

25 Prompts for Lenten Prayers and Confession

1. In the season of Lent, as I prepare to receive the Easter gift of resurrection, I am invited on a journey. I am invited to walk a path of introspection and reflection, acknowledging both the shadows and light of my life. Trusting in the grace of God, and before one another, and let me admit my own sin.

Prayer: Holy God, You know me better than I know myself, and You see me more clearly. How impossible it seems that I could ever hide anything from You, or even try to hide such things; but I do. Sometimes I pretend to be better than I am. I do things I know will hurt others and act as though I am blameless. But I am not. I am complicit, and I am guilty, and I am broken. So I ask for Your forgiveness, because You love me more than I can imagine, and You make me whole beyond my wildest dreams. This I ask in the name of Jesus, who came to show me the way. Amen.

2. New every morning is God's love for me, and so new each day is my opportunity to ask Him to clean the slate, to make my confession with a willing spirit, and to be assured of God's forgiveness and love. On this new day, I come to God in prayer.

Prayer: O Lord, I know that You are as close as my next breath, and at the same time it feels as if there is a great distance between us. That distance is sometimes a tragedy when I feel abandoned. That distance is sometimes a force of evil when something conspires against me. That distance is sometimes my foolish choices or my selfish acts, or the hurt I cause another. I seek Your forgiveness. So assure me of Your closeness, Your power, Your mercy, and Your ability to change my life for the good. In Your great mercy, Amen.

3. In the beauty of this space, in this sacred moment, in the fellowship I have with the God of creation, I speak with Him about my life, about how I have followed and how I have faltered. Trusting in God's grace and mercy, I pray this confession.

Prayer: Merciful God, I claim that You sent Jesus to take away the sin of the world. I am part of that sin. Help me not to acknowledge that I do things that hurt other people, the creation, mankind, and You. Come into my heart, Lord God, and give me strength and courage to be less hurtful and more loving. These things I pray in the name of Jesus, who showed me how this is done. Amen.

4. Prayer: Merciful and loving God: when I am ungrateful, remind me of Your grace. When I am oblivious, open my eyes. When I am harsh, gentle my spirit. When I am apathetic, show me Your suffering children. When I demean myself, whisper that I am created in Your image. When I lose all hope, show me the empty tomb. Renew a right spirit within me. Shape me and turn me around, so that I will live with blessing and grace and light. In Jesus' name, Amen.

5. Prayer: God of mercy and love, I know that sometimes I allow myself to be distracted by things that really don't matter all that much. I would rather pursue intellectual arguments than live the Gospel. I would rather debate my equals than defend the vulnerable. I prefer to think *about* You instead of getting to *know* You. Help me, O Christ. Help me to discern what matters to You and to the vulnerable You call me to help. Help me to open up my heart, wide in love and grace, and so be a living example of your Good News. In Christ, I pray. Amen.

6. I come before God in silence and in prayer, to open my heart to my Creator, the One who heals, loves, and forgives.

Prayer: Merciful God, hear my prayer. When I am down and out, or too weary to do anything else, I do not offer kindness as often as I might. I admit that I do not add beauty to the world apart from You. I pay lip

service to the cries of others and sit idly by until the sound fades. Sometimes I get it right, and sometimes I don't. I ask for Your mercy and grace, and I ask for Your help, to give me courage and strength to live as You would have me live. In the name of Jesus Christ, who gave me those qualities and who taught me all I need to know, I pray. Amen.

7. Maybe it's easier to understand sin as separation: separation from God, separation from others, separation from my identity in Christ. In the midst of separation, God walks toward me, inviting me to walk toward Him. In prayer, let me seek God's grace.

Prayer: Holy God, I wander off. I am distracted by shiny things, and I get lost. Merciful God, You come to find me. Lost and afraid, I become stubborn and intractable. Loving God, You pick me up and brush me off and take me home. You are the light of the world, so give me eyes past this present darkness. I will wander again, but for the moment, I am safe and forgiven. And so I thank you. Amen.

8. Life is full – full of good things and full of hard things. I work to cope with the easy and with the sad, and sometimes as I try to manage all that life hands me, I ignore the pain of someone else, the struggle of another. God calls me to see it all, and to help when I can. Aware of my shortcomings and confident in God's grace, let me make my confession.

