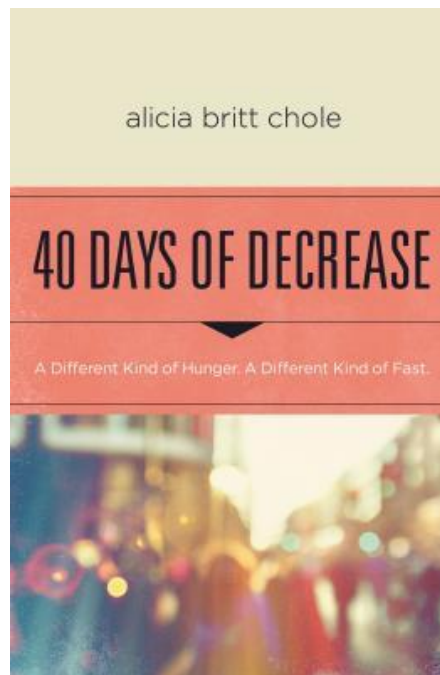




40 Days of Decrease: A Different Kind of Hunger. A Different Kind of Fast.

Alicia Britt Chole

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*What if you fasted **regret**?*

*What if your friends fasted **comparison**?*

*What if your generation fasted **escapism**?*

*What if your community fasted **spectatorship**?*

Such heart-fasts could trigger a spiritual revolution! Via readings, reflection questions, daily fasts, ancient quotes, and more, this is the dream of *40 Days of Decrease: A Different Kind of Hunger. A Different Kind of Fast*.

Every day offers a meaningful consideration of Jesus' journey and then invites readers into a daily fast of heart-clutter, the stuff that sticks to our souls and weighs us down.

You can begin your forty-day journey any time of the year, but you may find it especially meaningful as a Lenten preparation to live in awe of Jesus' resurrection.

Each daily, 1000-word entry will include
a devotional based on Jesus' cross-ward life;
a reflection question to guide journaling or group discussion;
a heart fast to inspire a tangible response;
a thought-provoking Lenten quote;
an optional sidebar into the historical development of Lent.
a suggested reading that takes you from John 12 to John 21
journaling space for reflection

In the same way self cannot satisfy self no matter how long it feasts, self cannot starve self no matter how long it fasts. Decrease—like increase—is only holy when its destination is love.

We thin our lives to thicken our communion with God.

Dare to live awed by Christ's resurrection! Intuitive, prophetic, and profoundly inspiring, calling forth a revolution of soul health, stirring our passion to know Jesus more."

—**DARLENE ZSCHECH**, Composer, Worship Leader, Pastor, and Speaker

"God has sounded a clear chord of revelation through Alicia Chole. God uses her to lovingly guide the reader into recognizing His presence, purpose, and power in times of necessary loss."

—**DR. CLAUDE R. ALEXANDER, JR.**, Lead Pastor of The Park Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC

40 Days of Decrease: A Different Kind of Hunger. A Different Kind of Fast. Details

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From Reader Review 40 Days of Decrease: A Different Kind of Hunger. A Different Kind of Fast. for online ebook

Beth Peninger says

For Lent 2016 I used this book to guide what I call my "Lent warm up." I wasn't practicing Lent as much as I was/am warming up to the idea of practicing it. See, I'm not about the whole fast from something for 40 days only to gorge on it Easter Sunday and no difference has been made in my life or heart as the result of my 40 days of denial. Lent is more than giving up coffee, Faceook, beer, or slurpees for 40 days. Lent is supposed to be a season of preparation that leads to transformation. So when I found this book I internally leapt because it was describing the kind of Lent (or 40 days) practice that I am about.

I'm SO glad I got the book.

In 40 Days of Decrease Chole takes the reader through a decrease of the things that truly clutter our lives - most of them unseen to the naked eye. This book helps guide the reader through a decluttering of faith. As Chole says in the Prologue, "Though I had purposed to live simply, clutter was collecting around my faith. I was becoming more vulnerable to sin, but sin of a slightly different strain than in earlier years. We all guard against sins of commission and we are vigilant toward sins of omission. But achievements - even in small doses - can make us vulnerable to sins of addition: adding niceties and luxuries to our list of basic needs, adding imaginations on the strong back of vision, adding self-satisfaction to the purity of peace." Strike a chord? It did, it does with me. I can see it in my own life and I can see it in the lives of many other believers I know. But I can't do anything about them, just me.

