

Lent 2021 | Reflect. Repent. Restore

40 Days of Fasting & Prayer Guide

February 17, 2021 (Ash Wednesday) – April 4, 2021 (Easter Sunday)

4th Week (3/7-3/13): Deeper Experience of God's Grace

DAY 19

3/7 (Sun)

Biblical Readings:

Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

- ¹ *Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.*
- ² *Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.*
- ³ *For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.*
- ⁴ *Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are proved right when you speak
and justified when you judge.*
- ⁵ *Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*
- ⁶ *Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
you teach me wisdom
in the inmost place.*
- ⁷ *Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*
- ⁸ *Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*
- ⁹ *Hide your face from my sins*

and blot out all my iniquity.

- ¹⁰ *Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
- ¹¹ *Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.*
- ¹² *Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*
- ¹³ *Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will turn back to you.*
- ¹⁴ *Save me from bloodguilt, O God,
the God who saves me,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*
- ¹⁵ *O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.*
- ¹⁶ *You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*
- ¹⁷ *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.*
- ¹⁸ *In your good pleasure make Zion prosper;
build up the walls of Jerusalem.*
- ¹⁹ *Then there will be righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings to delight you;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

Reflection:

You and I have **three problems** that only the Redeemer has the power and willingness to solve...In this season of personal reflection and confession, may your confession be as deep and broad as David's. And may these three biblical words, **transgression, iniquity, and sin**, guide that confession. And as you confess, may you be comforted by God's promise that he will never turn his back on you. He will never despise one who comes to him with a truly broken and contrite heart. Confession is God's welcome to enter into a deeper experience of the majesty of his grace. (Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p111-115)

Prayer:

Return to *Psalm 51*, slowly read and pray through this Psalm, allowing the definitions of **transgression, iniquity**, and **sin** (see below) to deepen your time of confession.



Transgression is a spirit of rebellion, a willful stepping over of God's boundaries, putting yourself in God's place and writing your own rules, wanting your own way more than submitting to God's way. True confession confesses to more than weakness; it confesses to the rebellion of heart that causes you to be weak in your struggle with sin. ." (Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p113)

Iniquity is moral uncleanness. It is something even deeper than a spirit of rebellion lives in me. It is the thing that causes me to be rebellious. *Titus 1:15, "To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted."* The only way we would ever perfectly obey God is if the thoughts, motives, desires, and intentions of our hearts were completely pure. But sin defiles the heart. It is like water that is no longer pure, but has corrupting elements in it. So confession doesn't just admit to a moment of wrongdoing and a spirit of rebellion, but it also acknowledges the moral impurity of heart that is the seedbed of that rebellion. (Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p114)

Sin: Our confession of sin is a confession of a specific instance of weakness and failure. The word sin connotes falling short of God's wise and righteous standard. It's more that pulling the bowstring back and missing the target. It is pulling the bowstring back again and again and every time falling short of the target. Confession of a specific sin against God and others is an admission of weakness. It is an admission that, when left on our own, even in our best moments we would still fall short of God's holy requirement of us. Embedded in the word sin is a cry for help. It is a cry to be rescued from your bondage to yourself. It's a plea to not be left to your own weakness, but to be forgiven and recused by one greater and more powerful than you will ever be. Confession of sin carries with it a commitment. To be ever more dependent on the Redeemer for the help that He alone can give. Confession of sin is an admission that this instance of weakness and failure stands as a testament of your ongoing need for God's grace. (Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p114-115)

DAY 20

3/8 (Mon)

Biblical Readings:

Psalm 103

Of David.

- ¹ Praise the LORD, O my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.*
- ² Praise the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—*
- ³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,*
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,*
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*
- ⁶ The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.*
- ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:*
- ⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious,*

slow to anger, abounding in love.
⁹ *He will not always accuse,*
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
¹⁰ *he does not treat us as our sins deserve*
or repay us according to our iniquities.
¹¹ *For as high as the heavens are above the earth,*
so great is his love for those who fear him;
¹² *as far as the east is from the west,*
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
¹³ *As a father has compassion on his children,*
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;
¹⁴ *for he knows how we are formed,*
he remembers that we are dust.
¹⁵ *As for man, his days are like grass,*
he flourishes like a flower of the field;
¹⁶ *the wind blows over it and it is gone,*
and its place remembers it no more.
¹⁷ *But from everlasting to everlasting*
the LORD's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children—
¹⁸ *with those who keep his covenant*
and remember to obey his precepts.

