



**CHRISTMAS  
ADVENT  
DEVOTIONAL**



**hope  
peace  
joy  
love**

We're excited for you to join us on our Christmas Advent Devotional. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, we'll explore the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Each day, you'll have a Scripture reading and reflection questions. This is great to do for your own personal devotions or together as family. We pray that you will deepen your relationship with Jesus this Christmas season.

## Preparation

### Saturday, December 1

*A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

- Isaiah 40:3-5

This prophecy in Isaiah spoke of the eventual coming of God stepping into humanity - the coming of Jesus.

This month, we prepare to celebrate that day that changed history. By going through this Christmas Advent devotional, you'll also be preparing your heart for what Jesus will say to you and do through you.

Christmas can be a very busy time of the year, and the meaning in the celebration can get lost.

### Reflection Questions

What do you need to do to prepare your heart for Jesus? What are the mountains in your life that need to be made low? What rough grounds need to be made level?

## Week 1: Hope

### Sunday, December 2

*“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”*

- Isaiah 42:1-4

This prophecy about Jesus describes how he will bring justice to the nations and people will find their hope in him. One of the reasons for this hope is that Jesus will not falter or be discouraged - he will fulfill what he sets out to do.

This week, we will take a look at the different reasons we can put our hope in Jesus and the different ways we can live out that hope.

### Reflection Questions

Why do you put your hope in Jesus? How has that hope affected your life?

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### Monday, December 3

*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf.*

- Hebrews 16:19-20

Our hope is secure no matter what happens in life. That's because Jesus, whom our hope is anchored to, has taken us into the presence of God. Our souls are in his hands, and he is trustworthy.

### Reflection Questions

Knowing that Jesus has given you direct access to the God of the universe, how does that affect your prayer life? How does it affect your outlook on life?

**Tuesday, December 4**

*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

- Isaiah 40: 29-31

The struggles and stresses of life can wear us down. This is especially true during the holidays. But when we our hope is in God for strength, He promises to lift us up and sustain us.

**Reflection Questions**

What things in your life are currently wearing you down? How has God renewed your strength in the past, and how can you allow Him to do it for you now?

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**Wednesday, December 5**

*For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

- Jeremiah 29:11-13

God has plan for each of us and intends for us to thrive. However, we can only access that life if we pursue God with all of our hearts.

**Reflection Questions**

Have you given up on the plan God has for your life, or do you still have hope that He will work through you? How can you seek Jesus more this week?

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**Thursday, December 6**

*To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

- Colossians 1:27

God says that He will reveal a mystery to those who don't know Him - a secret about hope in life. That mystery is that Jesus lives inside of you, and that will bring hope to people around you.

### **Reflection Questions**

Who in your community is living without hope and doesn't know God? How can you show them who Jesus is through your life?

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### **Friday, December 7**

*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

- 1 Peter 3:15-16

If we are followers of Jesus, our lives should be so filled with hope that people around us ask us why we're so hopeful. But when we respond, that answer needs to be full of hope and love as well, not judgement or condemnation.

### **Reflection Questions**

When other people look at your life, would they say that you are full of hope? How can you live in a more hopeful way so people around you wonder about your life and ask?

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### **Saturday, December 8**

*And again, Isaiah says,*

*"The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope."*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

- Romans 15:12-13

In this prophecy, it says that people from all nations will put their hope in Jesus. That's the reason Jesus came to earth - to be the hope of the world. Then it talks about that hope being inside of us and overflowing out of our lives. This is how the whole world

will see the hope of Jesus - when they see the hope inside of us and the actions that we take because of we have hope.

### **Reflection Questions**

If hope is overflowing in your life, what would that look like? What ways can you share the hope of Jesus not only with those in your community, but also with the “nations?”

## **Week 2: Peace**

### **Sunday, December 9**

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

- Luke 2:13-14

When the angels made their first appearance to humanity to announce the birth of Jesus, their first message was that there would be peace on earth. They were marking a new era in human history.

But as we look back on history, the world hasn't been very peaceful. So what did the angels mean? What kind of peace were they proclaiming?

This week, we will explore the peace that Jesus brings and how we can experience that peace in our lives.

