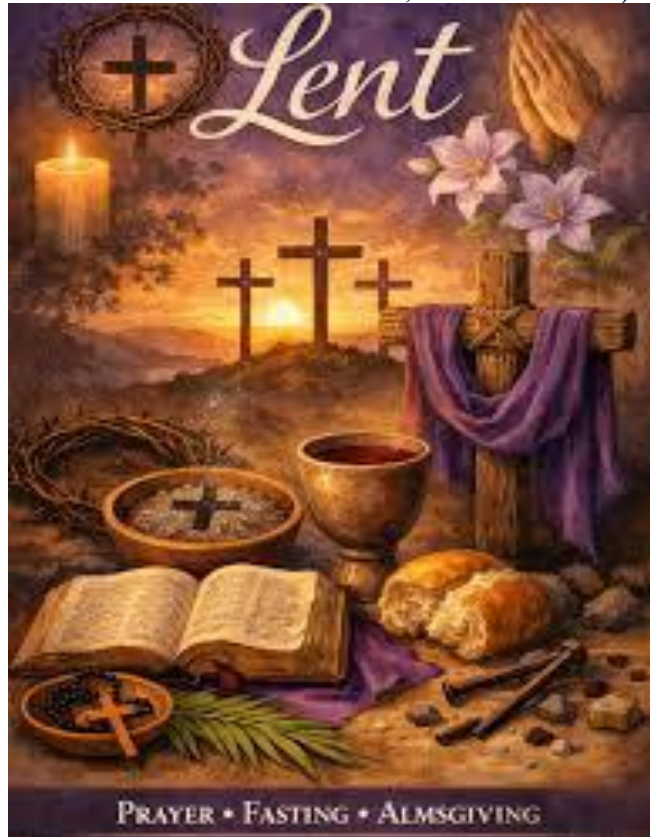


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2026 Is The Year Of B.E.T.T.E.R.:

**(BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, EQUIPPING, TRAINING, TRANSFORMATION,
ENGAGE EVANGELISM, REVITALIZE)**



“STEP 4: Taking Inventory”
HEART FAST: Fasting From Denial
PART 1

Wednesday in the Word

April 15, 2026

Introduction

The scripture passages we'll study today invite us to move beyond external actions to internal transformation – from “my doing” to “my being.” As we continue 12 Steps to Better, this month's focus “Taking Inventory” guides our discussion as we move toward the culmination of this Lenten season.

Today's Heart Fast is: Denial

Before we can fast from denial, we must take inventory of how it shows in our lives.

Matthew 26:36–42 (AMP) The Garden of Gethsemane

³⁶Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane (olive-press), and He told His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [James and John], He began to be grieved and greatly distressed. ³⁸Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, so that I am almost dying *of sorrow*. Stay here and stay awake *and* keep watch with Me.” ³⁹And after going a little farther, He fell face down and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible [that is, consistent with Your will], let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” ⁴⁰And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “So, you *men* could not stay awake *and* keep watch with Me for one hour? ⁴¹Keep *actively* watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” ⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

Denial can be a significant spiritual roadblock, preventing us from fully surrendering to God's will. In Matthew 26:31-42, we see denial at work—Peter's refusal to believe he could fall away and Jesus' struggle in Gethsemane. Fasting from denial means recognizing where we resist God's truth by taking inventory, surrendering to His will, and taking intentional steps to walk in obedience.

Before we can fast from denial, we must take inventory of how it manifests in our lives.

1. Recognizing the Cost of Denial

- A. Taking Inventory of Our Weaknesses (Matthew 26:33)
- B. Taking Inventory of Our Spiritual Focus (Matthew 26:40-41)
- C. Taking Inventory of God's Warnings in Our Lives (Matthew 26:34-35)

2. The Struggle of Surrender

Surrendering to God's will is difficult, but fasting from denial makes it possible.

- A. Taking Inventory of Our Internal Struggles (Matthew 26:39)
- B. Taking Inventory of Our Prayer Life (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44)
- C. Taking Inventory of Where We Find Strength (Matthew 26:45-46)

3. Walking in God's Truth

Once we fast from denial, we can confidently walk in obedience to God's plan.

- A. Taking Inventory of Our Trust in God (Matthew 26:42).
- B. Taking Inventory of Our Responses to Challenges (Matthew 26:51-52).
- C. Taking Inventory of Our Alignment with God's Will (Matthew 26:46).

Five Steps to Overcome Denial

1. Denial often stems from a refusal to see things as they truly are.

Take Honest Inventory of Your Life Lamentations 3:40 – “Let us examine our ways and test them and let us return to the Lord.”

2. Denial often thrives when we prioritize feelings over God's truth.

Seek God's Truth Over Your Feelings John 8:32 – “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

3. Denial is easier to maintain when we isolate ourselves.

Surround Yourself with Godly Accountability Proverbs 27:17 – “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

4. Overcoming denial requires humility and willingness to change.

Pray for a Willing and Teachable Heart Psalm 51:10 – “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

5. Recognizing denial is only the first step; true growth happens when we act

Take Action in Faith: James 1:22 – “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

What Cup Would You rather not Drink?

Where do struggle with denial? As you take inventory what area do you struggle with denial in? Peter was adamant about not denying Jesus to the point of death? What changed?

❖ Prayer: Daily Prayer Call Monday - Friday @ 6:00 AM

Prayer Conference Number

- Dial-in number: (605) 475-4000
- Participant Code: 689056#