¹⁹ *The LORD has established his throne in heaven,*
and his kingdom rules over all.

²⁰ *Praise the LORD, you his angels,*
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.
²¹ *Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,*
you his servants who do his will.
²² *Praise the LORD, all his works*
everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the LORD, O my soul.

Reflection:

It is good to **silence complaint** in your life by sitting down and taking the time to **count your blessings**....So take time out of each day, if only for a few moments, to count your blessings. Buy a journal or open a Google Doc, and each day catalog the blessings in your life, from the smallest and most mundane to those that are huge and life-changing. Fight the battle with complaint by developing a day-by-day habit of gratitude. Begin counting your blessings, and watch how the practice begins to alter the way you look at your life. No one is more worthy of your praise than your generous, loving, faithful, wise, and gracious Savior. Gratitude silences complaint. (Paul David. Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p120)

Prayer :

Slowly read and pray through *Psalms 103*, and thank the Lord for His many blessings.

DAY 21
3/9 (Tue)

Biblical Readings:

Psalm. 62:5-8

- ⁵ Find rest, O my soul, in God alone;
my hope comes from him.
- ⁶ He alone is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
- ⁷ My salvation and my honor depend on God;
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
- ⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.

Reflection:

What is confession? **Confession** is admitting personal responsibility for your words and actions, without excuse of any kind or shifting the blame to anyone else. Confession is a welcome into a deeper appreciation of the presence, promises, and grace of God. It is a welcome to more humble, honest, approachable, and loving relationships with others. It is a welcome to no longer being afraid of knowing yourself or being known, because you know that nothing will ever be known or revealed about you that hasn't already been covered by the blood of Jesus. Confession is an invitation to a life of internal rest and external peace. So this season as you reflect on the sacrifice of Christ on your behalf, and as the Spirit begins to reveal your heart and conviction sets in, don't defend yourself with **excuses**, **denial**, or **minimizing**, and in so doing run from the grace of your Savior. Run to him, owning what you have done as you rest in the grace he offers to all who come to him in this way. "*Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy*" (Prov. 28:13). (Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p125)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Psalm 62:5-8*, humbling yourself in prayer before the Lord.

DAY 22
3/10 (Wed)

Biblical Readings:

Psalm 50:8-15

- ⁸ *I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices
or your burnt offerings, which are ever before me.*
- ⁹ *I have no need of a bull from your stall*

or of goats from your pens,
10 for every animal of the forest is mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know every bird in the mountains,
and the creatures of the field are mine.
12 If I were hungry I would not tell you,
for the world is mine, and all that is in it.
13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls
or drink the blood of goats?
14 Sacrifice thank offerings to God,
fulfill your vows to the Most High,
15 and call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you will honor me.”

Reflection:

On this side of eternity, it is easy to love the **gifts** more than the **giver**... During this season when you are letting go of the things of the world, confessing areas of sin and weakness, and running to your Savior for rescue and help, perhaps you should also confess one of **the subtlest forms of idolatry**. Perhaps it would be good to confess that what appears as worship may not be worship at all. It may be **worship of the thing that reduces God to the delivery system for what your heart really craves**. And remember, God sent his Son not only to forgive our sins, but also **to liberate our hearts from the bondage to anything but him**. He is not shocked or disgusted by your struggle. He will turn not away from you, but toward you with love and grace. So today, hear this loving warning. Could it be that the confession of ongoing struggles of idolatry, no matter how subtle, is the first step toward a heart that is consumed by the **worship of God alone**? (Paul David. Tripp, “*Journey to the Cross*”, p130-131)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Psalm 50:8-15*, and hear God’s heart of love that longs for relationship, not empty sacrifice.

DAY 23

3/11 (Thurs)

Biblical Readings:

**The account of Crucifixion
Matthew 26:20-27:53**

²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.”

²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely not I, Lord?”

