. In this past week:**

- What did God reveal about my sin?
- What did God reveal about my heart?
- Where did I experience mercy?
- When did I resist?

**Step 3 – Complete this sentence:**

“Because of the cross, I am being cleansed from \_\_\_\_\_ and learning to walk in \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Prayer:** Father, I know my sins are always before me and that I have sinned against you. Thank You for your mercy that never runs out, and because I'm connected to the cross, I never have to stay in sin. I am redeemed and cleansed.

**Live it out today:** Make plans to come to Bible Study tomorrow night, ready to enter week 2 of our Lenten journey together.

