

5 Ways to Wreck Fear



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**Fear has left its
mark on me.**

It was how I did life. Most of my decisions were based on fear—not fear of God— but fear of everything. Will anyone be upset if I do this? Will so-and-so be mad at me if I do that? What will my neighbors/friends/relatives think if I do this? Worse yet, what will THEY think? THEY is a very powerful group. THEY have been making life miserable for the rest of us for many years. We need to vote THEY out of power. Why? Because THEY will keep us from following HIM.

Peter did it.

He finally beat THEY and took back his power.

I've been thinking about Peter.

How did he go from a three-Pete denier to the man who stood and preached like his heart was a-fire? Poured-out, filled-up, all-in man of God. I want that.

Let's look at what happened to

Peter in the book of Acts.

Jesus and Peter are having a conversation. Peter declares he is ready to go the mat for Jesus, but Jesus knows better.

31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." 33 Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." 34 Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me. [...]"

58 And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." 59 And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly. Luke 22

Peter was all talk and no walk. He couldn't deliver. I have been Peter-fired up at the conference and fast burn on the drive home. But, Peter changed.

How did it happen? How did God wreck fear?

Let's look at God's Peter Transformation Plan: From Fearful to Fearless

1. **Spend time weeping.** Go back and read Acts 3:62. Just

admit it and be done with it. Tell God you have failed, and you need Him to break your heart and put it back together again so it beats only for Him. Ask Him to do whatever it takes so you will fear only Him.

2. **Spend time with Jesus.** A lot of time. Peter spent 3 years doing daily life with Jesus. How many hours do we spend each day with Jesus? Perhaps the more accurate question is, *How many minutes do we spend each day with Jesus?* If you are serious about change, you'll be spending serious time with Jesus. Luke 5:11
3. **Spend time in prayer.** In the time between the Ascension and Pentecost, Peter and the rest of Jesus' disciples spent their time in the Upper Room in prayer. God used extended prayer to change Peter's heart. Acts 1:14, Acts 4:31
4. **Spend time in fellowship.** Peter did not become fearless by hunkering down by himself in his house. Effective outspoken Christians are not loners. We need others to encourage, confront and hold us accountable as we walk with Jesus. Acts 1:14, Acts 4:31
5. **Spend time in Scripture.** Start at Acts 2:14 and read Peter's speech to the crowd. How did he know what to say? Hours in the word of God. An Acts 2:14 kind of witness requires time, effort, perseverance and faith.

I have added one more element to this list: fasting. For this Lenten season, I have given up my favorite: Jason's Dark Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups. Yep. It hurts. But God honors my sacrifice. By the way, I don't expect to not ever feel fear again. I want to *act in faith* despite the fear. That's what I'm talking about.

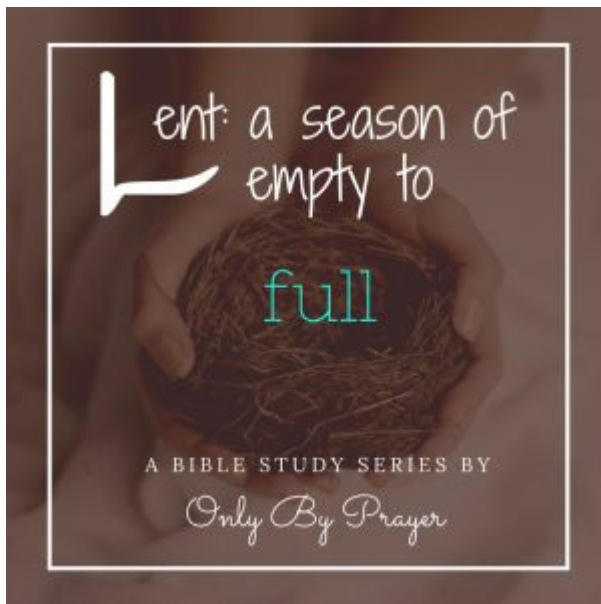
There we have it. The perfect recipe to wreck fear: prayer, repentance, scripture, fellowship and Jesus. Join me on this journey to wreck fear. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Leave me a comment below about your journey of faith. I'd love to chat with you.

Mary Kane

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Lent: empty to full, service



Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36 like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. Luke 12:35-36

Welcome to the final week of our Lent: empty to full study. We are so thankful for each one who has made this journey with us. For our final week, we will be looking at service.

Service can be a spur-of-the-moment Spirit-led prompting to help someone, or it can be a longer commitment that you make, perhaps

as a volunteer.

Your season of life will influence your acts of service. Parents with small children often find most of their time is spent serving their families. As your children grow, your schedule may allow for more time for you to serve others outside of your home as well.

The most important way to determine where God wants you serving in this season of life is to of course pray about it. Seek His plans and be alert to opportunities He brings your way. Enjoy this week's Sway and be sure to let us know some of the different ways you have served others in your life!

