

AWAITING THE KING



FAMILY DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR  
*Advent*

*Written by Alicia Searl*

# AWAITING *the King*



“SO CHRIST WAS SACRIFICED ONCE TO TAKE AWAY THE SINS OF MANY; AND HE WILL APPEAR A SECOND TIME, NOT TO BEAR SIN, BUT TO BRING SALVATION TO THOSE WHO ARE WAITING FOR HIM. “

-HEBREWS 9:28

Advent marks the four weeks leading up to Christmas and calls for us to set our hearts and minds on the true meaning of this sweet season. As believers, we celebrate the birth of Christ, and with Advent, we hold fast to the truth of His return, “awaiting” the day of His second coming.

This verse encourages us to live with hope, peace, joy, and love. These are also the weekly themes of Advent as we prepare for God entering this world in the flesh, making history for all mankind. O Come, Emmanuel!

As we enter into another beautiful time of year that beckons us to posture our hearts in prayerful devotion, allow this family devotional to be your guide. Each week will be filled with the true meaning of Christmas as you journey through five days of meaningful scriptures, purposeful passages, and precious prayers that will help your family unwrap the real gift of Christmas – Jesus!





# Table of CONTENTS

## WEEK ONE: HOPE

- Day 1 – Hope Fulfills Prophecy
- Day 2 – Anticipating the Coming Messiah
- Day 3 – Worldly Hope vs. Biblical Hope
- Day 4 – Jesus Gives Us Hope
- Day 5 – Jesus Will Come Again!
- Weekend Reflection - Living in Hope

## WEEK TWO:

- Day 1 – Finding Peace in a Troubled World
- Day 2 – Mary’s Humble Obedience
- Day 3 – Joseph’s Trust in the Lord
- Day 4 – Journey to Bethlehem
- Day 5 – Jesus is the Prince of Peace
- Weekend Reflection - Unsurpassable Peace

## WEEK THREE:

- Day 1 - Happiness Vs. Joy
- Day 2 - The Angels Message
- Day 3 - The Shepherds Respond
- Day 4 - Joy in the Trials
- Day 5 - Joy to the World
- Weekend Reflection - Rejoicing in the Nearness of Christ

## WEEK FOUR:

- Day 1 - God Is Love
- Day 2 - God’s Love Breaks Silence
- Day 3 - Jesus’ Love Saves Us from a Fallen World
- Day 4 - Loving Like Jesus
- Day 5 - Happy Birthday, Jesus!
- Weekend Reflection - In the Quiet, Love Was Born





# WEEK ONE: HOPE

DAY 1

## HOPE FULFILLS PROPHECY

iBelieve

### SCRIPTURE READING

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. - Isaiah 7:14

### REFLECTION

This first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the Christmas season and the weeks leading to the birth of Jesus. This week, we will light the first candle, which signifies “hope.” Just as the prophets in the Old Testament told of a coming Messiah and awaited His arrival (Micah 5:2 and Isaiah 7:14), we learn in the New Testament that the prophecy was fulfilled and that our God is so very faithful (Luke 2)!

Scripture tells us that hope is the confidence we have in Christ based on His past, present, and future promises proclaimed throughout His Word. Promises that were foretold in the Old Testament that came to be in the New Testament, and the promise of His return. The theme of God’s love is hope, which calls for us to live differently and with expectation.

What is hope? How would you define it for a non-believer? How can you share hope this Christmas season with others?

### PRAYER

God,

*As we enter into this season of Christmas, please open our hearts to receive the hope You give us in Your Word.*

*Amen.*



# Space to Process ...



Write today's verse below:



Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.



A festive winter scene featuring several lit candles in wooden holders, some with numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The scene is decorated with pinecones, evergreen branches, a paper Christmas tree, and a star. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape.

THE THEME OF  
GOD'S LOVE IS

*hope*

WHICH CALLS  
FOR US TO LIVE

DIFFERENTLY

AND WITH

*expectation.*

Day 2

## ANTICIPATING THE COMING MESSIAH

### SCRIPTURE READING

But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

- Romans 8:25

It can be hard to wait for Christmas, and all the built-up anticipation can sometimes be too much to bear! Yet, as we count down the days and eagerly await the moment we get to hug long-lost family members, hang out with friends, enjoy time off school, enjoy a bunch of sweet treats, and tear into the gifts under the tree, we can miss the purpose of “waiting.”



Yet, in Romans 8:25, Paul reminds us that hope is found in the waiting and that patience through adversity creates a deeper faith. Just as the people 2,000 years ago awaited a Messiah and held on to hope that He would one day appear, we can also eagerly await the day to honor and celebrate His birth.