Prayer: Holy God, I am an imperfect person and I need Your love. Forgive me when I ignore Your children who cry out in distress. Forgive me when I choose not to see those who remind me too much of myself. Forgive me when I put rules ahead of people, and choose legality over kindness and judgment that lacks mercy. Enable me to see as You see, the wide vistas open to the possibility of compassion and grace. O God, hear my prayer. Amen.

9. Prayer: Almighty God, You know me. You know my heart, You know my thoughts, You know my actions and human nature. You know my successes and my failures, that which commends me and that which condemns me. I know ourselves, too; I know the good I have done, and I know how I have fallen short. I would know you better so that the burden of sin would not weigh me down. I would know you better so that the freedom of your mercy would enable me to fly. Forgive my sins, and restore me to wholeness, I pray. Amen.

10. Prayer: Holy God, hear my prayer. As I walk this spiritual life, I relentlessly question You. You heal someone's beloved, and I ask, "Why not this one too?" You shower food upon some who hunger, and I complain that my stomach is growling. Forgive me. Forgive me for my doubts and my limited sight. Open wide before me the expanse of Your grace, the embrace of Your love, and the wonder of Your healing power. Through Christ, I pray. Amen.

11. Prayer based on Psalm 8: Great God of all creation, who am I that you are mindful of me? You who set the stars in motion, who launched waves crashing against the shore, who knows the heights and depths of the world. Why do you bother with me? You count the hairs on my head and call me each by name. You give me Your wisdom and You uphold me by Your Spirit. You tend to me and care for me, and I do not understand why. I cannot grasp Your love for me, O God, for it is unlike me to be that loving and forgiving. Remind me once again of the sacredness of my ordinary, day-to-day life. By your Spirit, teach me to live truly as beings little lower than angels. In your mercy, O God, forgive who I am and bless who I will be. I pray in the peace of Christ. Amen.

12. Prayer: Holy God, hear my prayer. There is pain and there is sorrow, there are broken relationships and broken hearts. Sometimes I am the cause of those things. I have caused pain. I have broken the relationship. Sometimes I am simply a part of them – I am the one who suffers, I am the one who is broken. So I ask for Your forgiveness, and I ask for Your healing. Beyond that, I ask that You turn me from my former self to a person who reflects Your mercy and grace and love. Through Christ, who is my example, I pray. Amen.

13. Prayer: O God, when I look at You and then look at myself, I realize how tiny I am. But I am not so small that my actions are inconsequential. Sometimes a word of thanks brings warmth to a cold heart. Sometimes a choice to forgive opens up a new future for two people. Sometimes a thoughtless gesture slashes the heart. Sometimes my inaction leaves the world in its sorry state. I ask for your help. I ask that Your greatness infuse my smallness. I ask that I will not be captive to the wrong I do but changed by the mercy You grant. Amen.

14. Prayer: Holy God, I carry the burdens of words spoken that I wish I had not; of acts done in anger or pride that I wish I could undo. I hold grudges for a long time, and I do not reconcile with those from whom I am estranged. Forgive me. Forgive those words and deeds and inactions that cause You and others sorrow. Restore me, renew me, and give me the strength, courage, and love I need to be Your gracious child and effective witness. Amen.

15. In the midst of my sorrows and guilt, my doubt and regrets, I am bathed in light and beauty that comes from God. Trusting Your love for me, let me make my confession.

Prayer: God of love and mystery, make me whole. Heal the wounds I carry in me, and heal the wounds I have created in others. Make me strong in the broken places, that I will know of what I speak when I offer mercy and hope. Forgive me, and enable me to forgive in that same way. God of love and mystery, make me whole, through your Son Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

16. I have come this morning with full hearts – hearts that carry sorrow, worry, and guilt. In this time I offer my heart to God, remembering Christ’s invitation that all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens may come to Him. Trusting in that love, let me make my confession.

Prayer: Holy God, I offer You my life. That the good I have done will build up Your children, and not my own ego. That the harm I have caused will lead me to confession and atonement. That the anxiety that eats at me will be transformed into trust. That the hope You give will multiply and leaven the world like yeast. Righteous God, hear me, forgive me, reshape me, and love me, I pray. Amen.