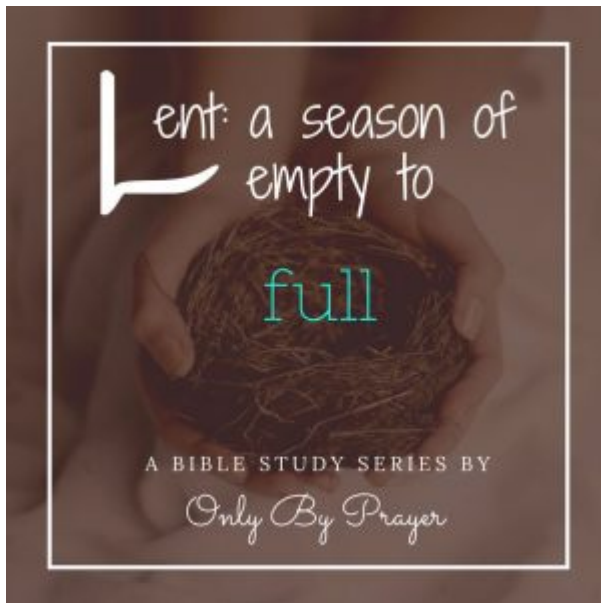
Have a blessed Easter!

Jane Vanosdol and Mary Kane

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Study, Lent: empty to full



16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:16-17

I love studying and learning.

I could be a professional student. My heart beats a little faster when I hear terms such as Rhodes Scholar, Oxford, Cambridge, Colson Fellows Program ... the stuff dreams are made of. God is all about studying and learning. He required the Kings of Israel to write a copy of His word and keep it with them and study it every day of their life. What's good for the Kings of Israel is good for us.

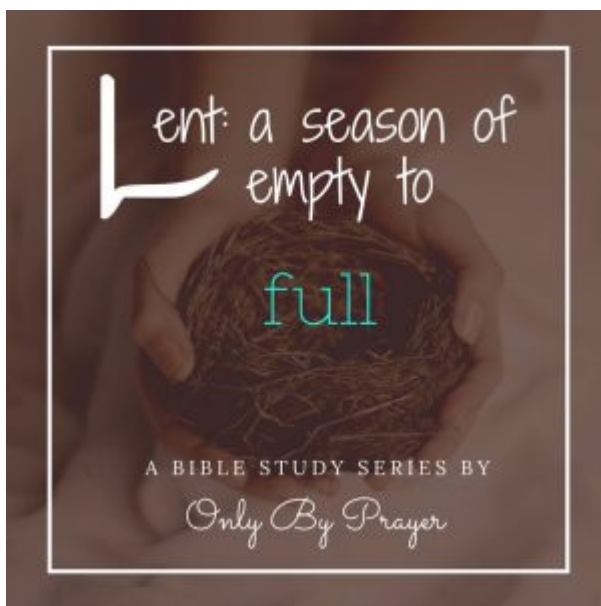
Studying is a discipline and requires determination and perseverance, but the pay-outs are huge. Wisdom, knowledge, blessings, being smarter than our enemies are just a few of the benefits of studying God's holy word. In this digital age we have instant access to the word of God – it's only a click away.

Make some extra time this week and get your study on, you will

be blessed! To get you started, please dig in to the Sway below.

Don't forget to leave a comment in the Comment Section about what you have learned!

Lent: empty to full, fasting



Fasting is temporarily abstaining from food (electronic media, television, etc.) for a period of time with the purpose of focusing on prayer and spiritual guidance.

Welcome to week 4 of our Lent guide! After spending last week

studying prayer, this week's topic of fasting is a natural follow-up.

As we persevere through the discomfort of fasting, we often experience a time of laser focus and closeness with God that is at a deeper level than what we usually attain. It is interesting how a physical discipline such as fasting complements our spiritual development. But God has created us in a way that our bodies, souls, and spirits are intricately connected. Disciplining our bodies by way of fasting often brings about spiritual breakthroughs as we cooperate with God in our goal for the fast.

New to Fasting?

If you've never tried fasting before, please don't be intimidated. A fast does not have to be weeks long to be beneficial. In fact, if you are new, start slow. Try fasting for one meal. You'll find several suggestions in the Sway that should help you choose a method to practice during the upcoming week.

Please scroll through the Sway and explore the different resources we have for you this week.

Share your insights, questions, and prayer requests on our Lent Facebook page. We love hearing from you!

Have a blessed week!



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Short & Sweet: 5 Reasons Why Jesus Had to Die



Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mathew 20:28

Why did Jesus have to come to earth, to be born as a man and die?

For as long as I can remember, I've known about the crucifixion of Jesus. The church we attended prominently displayed a large crucifix. Jesus on the cross—front and center. The matter of His death was a bedrock issue, but I had never stopped to ask *why*.

Why did Jesus have to die?