### REFLECTION

Do you find it hard to wait for Christmas day? How can you practice patience this week?

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### PRAYER

God,  
Thank you for the gift of hope. As we eagerly await celebrating Your glorious birth, help us remember that You are the real reason for the season as we grow with excitement to honor You. Amen.



# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.





Day 3

## WORLDLY HOPE VS. BIBLICAL HOPE

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**SCRIPTURE READING:**  
**NOW FAITH IS CONFIDENCE IN WHAT WE HOPE FOR AND ASSURANCE ABOUT WHAT WE DO NOT SEE. - HEBREWS 11:1**



We serve a God that holds vastly different views than the ways of this world. Many call it God's upside-down kingdom. For example: the first shall be last, love your enemies, the meek will inherit the kingdom of God, and humility and service are far greater than power. These are not natural actions and can be difficult to carry out if we don't have guidance from God and the Holy Spirit.

Hope is no different. Where the world's view of hope may revolve around our selfish ambition or wishful thinking, the Bible holds a vastly different definition. Biblical hope comes from the assurance of what we can not see, but have faith in. It's found in trusting and knowing that God is true and faithful. Once again, this may not be our natural response as we are innately sinful (Psalm 51:5), but, as believers we are called to live in this world but not become consumed by it (Romans 12:2). That's because we are God's most prized possession, set apart, chosen, and meant to be a light in a dark world (1 Peter 2:9 and Deuteronomy 14:2).

### **REFLECTION**

What are some examples of worldly hope? What about Biblical hope? How can you find real hope in Christ this season and not be swayed by the world?

### **PRAYER**

God,  
We are so thankful that You are a God of hope. May we have hearts that embrace the Biblical view of hope and have faith to fully trust You with what we do not know and what we cannot see.  
Amen.

# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.

# Day 4 JESUS GIVES US HOPE



## SCRIPTURE READING

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

-John 4:13-14

One of the longest conversations that Jesus had with another human being was not with one of his beloved disciples or even His mother, but with a Samaritan woman. A woman that was cast out and rejected by many for her sinful choices and behavior. Yet, as she was drawing water from the communal well, Jesus just so happened to be there. Did He go out of His way to speak to her? Yes. This meeting was intentional and held a meaningful purpose, just as with everything Jesus did. Jesus wanted to offer this broken woman that was carrying guilt and shame - hope. Hope that was far more than the water in that well, quenching her thirst.



Everyone needs water to live, but Jesus offers us “living water” which allows us to live differently and secures us a spot in heaven. When we sin and go against God’s laws, Jesus gives us a redemption story. He tells us that if we believe in Him there is hope.

## REFLECTION

How does the story of the Samaritan woman give you hope? Do you need to confess a sin and let Jesus cover you in His endless grace today?

