

On The Move: vol 3, iss 5
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Give 1 vs. Give Up

When I came to Mt. Calvary, one of the first additions we made was the B1 Discipleship Model. From many strategic conversations in my previous churches, I was fully aware that our culture was going to become more and more unchurched, and the more unchurched we became, the harder it was going to be to help people know what to do as a disciple of Christ. The B1 model is merely a guide to help people who find themselves in an unfamiliar situation, and to contrast what the culture is speaking.

Lent is a tough season, even for a person connected to the church. St. Louis seems to cry out that people should be sacrificial during this time. Don't believe me? Just look at how many sales on fish you see advertised on Fridays. Have you ever stopped to think what that says to an unbeliever? I imagine they have ideas, like a fable or folktale, that giving up meat in a certain season makes you a better person.

After years of seeing how the historic catholic culture had impacted this city, I decided to research it. This Lenten tradition came from a suggestion from the pope himself. He proposed that giving up something was a good way to walk through the season of Lent, and suggested that giving up meat on Fridays would be beneficial. That is when this unique tradition was born. It impacts Lutheran circles as well. While in college at Concordia River Forest, I remember watching my roommate kiss his girlfriend in the cafeteria so she could get a taste of the ice cream she gave up for Lent (yuck). And closer to home, my son asks about it every year.

Yes, every year my son asks me what are we going to give up for Lent, and each year he listens as his father's passionate (boiling) heart speaks about *giving 1* (or adding something) instead of giving up something. Gently, I tell him sometimes we forget to do things, or speed through things that are beneficial for us, especially during this season. For example, how often do we speed through our prayer requests at night? (Just ask Audrey; she thinks mumbling our prayer requests is how it's supposed to be done.) We also talk about how we sometimes decide we are too tired to read the Bible before prayers. Lent is a good time to work on both of these. Finally, I remind him that none of these things, adding something or giving something up, changes the real meaning of Lent—a time to remember that Jesus was the only way we could be rescued from sin, death and the devil. But, in remembering this truth, we can get excited about adding some cool holy habits to our lives for this season and beyond.

There are a ton of ways you can *give 1*. You could say, "I have never checked out Helping Hand-Me-Downs, so this month I am going to check it out." You could say, "I am going to throw a party and invite a few of my neighbors over (Love 1)." You could start a Bible reading plan (Read 1). I often use the YouVersion App to help me with this. You can even find me on it and we can be friends. Maybe you notice your church attendance has been sporadic, so you could try and make it to church every Sunday in Lent (Worship 1). How

about stopping to pray multiple times throughout the day (Pray 1). See, you don't have to give up something; you can add 1 thing that would be beneficial to your story with Jesus.

One of our members gave her time and money. She took time to figure out that her company will match her gifts to the church. Because she took time to figure this out, our church will be able to transform our community by meeting our commitments and taking care of the gifts with which God has blessed us. This kind of gift alone will be able to meet our commitment to All Nations church this year, or pay for the salting and snow removal necessary to keep us fully functioning in the winter months, or cover our expenses for the 100+ kids who attend VBS at Mt. Calvary for free.

You don't have to give something up; this should not be anything that makes you feel guilty. If you do feel guilty, come to worship or meet with me and hear the message that Jesus came to take away that guilt. With the guilt gone you can ask, "How can I *give 1*?" If you still want to give something up, give up sugar. My health coach reminds me all the time how sugar negatively impacts/effects the body with which God has blessed me. Most of all, while this is a season of deep reflection, it is still a season of great joy; the story of Jesus is one that completely changes all of our stories.

God's Peace,
Pastor Will