17. Prayer: Holy God, I admit to You that all is not right – in my heart and in my world, I look to the darkness and not to the light. I look for what is broken, and not at what is being mended. I look to criticize and not to praise. I look at myself and not at You. Turn me around so that I look at the possibility, at hope, at promise, at grace, at healing, at Your love. This I pray in the strong name of Jesus. Amen.

18. Prayer: Holy God, remind me that I am loved when I find myself unlovable. Remind me that there is hope when all I see around me causes despair. Remind me that You sent the Prince of Peace when war and violence threaten. Remind me that You are the merciful judge when injustice seems to prevail. Remind me that You give me all I need to do Your work in the world. Remind me that You give me grace so that I can be graceful to others. I confess my doubt and trust in Your love. Amen.

19. The call to confession is always a call to experience God's mercy. In admitting the truth of my love to my loving Creator, I open myself to the experience of grace and healing. Trusting in that divine love, let me pray.

Prayer: Gracious God, at times when I hear the bad news of the world, it is as though I’ve been in the middle of a bad dream. Then I turn over and go back to sleep, ignoring the plight of Your children. It is hard to see tragedy and suffering. It is hard to admit my responsibility for the plagues of the world. It is hard to work for the good when the good seems so far off. So help me, dear Lord. Give me the courage to see clearly. Give me the strength to do my part. Give me the grace to forgive others as You have forgiven me. And give me faith to follow you wholeheartedly. This is my prayer, offered in the name of Christ. Amen.

20. Because faith is more than an intellectual pursuit, and because faith is really about how I live each day, in this time I can reflect on my living, on the good I have done, and the harm I have caused. Mindful of God's grace and love, let me make my confession.

Prayer: Dear God, have mercy on me for the wrong I have done. Show me where my service is needed. Help me set aside my prejudice and bias. Fill me with a longing to know You better. Forgive me for my lukewarm responses. Kindle in me the passion for Your work. Set me free from doubt and fear. Send me out to be Your people. This I pray in the name of Jesus, my leader, my guide, my Savior. Amen.

21. To confess is to admit – to admit something that might make me feel guilty or ashamed or sad. To confess to God is to await that word of grace, of forgiveness, of hope. Trusting in God's mercy, let me make my confession.

Prayer: Loving Creator, I admit that I like placing You into neat little boxes – the God of this, the God of that, the God of these people but not of those people. I admit I make You too small. I admit I try to make You manageable. Forgive my short-sightedness, my self-limitedness, and my stubbornness. Enlarge my heart, soul, and mind so that I let go of the need to define You so that I can embrace the joy of letting You be the One who loves. In Christ, I pray, Amen.

22. The call to confess is the call to lay down the burden I may carry, the burden of guilt, of judgment, of knowing I hurt another. I lay that burden down at the feet of the One who calls all of me to a life of forgiveness and repentance. Trusting in the mercy and love of God, let me pray.

Prayer: Savior, like a shepherd lead me; much I need Thy tender care. Forgive me for the wrong I know I have done: my neglect of the vulnerable; my misuse of Your gifts; my hoarding of things I am called to share. Forgive me for failing to do good, offering grace to the imperfect; forgiving those who have hurt me; seeing the good that surrounds me. Turn me away from that which harms, and turn me to You, the only One who heals. Amen.

23. Prayer: Holy God, I know when I have hurt another. I know when I have acted against Your rule of love. I know when I have neglected to do something that would help another person or help the world. I know that I sin and come before You in true repentance. I also know that You love me, forgive me, and call me to forgive others. So enable me in all of this to be Your servant in service and mission. Amen.

24. Prayer: Holy and wonderful God, hear my prayer. You alone enable me to be different – less judging, less selfish, less greedy; more hopeful, more graceful, more trusting. I would be different if I opened my heart to Your cleansing; if I opened my hands for You to direct them; if I would relinquish control of my feet to follow you. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, loosen my grip and remake me in Your image. Amen.

25. To confess to God is to do something holy – opening myself to the light and healing of the divine. Trusting in God's grace and mercy, let me admit the truth of my life.

Prayer: Holy God, forgive me for being so proud, so smart, so able that I forget how to be humble, how to learn, and how to seek help. Forgive me for being so smug, so anxious, so mean that I forget I am not always right, or in control, or good. Forgive me for being less than what You created me to be. Make me whole. This I pray in Jesus' strong name. Amen.