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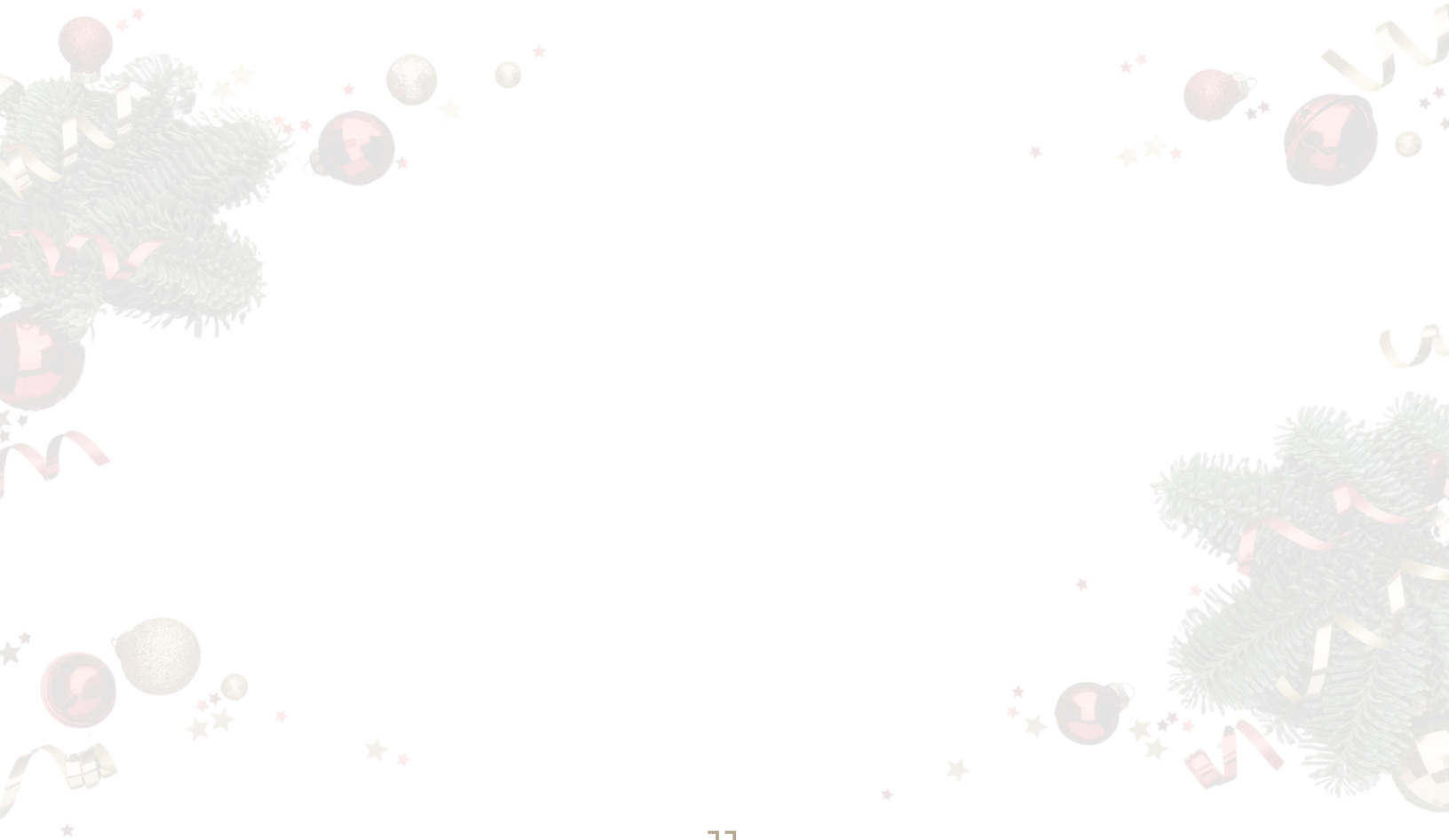
## PRAYER

*God,  
I give you my heart today and ask that  
You lead and guide me to make  
choices that honor You. Thank you for  
being our “living water” and granting  
us mercy and grace.  
Amen.*

# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.



# Day 5 JESUS WILL COME AGAIN

## SCRIPTURE READING

While we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. - Titus 2:13

According to Scripture, Jesus will return. That is a certainty! This future event is referred to as the “blessed hope” we have as Christ followers. Titus 2 is a message for the church and body of believers. It’s a profound message that declares how we are to live until Jesus returns. While we wait with hope and expectation, we must live on purpose on this earth until we are called to our eternal home.

Just as Jesus reassured His disciples before He was crucified, telling them He would be going to His Father’s house and preparing a room for them (John 14:1-3), He delivers the same message of hope for us!

Jesus has paved the way for us to get into heaven.

What will heaven be like? Well, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 2:9 that our thoughts cannot even begin to comprehend the depth of God’s eternal kingdom. That because our ways are not God’s ways, and our wisdom and knowledge cannot even come close to fully understanding the glory and riches that await us after this life. Yet God’s Word gives us the assurance in knowing that what we see, hear, and experience in this life, will fail in comparison when we are walking in His presence!

## REFLECTION

Are you excited about Jesus’ return? What do you think heaven will be like?

## PRAYER

God,

*As we await Your return, teach us Your ways and give us opportunities to share Your love and serve others. We long to honor and glorify You until Your glorious return.*

*Amen.*

# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.

# Weekend Reflection



## LIVING IN HOPE

As you close out this first week of Advent, take a moment to pause and reflect on the incredible hope we have in Jesus. The same God who fulfilled His promise through the birth of Christ is the One who continues to keep His promises today. Hope is not just a feeling — it's the confident assurance that God is faithful, even when we can't see the full picture. This week's readings remind us that hope is found not in the things of this world, but in the unchanging truth of God's Word and the eternal life we have through His Son.

Just as the prophets awaited the Messiah and believers now await His return, we are called to live each day with hearts full of expectation and joy. Let this hope shape the way you speak, love, and serve this Christmas season. Light your Advent candle, pray together as a family, and thank God for the living hope found only in Jesus Christ — our Savior, our Redeemer, and our Coming King.

## PRAYER

God,  
Thank You for being the source of our hope. As we rest this weekend, remind us that Your promises never fail. Help us live with confident expectation and share the hope of Jesus with others.  
Amen.