This question had been blowing around the corners of my mind since I became a Christian many years ago, but I never gave it serious consideration until recently. It came to the forefront

when one of my students, a new Christian, asked me, “*why did Jesus have to die?*”. Good question. Couldn’t God save people without Jesus dying on the cross? Salvation would so much easier to accept if we could skip the whole crucifixion process.

I do not claim to have deep theological or exhaustive information, but my answer comes straight from Scripture. Please, like the Bereans, search the Bible for further insight.

5 Reasons Jesus had to die:

Reason 1: Jesus had to die because the wages of sin is death. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23. Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, God covered man’s sin with a sacrifice of an innocent life. Jesus came to be our sacrifice—the Lamb of God.

Reason 2: Jesus had to die because God cannot die. “Behold, God is exalted, and we do not know Him; The number of His years is unsearchable.” Job 36:26. God is not flesh and blood; He is Spirit and therefore eternal. Since He cannot die, God had to send Jesus to the cross.

Reason 3: Jesus had to die because redemption requires blood. “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” Hebrews 9:22. Since God is not flesh but spirit, He has no blood. Therefore, God took on flesh, tabernacled among us, walked the road to the cross and shed His blood.

Reason 4: Jesus had to die because prophecy must be fulfilled. “Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death.” Isaiah 53:12. In

total, 28 prophecies were fulfilled on the day of Jesus' crucifixion. For more information on prophecies fulfilled by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, please see the following link: [Prophecies](#)

Reason 5: Jesus had to die because God needed a perfect sacrifice. "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" ... "Now where there is remission of these, *there is no longer an offering for sin.*" Hebrews 10:14, 18.

Jesus had to come. He is the only One who could live a perfect life, pay the wages of sin by shedding His blood upon the cross and thereby fulfill the Old Testament prophecies. One question remains then ...

Why did Jesus *want* to die?

Because God so loves us that He would rather die than live without us. Sometimes I have days when I wonder if anyone truly cares. Does anyone see my hurts and my wounds? Then I remember, there is no greater love than this, that a Man should lay down His life for a friend. Jesus died for me. He died for you. He loves us.

He. Loves. You.

Action Points:

- 1. Knowing that Jesus has given His life for you,** how can you give your life back to Him? Where can you plug-in?
- 2. Who in your life needs to hear about the life,** death, resurrection, and love of Jesus? How can you begin to witness to this person?
- 3. Look for three different people to bless today.** (How about the busy clerk at the store ... the person who is going to cut you off in traffic today ... the elderly neighbor who is aching for someone to visit.)

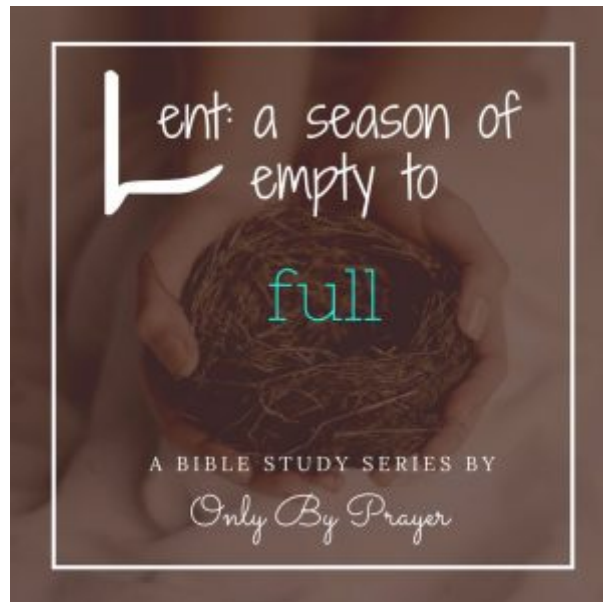
Life is sweet because Jesus died for you.

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Lent: empty to full, prayer



At its simplest, prayer is communicating with God.

Prayer is the language of our hopes, dreams, and ambitions. The Bible teaches that we should pray without ceasing, in good times and bad, when we are tempted, and when we are under attack. While God can do whatever He wants without the help of man, in His wisdom He has decreed that some things will not be accomplished apart from the prayers of man.

The effective fervent prayers of a righteous man availeth much!

We all know we should pray. We all know prayer is important ... so why don't we? Why do we struggle so *with* prayer instead of *in* prayer? Because prayer is hard work. Prayer is where our battles are won or lost. Some parts of the Christian life are enjoyable: praise and worship, fellowship, hospitality. Prayer is literally going to war with the enemy. No one likes to go to war. It's hard. It's bloody. It's critical. It's necessary. It's our privilege and the payouts are huge.

Our nation is at stake. Our families are at stake. Our

children are at stake. Suit up and get your armor on and drop to your knees because the battle must be won.

Please scroll through the Sway below to access the many embedded prayer resources. Remember to leave a comment below and on our Facebook page.

Have a blessed Lent.

Mary Kane

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