

# *The Kindness of God*

7 Day Lent Devotional

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*from Weary  
to Worship*

FROMWEARYTOWORSHIP.COM

## Repentant Hearts

Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves and believed that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.’

- Luke 18:9-14

As we begin our readings on repentance, I want to start out being crystal clear on one thing: God doesn’t love us more if we come to Him clean. Jesus doesn’t become our Savior only after we have fixed our messy lives. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Actually, we can’t fix our messy lives without Him and through His power. But when we encounter Jesus, a pure and right response, our hearts cry is like the tax collector who exclaims, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

A posture of repentance requires humility. Humility needs to change all of us at some point. But whether it comes *from* us or it comes *to* us (usually through humiliation) is our choice. I so appreciate how the tax collector in this story models our need to cry out to God and admit our need for Him. Later on, I share one of my biggest sin struggles. But I wouldn’t put pride even towards the top of my list. (Wait, is that a prideful statement...?!) Pride may not be your ‘problem’ either. But as you’ve probably witnessed, the church has been accused of hypocrisy time and again. We are saved by grace, yet we’re still worried about looking our best, even if we’re not at our best. It’s time we realize, like the tax collector, that admitting our continual need for Jesus is actually a strength in drawing us ever so close to Him!

In the introduction, I made a bold request. To read this devotional only for you. I truly believe and pray that this time of preparation before Easter can be a refreshing, renewing, and repenting time for you. But I think it’s only possible if we examine ourselves - and approach our God - with the posture of humility. This is why I picked the passage above to begin our readings this week. I’m excited for you and praying for you!

## Your Kindness Moment

**Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.**

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**Ask God to help you have a humble heart this week, as we are drawn to repentance because of His kindness towards us. Using the chorus of the hymn: “Lord, I need You, oh, I need You, every hour I need You. My one defense, my righteousness, Oh God, how I need you” is a good place to start.**

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**Be refreshed by spending time in worship singing/listening to the hymn, “Lord I Need You.” Scan the QR code to listen on YouTube.**

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## Why We Repent

*And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.*

- Acts 3:17-21

Why do we repent? Well, frankly, because we are commanded to (Nehemiah 1:5-7, Luke 17:3-5, Acts 2:38, James 5:15-16, 1 John 1:9, etc). Or, as the 17th-century John Owen said, "Be killing sin, or it will be killing you." It's that simple. But simple isn't easy. We don't like being told what to do. But a shift happens as we read the Bible and begin to see that whatever God tells us not to do, it's for our protection. And when He tells us to do something, it's for our good. As we repent and confess our sins, the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts, changing our sinful thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions. Jesus forgave our sins on the cross because of His amazing love and grace.

The meaning of Easter (Jesus' death and resurrection) is the bridge between our holy God and our sinful selves. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, repentance allows us intimacy with God and the people around us. Repentance is one of the kindest gifts. God's forgiveness leads to living an abundant life - one that basks in the Lord's refreshment and restoration.

When we become saved, repentance is the first step. We each understood we needed saving, and understood what we were being saved from, and saved for. But when that initial repentance happens, a miracle takes place. We receive the Holy Spirit, without whom the rest of repentance in our sanctification would be rendered impossible. "And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38). Scripture is very clear that once you are saved, you can not lose your salvation. But having a repentant heart and confessing our sins are aspects of our lifelong process of sanctification. Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines sanctification as: "The act of making holy. In an evangelical sense, the act of God's grace by which the affections of men are purified or alienated from sin and the world,

and exalted to a supreme love to God." The repentance that takes place in our lifelong walk with God is what this devotional focuses on.

Repentance isn't one-and-done when we become saved. Romans 7:15 explains the struggle, "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." On the same token, we have the Holy Spirit that makes repenting possible. 2 Corinthians 5:17 puts it this way: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." The Holy Spirit transforms us from the inside out. The Holy Spirit guides, convicts, emboldens, and comforts us. What a job the Holy Spirit has! Having a posture of repentance and reflecting our Savior better each day is only possible by the Holy Spirit's continual work in our lives. Jesus' grace, his unearned forgiveness and kindness, transforms our lives!

Repentance isn't about us *doing* better either. Repentance is a gift for us to *become* more like Christ. And the best part is, we don't become better alone. In fact, we cannot. The call for repentance isn't for our misery. Living an abundant life is one that is refreshed and restored in Christ. This time of refreshing is here and now. Come to Jesus just as you are. As the old hymn puts it, come, "Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou biddest me come to thee, O Lamb of God I come, I come."