### **Reflection Questions**

When you think of peace, what does that mean to you? What areas of your life, or the world, need to have peace?

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### **Monday, December 10**

*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

- Isaiah 53:5

It was because of our sins that Jesus had to come and suffer. The punishment that we should have received, he took for us. Through his suffering we are healed and have peace.

### **Reflection Questions**

What kind of peace did Jesus' suffering bring? What difference does that peace make in our lives?

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## **Tuesday, December 11**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- *Philippians 4:6-7*

There are a lot of different situations in life that can bring us anxiety. We're told to not worry, but instead, to bring our anxieties to God and He will give us peace.

### **Reflection Questions**

What is causing you stress and anxiety in your life right now? What would your life look like if you gave those over to God and experienced peace?

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## **Wednesday, December 12**

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

- *John 14:27*

Challenges in life can be overwhelming. When Jesus said this to His disciples, they were about to face the most difficult time of their lives. Yet Jesus says to not be afraid, but that His peace enable our hearts to overcome.

### **Reflection Questions**

What in your life is overwhelming or causing you fear? How does peace help you to endure through those hardships?

**Thursday, December 13**

*But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

*Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.*

- James 3:17-18

Peace comes from heaven and is a gift of God. He calls us to be peacemakers, and those who seek to create peace will build a character and lifestyle that is holy to God.

**Reflection Questions**

What does it mean to be a peacemaker? Are there people in your life that you be make peace with? Are there communities that you need to speak peace into? How can you do that?

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**Friday, December 14**

*For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

- Ephesians 2:14-18

Jesus came to bring peace between different people groups. Specifically in this passage, it was to unite Jews and non-Jews together into a single Church. But it also applies to different ethnic and social groups as well. God says he will remove hostility and give everyone to peace, both near and far.

**Reflection Questions**

Is there any bitterness or hostility in your heart towards other people groups, whether it's race, nationality, culture, or location? If Jesus came to unite people into one body, what actions can to take to reconcile and make peace with other people groups?



## Saturday, December 15

*Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I." How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

- Isaiah 52:6-7

God speaks of a day when people will know Him and be in relationship with Him. That comes when we go and proclaim peace and salvation to everyone. He says those people are beautiful because they are bringing people into relationship with Jesus.

### Reflection Questions

Who can you proclaim the peace and good news of Jesus to? Think of a few people, start praying for them, and make an intention to share with them.

## Week 3: Joy

### Sunday, December 16

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.*

- Luke 2:8-11

Christmastime is naturally a season of joy and celebration. But that joy is often found in temporary things, despite how good those things may be. We find joy in relationships, in gifts, in parties, in decorations, and everything else that comes with Christmas.

But when the angels came and declared joy of all people, there was only one reason for that joy - the birth of a Savior.

This week, we'll look at the why we can be joyful and how we can share that joy with others.

**Reflection Questions**

What brings you joy this Christmas? How does that joy compare to the level of joy you have in Jesus?

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**Monday, December 17**

*For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

- *Hebrews 12:2*

Jesus finds joy in something that's not joyful. In fact, it's the complete opposite of joy - suffering. Yet that joy wasn't in the crucifixion itself, but it was what motivated him and pulled him through the suffering. You were his joy, the reason he chose to go to the cross.

**Reflection Questions**

Has it ever occurred to you that you bring joy to God? How does that reality impact the way you live?

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**Tuesday, December 18**

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.*

- *James 1:2-3*

Our source of joy also comes from something unexpected - trials. But like Jesus, it's not the actual struggle that brings us joy, but rather the end result. For us, it's perseverance. Our joy is found in having the faith to withstand anything in this world.

**Reflection Questions**

What trials are you going through in your life, and what is your response to them? How can you react to trials in such a way that strengthens your faith, and ultimately brings you joy?

**Wednesday, December 19**

*Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

- James 1:8-9

It's easy to find joy in our human relationships, but we can also find joy in God even though we can't see him. Our faith in Jesus, though we don't see Him, will result in our salvation, and for this, we have joy.

**Reflection Questions**

Do you find it difficult to love or find joy in a God that is invisible? What would your life look like if it were filled with inexpressible joy?

