



Lent For Non-Lent People: "33 Things To Give Up For Lent" And Other Readings

Jon C Swanson

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"Lent For Non-Lent People" is a daily guide to prayer, fasting, rest, and following Jesus for people who want training wheels for Lent. In ordinary language, this book explores prayer, fasting, and Sabbath. There are eight chapters. You can read them as chapters. But if you look closer, you will find seven sections in each chapter, a reading for every day of Lent and a bonus chapter for the week after Easter. So this can be a daily reader. In each reading, we explore what Lent is, what giving up and committing to can mean. Lent is an old word that means spring. But if you had to pick a phrase that best captures what people think of Lent, it's this: giving up. Not as in quitting a competition, but as in giving up something. People observing Lent give up something that matters to them. Often it's food, like meat on Friday or sugar for the forty weekdays. Sundays often are free days, exempt from the giving up. As best as I can tell, it started with the idea of helping people appreciate the festivities of Easter. If we spend the time before Easter preparing our hearts and our bodies, the celebration has more significance. The forty days are designed to resonate with the forty-day seasons that show up in the Bible. Jesus fasted for forty days. Moses was on the mountain for forty days. Noah and his family watched it rain for forty days and forty nights. Older than the name Lent is the term "fasting". It is also about giving up. Fasting most simply is giving up that for this. That is something good in itself. This is something great. That is nourishing to a point. This is life itself. That's why Lent isn't about giving up sin. Think about it. "I'll give up my affair for forty days. But every Sunday, just for the day, I go back to my mistress." Ludicrous. It's easy to get legalistic about forty days of fasting. When humans are presented with a boundary, we focus on the boundary. What counts as fasting? How much can you eat without breaking the fast? How long? What health matters? Focus may be a better word than Lent, fasting, or giving up. Often, the best way to give something up is to choose what to focus on instead. In the case of Lent, the intended focus is God. We'll talk about God a lot. This isn't a book of how to survive a fast. It's not about the health implications, good and bad, of fasting or praying or resting. We're going to give up some time, give some attention, and spend a few minutes, or a few weeks understanding ourselves and God.

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