## Your Kindness Moment

**Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.**

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**Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be aware of areas that need repenting from. Delight in God's kindness instead of despairing over sin by coming to Him, just as you are.**

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**Be reassured of God's forgiveness by spending time in worship singing/listening to the hymn, "Just As I Am." Scan the QR code to listen on YouTube.**



## *The Lord's Prayer*

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

- Matthew 6:9-13

Some say Jesus taught this prayer to be prayed every day. And of all topics, Jesus includes forgiveness. We are taught to ask for forgiveness from God, our Father, and extend forgiveness to one another. One of the things that made "The Lord's Prayer" so pivotal at the time Jesus taught it was the way we are to address our God, as Father. It's a personal relationship with the Creator of all who made our heart, soul, and mind, and who loves us more deeply and purely than we will ever understand. So with this in mind, it makes asking for forgiveness for our sins like running to safety, to the One who loves us with an everlasting love. Run to Jesus. If every day we are to ask for forgiveness, then every day we are to be keenly aware of our sins. And that requires a posture of repentance. When we focus on the Lord, whose main characteristic is holy, holy, holy, we more clearly see our need for repentance.

Unfortunately, often our hearts quickly become callous. We justify our sins. We are quick to point fingers outwardly, instead of gazing into what needs to be addressed in our own hearts. Matthew 7:3-5 gives us the prime example, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." We need to be forgiven and transformed inwardly, and we are provided an answer for this need with the Holy Spirit's work of transformation in us. That's when we will experience true change toward Godliness. I think this is why Jesus made the daily call to ask for forgiveness and to extend forgiveness. The Creator of our hearts knows just how sinful our hearts can be. So much so that He experienced the sin of the whole world while hanging on the cross. But Jesus didn't stay on the cross, and God does not leave us stuck in our sin. He opens His arms to us and invites us to go to Him as our Father.

## *Your Kindness Moment*

**Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.**

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**Pray "The Lord's Prayer" for the rest of this week, as we are drawn to repentance because of His kindness towards us, and because of His holiness. "Holy! Holy! Holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!"**

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**Bask in awe of God's holiness by spending time in worship, singing/listening to the hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Scan the QR code to listen on YouTube.**

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## *Grief and Comfort*

*For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*

*For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.*

*So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God.*

*Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.*

*~ 2 Corinthians 7:10-13*

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines repentance this way: "Real penitence; sorrow or deep contrition for sin, as an offense and dishonor to God, a violation of his holy law, and the basest ingratitude towards a Being of infinite benevolence. This is called evangelical repentance and is accompanied and followed by amendment of life.

Repentance is a change of mind, or a conversion from sin to God.

Repentance is the relinquishment of any practice, from conviction that it has offended God."

One of the sins I struggle with the most is jealousy. When jealousy bubbles up within me, my insides feel very ugly, and my outside feels all tense. Being that my first multi-day devotional was on gratitude, this may surprise you. And it's true - as I said somewhere in *Thanksgiving Thoughts*, I wrote it because I need the reminder to be thankful.

Jealousy makes me feel ugly. And then I become grieved. But then Jesus cleanses me. There's a difference between being beaten up about it and taking the grievance and the grief over our own sin to God. Godly grief over sin leads to repentance. We are not met with condemnation, but with comfort. What an amazing life we have because of the grace God has given us!

Oh! Repentance isn't a hateful, cruel thing. Repentance leads to freedom!

## *Your Kindness Moment*

**Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.**

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**Set aside time to bring your griefs to God, and give thanks for the comfort He brings. We can begin our prayer with the hymn: "Alas, and did my Savior bleed and did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head for sinners such as I? Was it for crimes that I have done, He groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity, grace unknown, and love beyond degree!"**

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**Be still and ponder God's comfort by spending time in worship, singing/listening to the hymn, "Alas and Did My Savior Bleed." Scan the QR code to listen on YouTube.**

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## Grace

*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may be bound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

*For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.*

*Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

- Romans 6:1-14

The grace of God isn't a Band-Aid. God's not interested in patching up our blemishes and the wounds that have been inflicted on us, or the scabs and scars we have inflicted on others. God is in the business of complete and total transformation. Roman chapter 6 compares our salvation to being raised from the dead. That's a dramatic statement. And we were raised so that we'd walk in the new way of life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." He provides the way for the new way! But if we've been walking with Jesus for a long time, this is where the tension arises. As many authors and theologians refer to our present moment in time as the now and the not yet, 2 Corinthians 3:18 explains, "Being transformed into the image of the Son, one degree of glory to another." It's the lifelong process of sanctification. We came from death to life. But now alive in Christ, we continue the journey and become more like Him. Sometimes this makes us aware of how unlike Him we are. "And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." - 2 Corinthians 3:3

I am a recipient of God's amazing moment-by-moment grace. Therefore, I can extend grace to others because I have first received this grace.