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**Thursday, December 20**

*You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

- Psalm 16:11

Following God is meant to be joyful. Here He equates life with joy and pleasure, and the source of that is being in His presence.

**Reflection Questions**

What does it mean to be in the presence of God? Do you view God as someone who wants you to have joy?

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**Friday, December 21**

*This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."*

- Nehemiah 8:10

In this story, when the Israelites heard the scriptures read to them, they wept. But Nehemiah tells them to be joyful, and that joy is found in God. To honor God on a holy day is to be filled with joy.

**Reflection Questions**

Have you ever thought of joy as a command from God? If joy were a measure of our spirituality or closeness with God, where would you be?

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**Saturday, December 22**

*Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. For the Lord Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth.*

- *Psalm 47:1-2*

God is King over all the earth, and commands all the nations to find their joy in Him. That means that the joy given to us is not only for us, but it's for the world.

**Reflection Questions**

Is the joy in your life evident to others around you? How can you share the joy of God with people?

## Week 4: Love

**Sunday, December 23**

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

- *John 3:16-17*

This is why God sent Jesus into the world and why we celebrate Him. God loves us. He loves the entire world and came to save it. Jesus is the ultimate display of God's love.

As we celebrate Christmas this week, we'll reflect on the incredible love of God and how that love flows through us into the world.

**Reflection Questions**

How you celebrate Christmas is a direct reflection of your relationship with God. Have you believed in Jesus as your savior? What does celebrating Christmas look like if you understand how much God sacrificed for you?

**Monday, December 24**

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- *Romans 8:38-39*

Nothing in this world can separate us from God's love. He proved that by stepping into space and time as a human being and making the ultimate sacrifice. Even our darkest sin was not enough to hold back His love.

**Reflection Questions**

Are there things in your life that you feel make you unlovable? Take some time to acknowledge that Jesus has broken down those barriers to love you.

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**Tuesday, December 25**

*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- *Romans 5:6-8*

The ultimate expression of love is to give up your life for someone, but it's rare to do, even for someone you love. Yet God shows us His love by dying for us - sinners. As we celebrate Christmas today, be reminded that there is nothing we did to deserve God's love. When we were at our worst, Jesus showed us love. This is the Christmas story.

**Reflection Questions**

Does the death of Jesus magnify or diminish the Christmas story for you? Knowing that Jesus was born to die for us, how can we live in gratitude of His love?

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**Wednesday, December 26**

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

- *John 13:34-35*

Jesus gives a new command to his followers: to love one another. But loving people isn't new, God has always commanded that. What makes this different is to love each other in the same way that Jesus loved us - that's a whole new level of love. This is how people will know that we are followers of Jesus.

### **Reflection Questions**

Do you love those in your spiritual community to the level that Jesus is asking for? If people looked at the way you treated others, would they know you were a follower of Jesus?

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### **Thursday, December 27**

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.*

- *Mark 12:30-31*

This is the simplest command that God gives, dating back to the Old Testament. Love God and love people. In this passage, loving others isn't limited to those in your church, but your neighbor. And Jesus defines your neighbor as anyone you meet, even those you don't like.

### **Reflection Questions**

How can you love God with everything that you are? Who are the neighbors in your that you can show love to?

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### **Friday, December 28**

*But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

- *Matthew 5:44-48*

In this section, Jesus takes love even further. Not only are we to love our church and love strangers, He tells us to also love our enemies. He says it's easy to love people who love you back, everyone does it. But we are to love even the people who hurt us.

**Reflection Questions**

Are there people that you dislike, feel threatened by, or have been hurt by? How can you love them?

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**Saturday, December 29**

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

*1 John 4:7-8*

Love is so much more than a command or a good thing to do. Love is our connection to God, because God is love. We cannot truly celebrate Christmas without loving people. We cannot follow Jesus without loving people. We cannot know God without loving people. If love is not in our lives, then neither is God.

**Reflection Questions**

How would you rate your love for other people? How can you increase the amount of love that flows from your life?

Congratulations on completing this Christmas Advent Devotional. We hope that you were able to deepen your experience this Christmas and expand your faith.

We would love to hear how this advent devotional went for you. If it has impacted your life, please share with us by emailing [info@guidelines.org](mailto:info@guidelines.org)

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