

## A Final Bible Study before Easter.

As we approach the season of Easter, a time of reflection, repentance, and anticipation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, preparing your heart and mind is a beautiful way to honor this sacred period. In the Bible, the period leading up to Easter, which we often refer to as Lent in the Christian tradition, is not explicitly mentioned. However, the Scriptures offer guidance on how we might prepare ourselves spiritually for such a significant observance.

1. **\*\*Prayer\*\*** - Jesus taught the importance of prayer in our relationship with God. In Matthew 6:6, He says, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Dedicate time to pray, seeking a closer relationship with God and reflecting on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
2. **\*\*Fasting\*\*** - Fasting is a biblical way to express repentance and humility before God. Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights in the wilderness, as we see in Matthew 4:1-2. While fasting, He was tempted by Satan, yet He stood firm in His faith. Consider fasting from certain foods, activities, or habits that distract you from God, using this time to grow in spiritual strength and dependence on Him.
3. **\*\*Repentance\*\*** - Lent is a season to reflect on our need for God's forgiveness and grace. Acts 3:19 encourages us, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." Examine your heart and life for areas where you have fallen short, confess these to God, and seek His cleansing and renewal.
4. **\*\*Almsgiving and Acts of Love\*\*** - The practice of giving to those in need and performing acts of kindness is deeply rooted in the teachings of Jesus. Matthew 25:40 reminds us, "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" Look for opportunities to serve and love others, reflecting the love of Christ in your actions.
5. **\*\*Meditation on Scripture\*\*** - Spend time daily reading and meditating on the Bible, focusing particularly on the Gospels and the accounts of Jesus' final week, death, and resurrection. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly, guiding and transforming you as you prepare to celebrate Easter.

By engaging in these practices with a sincere heart, you can draw closer to God and deepen your understanding and appreciation of the profound mystery and joy of Easter. Remember, it's not about the practices themselves, but about allowing them to lead you into a deeper relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Listening to the Holy Spirit is a vital aspect of a believer's life, guiding us into all truth and aligning our hearts with God's will. To listen to the Holy Spirit, one can follow several biblical principles that foster a receptive and attentive spirit.

1. **\*\*Be in a State of Prayerfulness\*\***: The Apostle Paul encourages believers in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 to "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Maintaining an attitude of prayer keeps our hearts tuned to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is not always about speaking; it's also about listening and being attentive to what God is communicating to us.
2. **\*\*Immerse Yourself in Scripture\*\***: The Word of God is the primary means through which the Holy Spirit speaks to us. John 16:13 says, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth." By reading and meditating on Scripture, we allow the Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds, guide our thoughts, and direct our actions according to God's will.
3. **\*\*Cultivate a Heart of Obedience\*\***: The Holy Spirit guides those who are willing to follow. Acts 5:32 tells us, "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." Obedience to God's commands and promptings opens our lives to deeper fellowship with the Holy Spirit and clearer discernment of His guidance.

4. **\*\*Seek Godly Counsel\*\***: The Holy Spirit often speaks through fellow believers endowed with wisdom and insight. Proverbs 15:22 states, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." When seeking to hear from the Holy Spirit, consider consulting mature Christians who can offer biblical advice and pray with you for clarity and direction.

5. **\*\*Be Open to Correction and Conviction\*\***: The Holy Spirit works to convict us of sin and lead us into righteousness. John 16:8 explains, "When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment." Be open to the Holy Spirit's conviction, allowing Him to bring to light areas of your life that need repentance and change. This humility and willingness to be corrected are essential for hearing the Holy Spirit more clearly.

6. **\*\*Live a Life of Worship\*\***: True worship, in spirit and truth, attracts the presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says in John 4:23-24, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Worship involves our whole being and when we worship God genuinely, we become more attuned to the Holy Spirit's voice.

Listening to the Holy Spirit is an ongoing journey that requires intentionality, patience, and a desire to grow in relationship with God. As you earnestly seek to listen to the Holy Spirit, be assured that He desires to speak to you, lead you into all truth, and empower you to live a life that glorifies God.