



40 DAYS OF WELLNESS - LENT 2021: FEBRUARY 17 – APRIL 4TH

A TIME TO *Receive & Restore*

Henri Nouwen said, "Lent is the most important time of the year to nurture our inner life." Is it well with our souls? How can we draw near to God and grow in body, mind, and spirit? This is the season to focus on wholeness as we evaluate our daily routines and consider what needs to be added, as well as what must be removed, rejuvenated, or refocused.

Below are 40 Wellness Challenges for Lent. You can be ambitious and choose to do them all or select the ones that are most helpful and do them when you can (repeating your favorites). Before you start, consider this question: "Do I see myself, my routine, and my choices accurately?" The easiest way to find out is to keep a written daily record of habits including diet (everything you eat and drink), exercise and activity, sleep patterns, spiritual practices, and mood and stress level. You can use that record to evaluate how you can improve your overall wellness. Here are ways to love God with your whole soul, mind, and body during Lent:

RECEIVE GOD'S LOVE:

- Make a list of your unique gifts and talents – including little skills that help others.
- Write a phrase to remind you of God's love. Examples: "I am a beloved child of God." "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Repeat this phrase to yourself throughout the day.
- Practice this breathing exercise for 3-5 minutes. Sit comfortably and breathe deeply. On each inhale, think, "You are my God." On each exhale, think, "And I am Yours."

RECEIVE GOD'S TEACHING AND GUIDANCE:

- Memorize an encouraging Bible verse.
- Spend 5 minutes praying and meditating on The Lord's Prayer.
- Spend 10 minutes in true silence (no phone, books, or activities) listening to God.

RECEIVE GOD'S PEACE:

- Focus on your breathing for 5 minutes. Don't try to change or control it. Observe it.
- Write a breath prayer about God's Presence and strength. Say it every time you look at your phone.
- Spend 30 minutes outside enjoying nature and the beauty of Creation.

RECEIVE INSPIRATION:

- Take 30 minutes to read for fun – anything that refreshes or inspires you.
- Write down your goals – be specific.
- Think of one way you can be generous today and make it happen.
- Write a list of 5 things that bring you joy and delight. Read it several times that day.

RECEIVE SUPPORT/FELLOWSHIP:

- Find an accountability or prayer partner and plan to check-in regularly.
- Think of a person who cares for/encourages you and express your appreciation.
- Connect with a neighbor: introduce yourself if needed and do something kind.
- Reach out to an old or far-away friend or a person who lives alone.

RECEIVE NOURISHMENT:

- Eat fresh and healthy foods for the entire day.
- Drink enough water. Aim for 8 glasses a day.
- Plan your meals for the week. Enjoy them by refusing to multitask while you eat.

RESTORE YOUR BODY:

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Revamp your evening routine. Avoid screen time, caffeine, and late meals. Establish a nurturing ritual that will help you prepare for a restful sleep.
- Take breaks throughout the day for quick walks.

RESTORE YOUR MIND:

- Have a screen free day or night – no tv, phones, computers, or tablets.
- Fast from social media for a day and unfollow negative social media accounts.
- Spend 5 minutes meditating.
- Eat a snack or meal mindfully – using all your senses and savoring each bite.
- De-clutter your closet, desk, or main living space.
- Reflect on your basic desire for wellness or happiness. This primary urge exists within all humans. Feel the simple beauty of the idea and record your thoughts and feelings.
- Choose to speak less and listen more. Listen for understanding, not response.

RESTORE YOUR SPIRIT:

- Start and end your day by listing 5 things you are thankful for.
- Take a prayer walk or listen to your favorite worship song.
- Send notes/texts/emails of encouragement to 3 people. Notice when others support or praise you. Accept and acknowledge the truth of their words.
- Try a new prayer style – write to God, draw a prayer, or use a visual cue.
- Before you get out of bed in the morning – pray for and thank God for the day ahead.
- Make time for a hobby or activity that you enjoy or a person you enjoy spending time with.

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11 ESV