The clutter that collects around a faith that Chole chose to discuss and decrease from was so deep and profound, not obvious. Which made it even more meaningful. Day One Fast Suggestion? Lent as a Project. Selah. Other decreases Chole walks the reader through included regret, rationalism, neutrality, God-as-job. I highly recommend this book for a guide during Lent or a season in which you know God is calling you to decrease so that he can increase. This won't be the only time I use this book, I anticipate it becoming an important guide in the decrease of me and the increase of HIM.

Lyn Mahler says

Excellent Lenten devotional. This book definitely enhanced my thoughtfulness and prayer life through this holy season.

Faith says

What if Lent wasn't meant to be just a period of duty-bound deprivation? What if it could be a season of preparation, where a time of renunciation helps set our soul right and readys it for Resurrection fullness?

It is Alicia's conviction that we need to recover this second view of the Lent, and that if we did, it would become a meaningful part of the cycle of faith.

Lent: waiting, watching, wondering, making space inside to holding the hard things and the sacred sadness. And then, we awaken to Easter-day fullness, where death gives way to life everlasting and everything is

rewritten in light of an empty tomb.

Alicia's heart is captivated by this mystery, and her writing spills over with awe. This is definitely an accessible and enriching read.

Many of her forty chosen "fasts" resonated strongly with me.

For example, one day she suggests we fast from trying to find quick-fixes. Some things do not reach resolution in a hurry, some aspects of life never tie up in a bow, some things have no fix at all- they simply have to be lived with.

Another day we fast from noise, intentionally choosing silence for a while. The list goes on, of course- we fast intimidation by standing against fear. We fast apathy- the world's pain is overwhelming, and we grow numb to survive it all, but we need to somehow keep our swift compassion for others.

Basically, all these "fasts" are chances to correct an unhealthy way of dealing with yourself, to refocus your relationships with others, or to catch a new glimpse of your God.

As Alicia says, Lent "frees me from the sticky stuff of self-consciousness, increases within me the sacred stuff of God-consciousness" and therefore "fills me with unspeakable joy."

Yep. I think a Resurrection should involve unspeakable joy.

I thank Thomas Nelson for providing me with a review copy in exchange for my opinion.

Joan says

In an era when society tells us to accumulate more, whether its possessions, self-confidence, or clout, Chole wants us to practice the spiritual discipline of decrease. This is a Lenten devotional unlike any I've read before.

Through an experience of surgery and loss of strength, Chole realized clutter had been collecting around her faith. She identified "sins of addition" in her life. She knew that Jesus lived an uncluttered life and she longed to follow His example.

There are so many aspects of this book I really like. One is the format. The forty devotions follow along the life of Jesus, each one based on a scene or saying. She adds guidance for reflection, then a suggested fast, a quote for meditation, information on Lent, a suggested Scripture reading, and space to journal.

I like the suggested fast for the day. There were some I expected to see in a Lenten devotional, like fasting a meal. But most of them were surprising. Her emphasis is less about the sacrifice of stuff and more about the surrendering of our souls. Her suggestions included fasting collecting praise for a day, and fasting stinginess for a day, halos (false definitions of holiness), apathy (in the face of justice), intimidation, willful sin, and criticism. These suggested fasts go to the core of our spiritual character. Each day's suggestion really made me think about my spiritual journey in a way I've not had a devotional do before.

I like her extra sections on Lent. Many Protestants do not understand the origin, history, or early practice of Lent. The information Chole includes is very enlightening in conveying the roots of this practice of voluntary discomfort to remind us of the discomfort of the cross.

Chole reminds us of the example of John the Baptist, saying that he must decrease while Jesus must increase. She has done an excellent job of encouraging us to have that same attitude. She reminds us that some of these fasts representing character traits and spiritual practices are really a lifetime commitment. Reading these devotions will help us take one step of that journey right now.

I highly recommend this book to those who have practiced Lent in the past. Chole will encourage you to have a fresh experience. I highly recommend this book to those for whom a Lenten experience is foreign. You'll learn about the origin and meaning of the practice and be encouraged to engage in it on a spiritually transforming level.

I received a complimentary galley of this book from the publisher for the purpose of an independent and honest review.