Roman 6 also warns of a theological slippery slope that I'm afraid many have become entangled by. I know in my own sin, there have been times I dismissed the grievance or handled it more lightly than I ought to have, because I knew I was covered by grace. But oh! That is the opposite of how we are called to react to our sin. Romans 6:1-2 explains, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?"

Our hearts are to be attuned to God. We can't walk in alignment with Him if we keep sinning and dismissing or minimizing our sin. Grace is a radically tremendous gift. We can have a deep and abiding relationship with God because of the grace He extends to us - the grace that forgives all of our sins. Yet, we are sorely wrong if we use grace as our ticket out of repentance or grace as an excuse for repetitive behavior that is outside of God's best for us. Grace is what makes repentance so sweet. It's like restorative work after a conflict. Grace guides and mends and restores. But we can't be guided if we are rebelling. We can't be mended if our hearts are hardened by being set in our own way. We can't be restored if we have no desire to be in constant, close proximity to the One who restores us.

Grace makes the season of Lent and the celebration of Easter so much more awaited... and so beautiful, and a reason to rejoice!

## Your Kindness Moment

**Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.**

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**Ask God to help you receive and extend grace this week, as we are drawn to repentance because of His kindness towards us. "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see!"**

**Rejoice in God's grace by spending time in worship, singing/listening to the hymn, "Amazing Grace." Scan the QR code to listen on YouTube.**



## God's Kindness

*Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*  
~ Romans 2:4

My personal favorite trait is kindness. I am quickly drawn in if someone demonstrates kindness, and my wall goes up really fast if someone demonstrates unkindness by their words, attitudes, or actions. The kindness of God is absolutely a treasure in my life. I am so deeply grateful that God is kind.

Simply the fact that He gives us second, third, fourth, etc., chances demonstrates His kindness. The fact that we will never be taken out of his family is kind (along with many other things!) When we sin against God, against others, or ourselves, He disciplines us, but He doesn't condemn us. "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." - Hebrews 12:6

God disciplines those he loves. And beyond that, He doesn't hold our mistakes over our heads. Psalm 103 is in my top three favorite Psalms, and here's a reminder for us of God's kindness.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. - Psalm 103:8-13

That is oh so kind!

There was a time in my life when I clung to Romans 2:4 as I waited for evidence of repentance. This is why I said in the introduction, please read this devotional just for you. Yes, God can choose to use us in the lives of the people we love to call them out on their sin, or to be the approachable friend to hear a confession. But Romans 2:4 struck a chord with me because I wanted so badly for them to know how much they hurt me. In my sin, I wanted to be unkind and hurt back.

BUT. My daily prayer was that they would love Jesus more than anyone or anything else. And shouldn't that be my prayer for myself, too? God's heart's desire for each of us to draw close to Him. He is not nasty towards us, but oh, so kind and so patient. And over time, I was humbled to witness repentance unfold. I know I have no power to change anyone or to force others to repent. But I could, by God's mercy, and by allowing the Holy Spirit to work in my heart, follow in His footsteps of kindness. I could allow God's kindness to transform me first, and trust Him that those around me could also experience His miraculous, generous kindness towards us.

## Your Kindness Moment

**Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.**

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**How does God's kindness change your perspective on sin and repentance? Who can I extend kindness to? These lyrics help remind me of God's kindness. "Jesus said if I am weak, I should come to him. No one else can be my strength; I should come to Him. For the Lord is good and faithful. He will keep us day and night. We can always run to Jesus, Jesus, strong and kind."**

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**Bask in awe of God's kindness by spending time in worship, singing/listening to the song, "Jesus, Strong and Kind." Scan the QR code to listen on YouTube.**

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## *Good Friday's Reading*

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.  
- John 3:16-17*

John 3:16 is likely one of the most popular Bible verses and most commonly memorized. So much so that it can lose its power, and we forget about the verses that follow.

When we think of what God has done for us - sending His only Son - it is right and good for our hearts to be filled with gratitude. It is a mighty miracle that we have the gift of eternal life. We are in the season of Lent, a time when we pause and purposefully reflect on the work mentioned in John 3:16. Thanks be to God that he chose to save the world, instead of condemning His own creation! But what was the reason for this tremendous act of love?

As a society, we no longer take sin seriously. Even as believers, we can be tempted to think of ourselves as better than we are, justify our sin, and shift the blame onto someone else. We make excuses for our short tempers and careless words.