²³ Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?”

Jesus answered, “Yes, it is you.”

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

²⁷ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

³⁰ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

³¹ Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

“ ‘I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’

³² But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

³³ Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”

³⁴ “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”

³⁵ But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

Gethsemane

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. ⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Jesus Arrested

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the

betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." ⁴⁹ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

⁵⁰ Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹ With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵² "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

⁵⁵ At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Before the Sanhedrin

⁵⁷ Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

⁵⁹ The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward ⁶¹ and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' "

⁶² Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

⁶⁴ "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophesy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

Peter Disowns Jesus

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

⁷¹ Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

⁷² He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

⁷³ After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

⁷⁴ Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!”

Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Judas Hangs Himself

²⁷ Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. ² They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

³ When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴ “I have sinned,” he said, “for I have betrayed innocent blood.”

“What is that to us?” they replied. “That’s your responsibility.”

⁵ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

⁶ The chief priests picked up the coins and said, “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.” ⁷ So they decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸ That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹ Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “They took the thirty silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, ¹⁰ and they used them to buy the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

Jesus Before Pilate

¹¹ Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied.

¹² When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” ¹⁴ But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

¹⁵ Now it was the governor’s custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. ¹⁶ At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” ¹⁸ For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

¹⁹ While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

²¹ “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor.

“Barabbas,” they answered.

²² “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?” Pilate asked.

They all answered, “Crucify him!”

²³ “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

²⁵ All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷ Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. ³⁰ They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion

³² As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). ³⁴ There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸ Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” ⁴⁴ In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵ From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”—which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. ⁵² The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

Reflection:

No *sacrifice* that you and I will ever make is as great as the *sacrifice* that was made for us and for our redemption.

1. What are the goals you're working toward right now? What are you sacrificing to reach them?
2. Does your level of sacrifice to develop your relationship with God match the level of sacrifice you make to do other things? Why or why not?
3. What sacrifice did Christ make for you? List out all that He endured, and thank Him specifically for those things.

(Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p136)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through the account of **crucifixion** in *Matthew 26:20-27:53*.

DAY 24

3/12 (Fri)

Biblical Readings:***Fasting******Matthew 6:16-18***

¹⁶ "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Reflection:

The purpose of *fasting* is not to earn God's love, but to more deeply surrender to it. How to fast: (1) Give yourself to prayer, (2) Don't make a show of it, (3) Bathe yourself in God's word, (4) Make sure you're ready (physically, financially and situationally prepared), (5) Be quiet before the Lord, (6) Confess what has been revealed, (7) Make new commitments, (8) Be thankful. So, fast this Lenten season. Receive God's welcome to fight for your heart and to learn to rest in the grace of your Savior more fully and more deeply. You will be glad you did. (Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p137-141)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *Matthew 6:16-18*, and ask the Lord if He is calling you to fast.

DAY 25
3/13 (Sat)

Biblical Readings:

James 4:6-10

⁶ *But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:*

*“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.”*

⁷ *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

Reflection:

Lent is not about what you will give of yourself to God, but about what He, in grace, has so bountifully given to you... Now, here's the struggle. Whenever you ***focus on yourself***, even in examination and confession, ***pride*** lurks right around the corner. It is so tempting to ***take credit*** for desires, choices, and actions that you would have never taken if you had not been rescued and changed by ***God's grace***. If ***pride*** is ***self-congratulatory***, then it is also ***self-reliant***. But the whole message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that you and I were not created to be self-reliant, and in ***our struggle with sin***, we have no ability to defeat what we need to defeat on our own. This is why ***the sacrifice of Christ was essential***. He came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves, even in our deepest moments of sacrifice and devotion. So in this season of new and deeper sacrifice and devotion, resist the temptation of turning the tables. That is, don't make the lavish gifts of another become about what you give. ***You can't stand at the foot of the cross and consider the magnitude of what was done there and hold onto the pride of personal sacrifice***. Pray for grace to make every sacrifice, every gift given, a celebration of both ***the ultimate gift and the most generous giver***. (Paul David. Tripp, "*Journey to the Cross*", p143-146)

Prayer:

Slowly read and pray through *James 4:6-10*, and let it lead you to genuine sorrow over your sin.