Stacey says

A fresh 40 day Lenten devotion that makes you aware of areas where the worldly values has taken over your life and left your spirit weary and thirsting for refreshment. Fasting, or letting go of, things like success, escapism, spectatorship, judgement, and 36 other qualities makes for a deep soul searching that reveals places where we need to grow in our relationship with Christ. This devotion carries the reader through Christ's journey to the cross and beyond with daily scripture reading from the book of John. It is not easy reading. Jesus decreased so that God could increase and save mankind. That journey was difficult, brutal and ugly. The author asks the reader to focus on this part of Lent to fully appreciate the resurrection. Where many people focus on only the resurrection and celebration of Easter Sunday, this author asks you to decrease and suffer with Christ so that the reader becomes more humbly aware of the sacrifice and price paid for their salvation. Each section closes with a historical explanation of Lent and how it has changed through the ages from a three day fast to the current forty day fast. A difficult read, but an enjoyable and more fulfilling Lent devotion than some I've read previously.

Jalynn Patterson says

About the Book:

We ache deep within to meaningfully honor Christ's resurrection. Yet, in practice, this focal point in the liturgical calendar is often a celebration of public holiday more than it is of humanity's hope. At day's end, we fall asleep well-fed and perhaps even grateful, yet still somehow something short of awed. Enduring awe is rarely the fruit of a morning's celebration. Enduring awe is the fruit of daily participation with Jesus, our resurrected Love. 40 Days of Decrease invites readers to walk with Jesus through the holy decrease of less and loss that led Him cross-ward and beyond.

Each day offers a meaningful consideration of Jesus' journey through reading and reflection and then issues a challenging daily fast. Instead of social media, chocolate, and designer coffee, 40 Days of Decrease calls communities to a Lenten fasting of apathy, injustice, resentment, hypocrisy, and more for the love of God. After all, in the same way self cannot satisfy self no matter how long it feasts, self cannot starve self no matter how long it fasts. Decrease is only holy when its destination is love. We thin our lives to thicken our communion with God.

My Review:

40 Days of Decrease is a DIFFERENT type of fast more different than anyone I have ever seen before. And

it definitely would not be considered traditional. I picked up this book to review in the hopes that it would give my family and I a guide to traditional fasting but it is quite the contrary. I know at this time it is quite popular but unless you are looking for something completely different than traditional this may not be the book for you.

The author takes you on a 40 day journey that can be done anytime throughout the year but is typically or recommended for those days preceding lent or right up until Easter. Each day is a different type of fast. I believe there was one that centered around food they rest centered around behaviors, tendencies, and issues or strongholds we may need to be free from.

While I agree with the author on her very well researched and thought out commentary, this just wasn't the fast I was looking for. The author is very profound and cerebral in her speaking and she discusses the call for change as well as Jewish traditions. Again a very good book if you are looking for something different from traditional way of fasting.

****Disclosure**** This book was sent to me free of charge for my honest review from the author.

Sarah says

You've probably heard a lot about living a simpler life. In this book, Alicia Britt Chole develops that idea in an unexpected way.

This is a deep, rich book, meant to be sipped slowly. Here's a quote to give you a taste:

"Faith, in general, is less about the sacrifice of stuff and more about the surrender of our souls. Lent, in kind, is less about well-mannered denials and more about thinning our lives in order to thicken our communion with God. Decrease is holy only when its destination is love."

She spurs us to fast from heart-level things like these:

Lent as Project
Regrets
Collecting Praise
Tidy Faith
Speeding Past Sorrow

Another unexpected bonus of this book is the historical notes about Lent. I also like the thoughtful quotes she often uses. This book is expanding my mind and helping me get in touch with what really matters.

I purchased this book on Amazon, and I'm thankful for it! It's inspiring me to think more deeply about the meaning of Lent.

Sarah says

This is two books in one. Chole reports on her research into the history of Lent's theology and practice in the occasionally insightful second halves of her chapters. The more interesting first halves were devotions drawing on events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, and urging "a different kind of fast" for

each day of Lent. Some of these are potentially life-changing, and the wording and ideas are worthy of reflection, discussion, and practice. However, as the author suggests, perhaps this book would be better used as a weekly devotional, or occasional. The way I, and most people I think, use a daily Lent devotional doesn't fit well with some of the fasts the books suggests. For example, one day I read at 6 AM that we'd be fasting from artificial light. Another day I was supposed to fast from speech or typing. These can be excellent practices, but I'd need advance preparation.

