A Simple Explanation of Lent
(from Irving Bible Church - www.irvingbible.org)

What is Lent?
The word Lent comes from a German word for “springtime.” The 40 days of Lent in the Christian calendar recall the 40 days of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. Since the fourth century A.D., the Church has observed Lent as a time of “spring cleaning for the soul.” During this season, we imitate Jesus’ withdrawal into the wilderness for 40 days. We focus on Christ’s battle with Satan that he waged in order to win our salvation. And we think about our temptations and sins and repent. Lent is a time to evaluate ourselves in light of God’s Word, to abandon sin, and to receive God’s forgiveness and strength. Lent has been called the season of “Bright Sadness” because it is a time of both celebration and mourning.

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Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1)
Every time Jesus responds to the three temptations of the devil in the wilderness, he quotes from Deuteronomy. “Man shall not live by bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3); “You shall not tempt the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 6:16); and “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve” (Deuteronomy 6:13). Moses is speaking to Israel about their time of testing in the wilderness. Look at Deuteronomy 8:2-3 and mark the parallels between Israel in the wilderness and Jesus in the wilderness:
“You shall remember all the ways which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness [as Jesus was led by the Spirit in the wilderness] these forty years [as Jesus was there forty days], that He might humble you, testing you [as Jesus was “tested”], to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you be hungry [as Jesus was made hungry by his fasting], and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:2-3)
God obviously intends a parallel between Jesus and the people of Israel in the wilderness. Jesus endured His “wilderness experience” to contrast that of Israel and to show us how to negotiate ours. How can we keep our eyes on the prize, avoid moral failures, and honor Christ with the fruit of obedient lives? By following in the footsteps of The Master. Lent is the Church’s annual “wilderness experience” with Christ. He went to the desert, and so should we.