

**Introduction:**

1. What have been your own experiences and attitudes regarding lent?
2. When are you most likely to blow your top?

**Understanding:**

3. One commentator said “Each of the four gospels is a passion narrative with a long introduction”. Why would the commentator say this? How does it connect to our *Give It Up* series?
4. What are some of the distorted views of lent that people have? How can lent be a useful spiritual discipline?
5. Was Jesus' cursing of the fig tree an inexplicable example of His anger? Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? What is the warning for us?
6. Read Amos 5:21-24. What are some things that Israel thinks it's doing for the Lord that displease the Lord? What is the Lord actually looking for? How can you connect both these negatives and the positives to living as a Christian in 2015?
7. There is a strong warning against Israel being religious in Isaiah 29:13. What does this religiosity look like? How does this have anything to do with us as Christians in 2015?
8. Jesus quotes Isaiah 26:6-7 when he clears the temple. Explain how and why foreigners are being allowed to participate in what was originally just for the Jews.
9. A guy says, "Wow, I love that scene with Jesus turning over the tables in the Temple. It shows that I'm just like Jesus – We both like blowing our top!" Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
10. Read Hebrews 10:19-22. How dare we think that we can approach God?
11. Pastor Dave talked about 3 signs that we need to stop trusting our religious activity and start trusting Christ. Which of these apply to you?
  - A. I feel like God loves me less when I miss church or morning Bible reading or small group. I am filled with vague guilt.
  - B. I can't say No to volunteer activities. Are you so duty-driven, that you are burned out?
  - C. My relationships are a mess...and my faith's not helping. Are you not seeing the love and the patience and forgiveness that make relationships better?

**Application:**

12. What might Jesus be calling you to give up? There are two big things that could mean.
  - A. It could be that you'll choose to fast from something for the next 40 days. Something that's not necessarily wrong or sinful, but it's something that you've gotten a little too dependent on. Is there something God is calling me to fast from? Even if you don't do it perfectly, it'll still be worth it.

- B. We might hear Jesus calling us to give up something deeper. Like our pride. Maybe our need to be in control. Maybe our fear. Something that has held us back spiritually, and this will be the time to repent of that and give it up.
13. Did you drop that rock into the big box on the floor? If so let that be a tangible reminder that you're giving that thing up, to make more room for Jesus.
14. This application is copied from the Chapel's "LENTEN GUIDE":

**READ:** Mark 11:12-18

**REFLECT:** Do you ever find yourself going through the motions in your spiritual walk? How so?

**FAST:** Replace one night's dinner with a time of focused prayer. Ask God to work in your heart this Lenten season, replacing religion with relationship.