Overall, this book has some valuable lessons to teach. The format didn't work very well for me, though.

Laura Eaton says

It was a good book, but not really what I was expecting or looking for this season. It was very informative on how lent came to be, and was very interesting, but I was expecting it to be more about the personal and spiritual growth. I really enjoyed the days when we were expected to "give up" something like laziness or another trait, and really had to pay attention to each single sin. it helped me more understand the things I may not be aware of that are hindering a closer walk with my Father.

Jennifer Sandino says

Pleasantly surprised

I wasn't quite sure what I expected when I started this adventure 40 odd days ago, but I am changed. The author's thoughtful writing and reflections made me think about my relationship with Jesus. I will definitely read this book again through Lent next year, as I will gain different insights.

Catherine says

This is one of those books that requires pre-reading and some planning to actually implement her suggested fasts. The forty days does not have to be limited to the season of Lent as the meditations and fasts are appropriate for any time one feels called to a period of spiritual reflection and renewal.

Elizabeth says

Like the advent season leading up to Christmas, Lent is the season leading up to Easter. A quick Google search explains that "Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word lencten, which means "spring." The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry. Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians focus on their relationship with God, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of themselves for others."

While we often sacrifice something we enjoy for those 40 days in solidarity with Jesus sacrifice for us (it's often sweets, caffeine, etc.) I love the idea that Chole brings to us in this book on giving up more - and focusing on different fasts each day. Topics such as regrets, sorrow, stinginess (for example, day 13 which deals with stinginess asks us to seek an opportunity to be irrationally lavish toward someone who cannot possibly return the favor).

Each day "features a devotional based upon Jesus' life, guidance for reflection, suggested daily fasts, an inspiring quote for prayerful meditation, an optional and somewhat academic sidebar chronicling the historical development, practices, and images of Lent, and a suggested Scripture reading with journaling space."

While the season of Lent is often only celebrated by Catholics and Protestants, I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to take some special time each day starting on Ash Wednesday (this coming Wednesday!) until Easter to grow closer to God and learn to be more like Him as we decrease our wishes and lean upon His.

This book was given to me by BookLook Bloggers in exchange for my honest review.

Cecelia Lester says

This is the third year I have read this book and done the study. The first two years I did it as a Lenten study. This year, I chose to do it as a part of Eastertide/Pentecost observance. The past two years, I kept a separate journal for my thoughts. The first year, I used the journal lines provided and wrote about the scripture readings taking the reader through the journey that Jesus took to the cross and into heaven.

Ian says

Ann Voskamp introduced me to the notion of using Lent to fast a different aspect of life each day. She provided a verse to meditate on and a prayer to pray. Alicia Britt Chole has provided a devotional that provides more detail as one walks through the season of Lent and follows Jesus' steps. In particular, the final week was very powerful as Chole had us imagine ourselves as one of a variety of the people that participated in Jesus' walk to the Cross and then His resurrection.

"Like John the Baptist before us, we decrease so that Jesus can increase in and through us." Chole takes us on a journey of discovery. One where this indeed takes place. As we set aside aspects of our own life, we get to experience more of Jesus.

Some of the daily fasts were: isolation, spectatorship, apathy, leavened bread, sound, comparison and self-confidence. I'll confess I didn't apply all of the fasts but most and found it to be of benefit. Interestingly, I found Chole's introduction for each day to be wonderfully inspiring and challenging.

This quote from Alexander Schmenmann perhaps best sums up this very helpful 40 day practice that I believe could very easily be followed at other times of the year outside Lent:

"The purpose of Lent is not to focus on a us a few formal obligations, but to 'soften' our heart so that it many open itself to the realities of the spirit, to experience the hidden 'thirst and hunger' for communion with God."

I do believe my heart has certainly been softened and opened to an increased "'thirst and hunger' for communion with God".

Highly recommended

Emily Love says

This is an incredibly thought-provoking and spiritually challenging Lenten devotional. You could go through it at any point in the year, but it is truly special in the days leading up to the celebration of Easter. As I have been celebrating Easter throughout my entire life, I particularly appreciated the emphasis the author places on slowing down a well-known story to engage with each scene more fully. She has produced a work that is a wonderful blend of soul-searching reflections and academic findings, a truly excellent read.