The 40 days of Lent are set apart to focus on reflection and repentance. Lent takes our gratitude for what is mentioned in John 3:16-17 one step further, from gratitude to giving. I used to view Lent only through the lens of giving up something. But the power of the preparation for Easter falls short if our focus is on lack rather than worship. Sacrificing earthly pleasures momentarily is an act of worship. Taking our sins seriously is an act of worship. Pondering the suffering of Christ is an act of worship. I hope that this Good Friday, we will purposefully spend time in the Bible and in prayer as we desire to deepen our relationship with God.

“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.” John 3:18-20

As believers, we are not condemned. But Lent is an opportunity to pause and purposefully confess our sins. And Good Friday is a great opportunity for this too. Coming to God as our Father, as we confess our temper, our jealousy, or whatever our struggle may be, illuminates the gravity and grace Good Friday brings. Today, let us humbly acknowledge and be filled with gratitude that Jesus dying on the cross was for the sins of the entire world - including my sins.

“But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” John 3:21

The power of the resurrection that we anticipate celebrating is sweeter and more powerful when we take time to remember why Jesus sacrificed Himself in our place.

## *Your Kindness Moment*

**Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.**

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**Take time to pause and give thanks for Jesus' saving work on Good Friday. This hymn always draws my heart a little deeper in gratitude for what He has done. “When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.”**

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**Ponder God's love for us on this Good Friday and spend time in worship singing/listening to the hymn, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.” Scan the QR code to listen on YouTube.**

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## *Repentance and Worship*

*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

*From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

*- 2 Corinthians 5:14-21*

Repentance leads us to worship. According to Webster's 1828 Dictionary, the definition of worship is: "extravagant respect or admiration for a devotion to an object or esteem. Reverence offered a divine being or supernatural power." Worship is a tool that draws our hearts, souls, and minds closer to God. And repentance does the same thing.

In my church, we have an order of worship, and early on in the service, we have a time of 'confession.' In the header of this section on the worship folder, it says, "We pray together, praising God for who He really is and admitting our inability to live up to what He expects of us." After the 'confession prayer,' the next part of worship is the assurance of pardon, and that heading reads, "We read God's Word together and are reminded that mercy and grace are freely given to all who have faith in Jesus Christ." Repentance and worship go hand in hand. One looks at our continual need to be transformed more like Christ. The other rejoices in gratitude for the kindness God has given us by freeing us in Christ.

The first of the Ten Commandments is, "You shall have no other gods before me" Exodus 20:3. All of the rest of the commandments flow out of that one. Loving God with all that we are and keeping Him at the forefront of our hearts and minds is the purest act of worship because He wants our whole being. Jesus came and shared the law at the Sermon on the Mount, and we realize that we cannot fulfill it apart from Him.

"And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" - Matthew 22:37-39 Thanks be to God that we have the help of the Holy Spirit to drive us towards loving God and loving others. As we rely on His strength in this process, does the love of Christ control us as 2 Corinthians expounds? Are we on a mission to be in reconciliation with God and others? This Easter, let's celebrate our reconciliation and intentionally reconcile with those around us.

## *Your Kindness Moment*

**Copy the verse(s) from the reading that stood out to you the most.**

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**Take time to be grateful for the reconciliation we have with God. Be thinking about how we can move towards reconciliation with others. This is Who we are reconciled to: "O worship the King, all glorious above, O gratefully sing His wonderful love! Our shield and defender, the ancient of days; pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise."**

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**Rejoice in the miraculous reconciliation we have with God made possible through Jesus' death and resurrection. Spend time in worship, singing/listening to the hymn, "Oh Worship the King." Scan the QR code to listen on YouTube.**

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## Conclusion

Thank you so much for preparing for Easter with me! I pray that this journey of seeing repentance as God's immense kindness towards us has filled your heart and given you a new perspective on how repentance is a gift.

I realize that the topics of repentance, confession, and forgiveness are theologically deep, and also that different denominations bring their own perspective to the table. This brief seven-day devotional is meant to stir your heart towards our risen Lord in worship as we prepare for Easter. I wrote based on my best understanding of repentance at this time. I love how when we continue to study the Bible, we realize we are on a lifelong journey of learning!

May you and yours have a blessed Easter, as we worship our risen Lord!

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**I would be grateful for the opportunity to speak at your church's women's conference, retreat, or business training day. You can reach out to me at:  
[kelly.arena@fromwearytoworship.com](mailto:kelly.arena@fromwearytoworship.com).**

## Acknowledgements

I want to thank the people in my life who point me to Jesus. The people who have provided opportunities for me to grow in seeing my need to have a repentant heart. For my church, which models each Sunday how confession is a part of worship. For the people who opened my eyes to see just how kind our God is.

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**Thank you for being a part of the From Weary to Worship community. God bless you!**