

40 Words for 40 Days: Pauses for Lent | Meditation Guideline:

1. **Stop/Pause/Be Still:** Create space in your mind, time, and body to desire God's presence and listen to His voice.
2. **Meditate on the theme and scriptures for each day during the Lenten season.** Read the scriptures, reflect on them repeatedly, and meditate on what God is revealing to you through His Word.
3. Each day comes with an action suggestion. Follow it and put it into practice. May you encounter and experience God each day.
4. **Spiritual growth is not a solitary journey.** As we pursue the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, we can share our intimate fellowship with Him with others. In this way, we can encourage one another. You are invited to share your experiences and reflections with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the Lenten season.

Day 1 : 2.18.2026. Ash Wednesday

Theme : DUST | Reading : Genesis 3:19

"For dust you are and to dust you will return."

On the first day of Lent, which the church calls Ash Wednesday, many people have their foreheads crossed with ashes as a reminder that they are creatures of dust. We are fragile, fallible, fallen human beings. From the moment we emerge from our mother's womb, we begin the process of dying. To think that one day we will be nothing but ashes is a pretty grim reality. Not surprisingly many of us avoid facing this truth. It is not something we want to reflect on or speak about or even read. After all, when we begin to sense how near to nothing we are, we can easily find ourselves in despair. Being born to die is not good news. However, the fact that we are marked by the sign of the cross tells us we are infinitely more than dust. We are God's beloved, and nothing—not even death—can separate us from God's love through Jesus Christ. Our dust is charged with God's own life-sustaining and death-defeating breath. We are beloved dust.

Daily Practice

Go outside and pick up a handful of soil. As you do this, focus on these two symbols: dust and the cross. Even when you wash off the dust from your forehead, remember the reality of your identity—you are dust redeemed by the cross.

Prayer

Help me! Lord! To yearn for a deeper relationship with you!

(Reference : 40 Words for 40 Days: Pauses for Lent, by Trevor Hudson)

Day 2 : 2.19.2026.

Theme : RETURN | Reading : Joel 2:13

"Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate."

Our lives continually drift away from their true home. We forget we are God's beloved. We forget that we are not God. We succumb to the temptations of money, sex, and power. We ignore the cries of our sisters and brothers. We focus only on ourselves. During Lent, God calls us home. We remember who we truly are. We let God be God in our lives. We respond to our suffering neighbor. Put simply, we begin again with God. Only when the fierce love of God, fully revealed in the Crucified One, pierces our hearts do we respond lovingly to God. During Lent, we listen for this good news: God passionately loves us and wants us to come home. Lent invites us to open our lives to this love however far we may have drifted and to return again to the God who longs for us.

Daily Practice

Mediate on the word return and ask the Holy Spirit to deepen your awareness of God's love. Be aware of the different ways in which the Divine Love comes to you—the smile of a stranger, the presence of a friend, the beauty of a sunset, the enjoyment of a walk. Before you go to sleep, think back on these gifts of God's love, savor them, and give thanks for them.

Prayer

Lord! Help me to be sensitive to Your love and Your voice!

Day 3 : 2.20.2026.

Theme : CHOOSE | Reading : Deuteronomy 30:19-20

*“Choose life so that you and your descendants may live,
loving the LORD your God,
obeying him, and holding fast to him.”*

Our choices matter because their consequences forever shape our lives as well as the lives of others. When my children were growing up, I would often say to them, “You are free to choose to do anything you want, but you are not free to choose the consequences.” In the midst of the journey through the desert, Moses invites the Israelites to make choices that will lead to life. While they are not in control of what happens to them, they do have control of how they will respond to the events of their lives. The consequences of these choices will ripple throughout their lives and futures. Lent asks us to examine our choices. In almost every moment of our lives—in our thoughts, our imaginations, our actions, and even our inactions—we make choices that lead either toward life or death. Choosing life involves awareness of those tendencies within us that sabotage our lives and of those that nourish them.

Daily Practice

Make two lists today: “What brings me life?” and “What takes life from me?” Add to the lists throughout the day. At the end of the day, reflect on these two columns and ask God for guidance in choosing life. Give thanks to God for new life that comes through Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Lord! Help me to choose to follow You in every event in my life!

Day 4 : 2.21.2026.

Theme : FAST | Reading : Matthew 6:17-18

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Throughout the ages, those who have made an impact on their generation for the sake of Christ have fasted. This usually involves going without food for a set length of time. Certainly Jesus assumes that his followers will do this as part of their relationship with God. He says, “When you fast . . .” not “If you fast. . . .” Fasting is really feasting. It provides us with an opportunity to feast on God’s overwhelming goodness and love for us. We do this during our fast by nourishing ourselves on those words that God speaks to us. We learn that we do not live on bread alone but by every word of God. When Jesus instructs us not to look somber when we fast, he is not inviting us to mislead others. He knows that we won’t really be sad. He has learned from his own experience how fasting leads us to those unseen gifts that come only from God.

Daily Practice

Refrain from eating today between mealtimes—or choose a day to fast. Allow your desires for food to deepen your consciousness of the spiritual resources that God gives you to endure other difficult deprivations. Remember this: Fasting means feasting on the words of God.

Prayer

Lord! Help me to live according to the teaching of Jesus :
“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)