



the **attentive** life
Lent 2016

WEEK FIVE:
March 6-12

Each week during Lent, we will
distribute the upcoming week's
devotional in print at Connect Central.

Sign up to have these devotions
emailed to you at
the**attentive**.life



Week 5: March 6-12

Because we are now the people of God, formed by what God has done for us in Jesus, we are invited to lay aside the patterns of life that characterized our old identity - distrust, unfaithfulness, self-centeredness, anger, hatred, violence, pride, jealousy, deception... all those things that flow from a heart that is unable to trust God, that is unwilling to trust anyone else. We are invited to live as those who have trusted God and have found him comprehensively trustworthy in Jesus. God's own Holy Spirit is given to us to give us the capacity to live as true Jesus-people. We are invited to lay down our self-protective defenses, and deepen in our trust in God, our love for him and our love for each other.

You'll find three sections to each day: a reading from the Bible, a reflection or two, and then space to remember.

In the morning, **receive.**

Read the set passage each day. Read it when you wake up in the morning. Read it slowly and reflectively. Receive the word of God into your mind, into your heart, into your soul.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

Throughout the day, **reflect.**

Read the reflections and questions for the section. These are designed to move you along the story line and offer you starting points to guide your meditations through your day.

Is there anything from the reading for the day that you'd like to investigate further? Was there something that connected dots for you? Anything that puzzled you?



At night, remember.

Before you go to sleep each night, spend a few minutes thinking over the day that's now coming to an end. Invite Jesus to walk with you through the day, and bring to mind those things that would be helpful to sort out with him in the safety of his love for you.

What were the thoughts and feelings within you when you woke up? How did you spend the first hour of your day?

What was the highlight of your day?

What occupied your attention the most?

Where did you most sense God's presence during your day? What was going on?

Did you sense God's prompting to do something? Or say something? Did you sense him move you to engage with a particular situation you noticed? How did it go?

What were your primary emotions? Was there a fear or anxiety that was constantly present? Was there a hunger or a longing that was a constant itch?

Was there peace? Joy? Gratitude?

Who were the people you interacted with today? How do you think your interactions went? Was there a conversation you wish you could redo? Is there someone you need to make peace with tomorrow?

Is there someone whose forgiveness you need? Is there someone you need to forgive?

End your day in the **Lord's Prayer**.

Receive

Colossians 3:1-17

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



Reflect

And so, as those who have died with Jesus, and who are now risen with him into a whole new life... as the repentant, forgiven, beloved, gifted people of God who are witnesses to Jesus, how are we now to live?

Pay close attention to yourself, Paul urges us. Understand who you are in Christ, and stay true to him. Turn your heart and your mind on Jesus, and on those things that reflect his heart, his priorities, his concerns.

Stop living like you used to. Remember you belong to Jesus. Remember you are chosen, holy, dearly loved.

So clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience.

Forgive one another.

Love one another.

Do everything in the name of Jesus.

Live the Jesus life.

Remember

Receive

Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”



Reflect

How many times shall I forgive?

This isn't merely an abstract, philosophical question. Rather, it brings the Jesus life down to earth for us. Forgiveness doesn't come easy, but come it must, for those who seek to follow the Jesus way.

How many times shall I forgive?

How many times do I need forgiveness?

Remember

Receive

John 13:34–35

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Romans 12:9–10

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

1 Peter 1:22–23

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 John 4:11–12

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 John 4:19–21

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.



Reflect

Love one another. God loves us, so we are to love one another. This is the primary mark of those who follow Jesus.

Our love for each other is our assurance that we have received God's love, and our love for each other is the evidence that we love God.

This is not easy.

And yet it is how evil is defeated among us - we love one another.

"... love one another deeply, from the heart."

Remember

Receive

Luke 9:46–48

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”

Luke 22:24–27

A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.”

John 13:3–17

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

...

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”



Reflect

One of the most insidious instincts of evil in our midst is our relentless drive to compare ourselves with each other, to compete with one another for power and popularity and position, to idolize those we see as above us and to disparage those we imagine are below us.

And then leadership degenerates into an all-out drive to acquire and use power over others, usually to our own benefit.

This is not the way of love; this is not the way of Jesus. "... you are not to be like that."

In Luke 22, Jesus was speaking to his disciples about his impending betrayal and death. Immediately their thoughts went first to trying to figure out who the betrayer was, and then right after that, to which one of them was the greatest, and would therefore "succeed" Jesus.

And in response, Jesus says, "... you are not to be like that."

The way of Jesus - the way of love - moves us from competition to service, from jealousy to generosity, from climbing the ladder to washing feet.

Remember

Receive

James 3:13–4:3

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.



Reflect

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

That’s a pointed diagnosis of our condition.

Listen to Eugene Peterson’s rendition of James 3:16-4:2 in *The Message*:

Whenever you’re trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others’ throats.

Real wisdom, God’s wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor.

Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. You lust for what you don’t have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn’t yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it.

So do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor.

Remember

Receive

Philippians 2:1–11

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.



Reflect

As always, Jesus is our exemplar in this life of love, this life of overcoming evil with good. He set aside every claim to power and position - ultimate power and ultimate position - and become the ultimate servant. He humbled himself - because he loved us - to the point of dying on a cross for us.

And so Paul invites us to follow Jesus.

Listen again to Eugene Peterson's rendition of Philippians 2:1-4

If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care— then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

This life of selfless love is what it looks like to follow Jesus... this is what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit.

This is what it looks like to bow the knee to Jesus, to acknowledge that he alone is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This life of love is how we worship God in spirit and in truth.

Remember

Receive

Galatians 5:13-26

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.



Reflect

We began this week reflecting on this question:

And so, as those who have died with Jesus, and who are now risen with him into a whole new life... as the repentant, forgiven, beloved, gifted people of God who are witnesses to Jesus, how are we now to live?

And we've reflected on Jesus' way of love from multiple angles.

All of it comes together in this phrase from Paul: "walk by the Spirit." The Holy Spirit is given to us to enable us to follow Jesus into this way of love.

And as we walk by the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, the kind of fruit we bear are these: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

So imagine a world where you were able to experience this kind of life... imagine a world where you were able to bring love and joy and peace to everyone you encountered. Imagine a world filled with life in the Spirit.

That's the kingdom of God. And we are the people of God.

So go proclaim the kingdom of God today through your life... through your words... from your heart in the power of the Spirit.

Remember



Matthew 6:5–13

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 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. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This, then, is how you should pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**And forgive us our sins,
as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.**

***For yours is the kingdom,
the power
and the glory...***

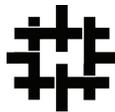
From this time forth and forever.

Amen.

Easter service times:

Saturday, March 26, 5:30pm

Sunday, March 27, 9am, 10:30am, & 12pm



HERITAGE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

7413 Maxtown Road, Westerville, Ohio 43082

info@heritagecc.org | 614-898-9412 | heritagecc.org