



We have two major seasons of importance in the life of a Christian. One is Advent, the time leading up to the birth of Jesus and the other season which is about to start is, Lent. Lent is a time to prepare and reflect on our lives as we journey towards Easter. Growing up was always being reminded that I needed to give something up for Lent, which was never very successful for me. I would jokingly say that I would give up fish for Lent because I did not like it. Now I get the idea about denying myself something of value during the season of Lent. Many people will give up chocolate, sweets, television, social media, coffee, or any number of other things. The thought is for this sacrifice to be offered as a way of getting closer to God. This is for sure a great thing to do and it can be very beneficial. Anything we do to strengthen our relationship with God or develop our spiritual lives is a good thing. The practice that I like to have for Lent was only suggested to be a number of years ago and that was to ask myself what give I give or add something to my life that would bring me closer to God. So instead of me focusing so much on subtracting something from my life and failing, I could focus on adding something to my life during Lent. If we subtract chocolate from our lives, it may be a genuine sacrifice, but it will actually have limited value for our lives in the big scheme of life. Imagine if you stopped doing something so

that you could spend more time in prayer or studying God's Word. The difference that this added time with God in your day would make it transformational. Or suppose that every time we had thought of chocolate, you talked to someone about your faith and relationship with God. Can you imagine how significant this would be. It would be life changing not just for you but for those you share with. Each of us need to find what is best to add to our lives to deepen and grow our faith and relationship with Jesus through Lent. Try it, by deciding what you can give to God during lent 2024. As Lent begins, it would be good to ask yourself, "What am I not doing that I should *start* doing? What am I doing that I should *stop* doing? What am I doing that is good and I should be doing *more* of?" Often these are questions we want to avoid but especially during Lent they are questions we need to ask ourselves. How about trying to do something like finding a way to show others an act of kindness or service that would bless them?

Throughout this Lenten season, we should be considering how our actions and thoughts are helping us to have a closer relationship with Jesus. Lent is an opportunity for each of us to pause, reflect, and identify the ways we can become closer to Christ through our prayers, actions, and words. How will you make your 2023 Lenten season personal and reflective? Use this season as a time to reboot your life and focus of Jesus. As you prepare and reflect on God's love for you it will bring you closer to the Savior of the world as He made His way to the Cross and defeat death and sin by leaving an empty tomb behind. Many of us may feel that our lives are empty and we are distant from God because there is too much going on in our lives. Well, it's time to stop, take a deep breath and let Jesus in. Remember His sacrifice and love for you and give Him all of your life this Lenten Season and beyond.

4 WAYS TO BE LIKE JESUS:

Do what the Father Does. (John 5:19)

Speak as the Father teaches you. (John 8:28)

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

Have the Mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:14-16)

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