

A prayer for the season of Lent.



Food.

God of sustenance, who nourishes my life,
I acknowledge my vast hunger and emptiness. I have confused that empty space with physical hunger and tried to fill it with food. With a history of failure under my belt, I know that food cannot fill that empty space, that it only leaves me feeling miserable.

Your Word says that You are the bread of life. Those who eat will never go hungry and will always be satisfied. You're speaking of spiritual food, the kind of feast which truly satisfies, and which I truly need.

Fill me now with Your presence, let me savor your love, and re-train me to run to You.

Sex. (*women*)

God of love, who knows me deeply and intimately,
I chase after love and affection, though only You know
how to provide it. I act like Your love is not enough to
satisfy me, but You know me better than any person can.
My heart aches to be wanted, cherished, held, only to
be repeatedly disappointed. Feeling alone, I wonder why
romance looms so far beyond my reach.

The truth is You made me for Yourself, and You love
me passionately. You designed my sexuality and declared
it as good; You made me as more than a body, but as a
mind, a soul, and a spirit, with the wonderful, creative
gift of my love. You made me to want to love and thereby
glimpse the enormity of Your love for me.

I pray that You would teach me to love. Show me the
nature of creative love in all my relationships. Forgive my
self-focus and let me love with a joyful heart.

Entertainment / Comfort.

God of extravagance, who captures my attention
and my heart,

I need distraction from myself. The thoughts and feelings that tumble through my head are often too painful to hear. Instead, I chase after entertainment, finding it in movies and books and music and video games, anything that keeps me from hearing Your thundering whisper.

You came to give abundant life, and as an abundantly creative Artist, You made me and the world around me as a source of joy. In spite of my pain, the joys of this world were meant to inspire my own creativity, not keep me from it.

Quiet the noise around me, and let me hear Your voice. I want the abundant life You came to give me.

Control.

Omnipotent God, who holds the world in His hands,
I fool myself with illusions of my own control of my
life. I cut myself off from others so I can maintain an
imaginary grasp on doing life as I think it should be done.
I feel angry when things don't go my way, and in turn
hurt my friends and family with my coldness, my passive
rage, and my not-so-passive rage.

The reality is I have very little control over my life.
You alone made the oceans, the mountains, and the blue
skies. You asked your servant Job, "Where were you when
I laid the earth's foundations? Tell me, if you under-
stand." I wasn't there, and I don't understand, God. You
alone hold my deepest treasures in Your hands.

Father, I pray for the grace to loosen my tight grip on
the reins of my life, and I give the reins back to You.

Self-doubt.

God of encouragement, who draws out the great treasure hidden within me,

I hear the same mantra repeated in my head, “You’re no good, you never have been, you never will be.” I fight to control the demons of self-doubt that taunt me with my worthlessness. Rather than take the risk to chase after my dreams, I worry what others will think when I fail.

The truth is I was made for a good purpose – to know God and be known by Him. I am made in His image and I am his beloved. Like Peter, I’ve been called out of the boat to firmly walk on water, and like Peter, I need the grace to take the risk.

Show me who I am in Your eyes, and give me the courage to take my eyes off myself, off the splashing waves I walk on, and let my eyes be on You.

Pride.

Father Almighty, who resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble,

My self-confident exterior is simply a system of layers hiding an insecure heart. I'm embarrassed to let anyone see how weak I am. Instead of extending mercy, I judge people most harshly in the area of my own intense weakness, only to make myself miserable.

Psalm 25:9 says, "He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way." Your way is a way of grace, peace, love, hope, and all the good things You have to give Your children. Though I will never be perfect, Your way is perfect.

Tear down my defenses and protective walls. Release me from the malaise of pride and teach me to forgive others, to forgive myself, and to receive Your love.

Selfishness.

God of generosity, who emptied Himself to be with me, I expect certain things out of life, and when I don't get them I feel angry, annoyed, and even hurt. I see the injustice in my own life, but I'm blind to the injustice embedded in the lives around me. Why do I pray only for my perceived needs, only to feel ever lacking, ever unsatisfied, ever unsettled?

Your Word instructs me to live generously, to love my neighbor as I love myself. You've made me to be Your hands and feet in a world that desperately needs the presence of a living, loving God.

God, I ask You to push me beyond my limits and my comfort zone for the benefit of others. Let me give the gift of myself, my time, my talents, and my money to those who need it more than I do.

Community Dependence.

Triune God, who makes no person an island,
You made me to live in community, but I look to my
community for approval and never find enough of it. I feel
alone even when I'm with people. The praises of others
slip through my fingers, pats on my back are hardly felt,
and I find myself starving for more.

The truth is no created thing – people included – can
meet my need for acceptance. Only a perfect Creator can
show me my value. Others are but a mere shadow of Your
perfect love. I was not made to take from others, but to
give freely the gift of acceptance You've given to me.

Help me to find acceptance in Your love. Teach me
the art of solitude, not to keep myself from others, but to
quietly discover Your acceptance, and humbly offer it to
those in my community.

Money.

God of riches, who owns all the wealth of the world,
My worry about money betrays my lack of trust. I
have found it easier to depend on finances than on
You. Instead of being satisfied by Your boundless love,
financial security is often my idol. I worry about trusting
only in You: “Will I have to struggle? Are You real enough
to provide?”

God, all I need in life is Your love – the best security
of all. Help me to give up my faith in money. You are rich,
and You will provide what I need. Teach me to trust You
alone. May my experience of Your rich grace be so good
that my grip loosens over my possessions and I become
more unselfish with all that I have – aware of the cross’s
treasure as well as the needs of those around me.

Help me to lose my fear of struggle, knowing and
believing that if You bring me to suffer, it is for Your good
purpose in my life – perhaps even to grow my faith.

Sex. (*men*)

Triune God, who invites me into Your community of three persons,

It's easy for me to avoid community and be busy, getting things done and living on the adrenaline of my accomplishments, my intelligence, my hobbies, my work. In chasing after these other things my muscle of human connection atrophies. I have a void in my heart that is meant for connection to others, a connection I often don't know how to cultivate, so I'm tempted with cheap connection. Every hour there's a new opportunity to objectify someone's body (or an image of one) rather than build life-giving community around me.

I need Your connection, Your affection, Your grace, to flood my heart – through knowing the love language of Your cross. Fill me with Your love so that I can move beyond cheap connections to seeing people around me as Your beloved children, created in Your image, brothers and sisters in the holy family. Help me Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – draw near to my soul, I pray.