# Space to Process ...

Write the verse that impacted you the most below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God has spoken to you this week:







# WEEK TWO: PEACE

## DAY 1

### FINDING PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD

**iBelieve**

#### **SCRIPTURE READING**

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

#### **REFLECTION**

It isn't hard to see that we live in a broken and hurting world. It brings consequences in many forms. People can disappoint us or break our hearts, situations can leave us scared or confused, and the news of certain global events can raise more questions than provide answers.

During the Passover Meal, Jesus delivers a warning and packs a powerful bunch of realistic truth to His beloved disciples the night before He was crucified. Since the fall of man, this world has been groveling for peace. Yet, as believers, we must realize that the peace the world gives is an illusion, and is simply fleeting, temporary, and based on personal happiness.

Thankfully, Jesus offers us real hope in a world hungry for peace. The peace Jesus extends to us is lasting, comforting, atoning, and filled with purpose. It allows us to face a chaotic world knowing that Jesus has already overcome the battle when He suffered for our sins on the cross. So, take heart and know that God will never leave or forsake you, and His peace is more than enough to see you through whatever adversities you currently face.

What is the promise Jesus declares in John 16:33? How is the peace Jesus offers different from the “peace” the world gives?

#### **PRAYER**

*God,*

*We are so very thankful that You are a God of peace. Please help us abide in You to find lasting comfort when the world feels uneasy or our lives become consumed with turmoil or trouble. Open our hearts, minds, and homes to welcome the sense of Your true and perfect peace.*

*Amen.*

# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.



JESUS OFFERS

*real hope*

IN A WORLD

*hungry  
for peace.*

## Day 2

# MARY'S HUMBLE OBEDIENCE

### SCRIPTURE READING

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

-Luke 1:38

Mary is often seen as the bold and compassionate heroine in the Christmas story, but she was actually not much older than 14 or 15 years of age and was likely fearful and confused when given the extraordinary task to carry the Son of God! Yet, while she was extremely young, as it was customary at the time for families to be brought together by prearranged marriages to protect and secure future generations, she was still "favored by God." Meaning that she was the recipient of His kind and unmerited blessing because God saw the nature of her humble heart and her willingness to trust Him and His perfect timing.

When she was visited by the angel, Gabriel, and given the news of her upcoming birth to the Messiah, she shows her humanity in her initial reaction of shock and concern (Luke 1:29 and 34), but then willingly surrenders to God's plan.

I'm sure she felt inadequate and incapable, but she also chose to trust the Lord. Even more, she chose to worship, praise, and sing of God's goodness, mercy, and grace in Luke 1:46-55. While she could have easily been faced with the devastating consequences of an unplanned pregnancy and grown with worry, concern, or fear of humiliation, she radiates joy. What a beautiful example of peace she gives us!

### REFLECTION

Read Mary's story in Luke 1:26-38. What do you notice about Mary's response and her humble obedience to the Lord? How can you humbly submit to God this season?

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### PRAYER

God,  
We are so thankful for the Virgin Mary and her willingness to submit to Your will in a time that changed the course of history for all mankind. As we celebrate this season, may we have a soft and willing heart that says "yes" to You, as we strive to be Your humble servant.  
Amen.





# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.

Day 3

## JOSEPH'S TRUST IN THE LORD

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### SCRIPTURE READING:

AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM IN A DREAM AND SAID, "JOSEPH SON OF DAVID, DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TAKE MARY HOME AS YOUR WIFE, BECAUSE WHAT IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND YOU ARE TO GIVE HIM THE NAME JESUS, BECAUSE HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS. MATTHEW 1:20-21

Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, holds a story that comes with faith, honor, and humility. And God chose him, just as He chose Mary. The Lord knew the heart of Joseph and that he would be able to carry out this plan that came with a divine purpose to save all mankind.

However, just as Mary's initial response came with many emotions, upon first hearing of Mary's unexpected pregnancy, the news devastated him. He wanted to quietly divorce her so as not to cause shame or worse within their community (Matthew 1:19). But then God revealed His plan. Joseph was visited by the angel in his sleep and given the purpose of Mary's pregnancy, and he responded with sheer faithfulness. He immediately took Mary home, honoring and protecting her until Jesus was born. Joseph's faithfulness and trust in the Lord show us that peace is found in obeying God in every circumstance of our lives, even when it doesn't make sense and is truly difficult.

### REFLECTION

Read Joseph's story in Matthew 1:18-25. How would you describe Joseph? Mary and Joseph must have felt so ill-equipped, knowing that they were about to be the parents of the Savior of the world, yet they trusted God. How can you surrender to the Lord and trust Him and His plan for your life?

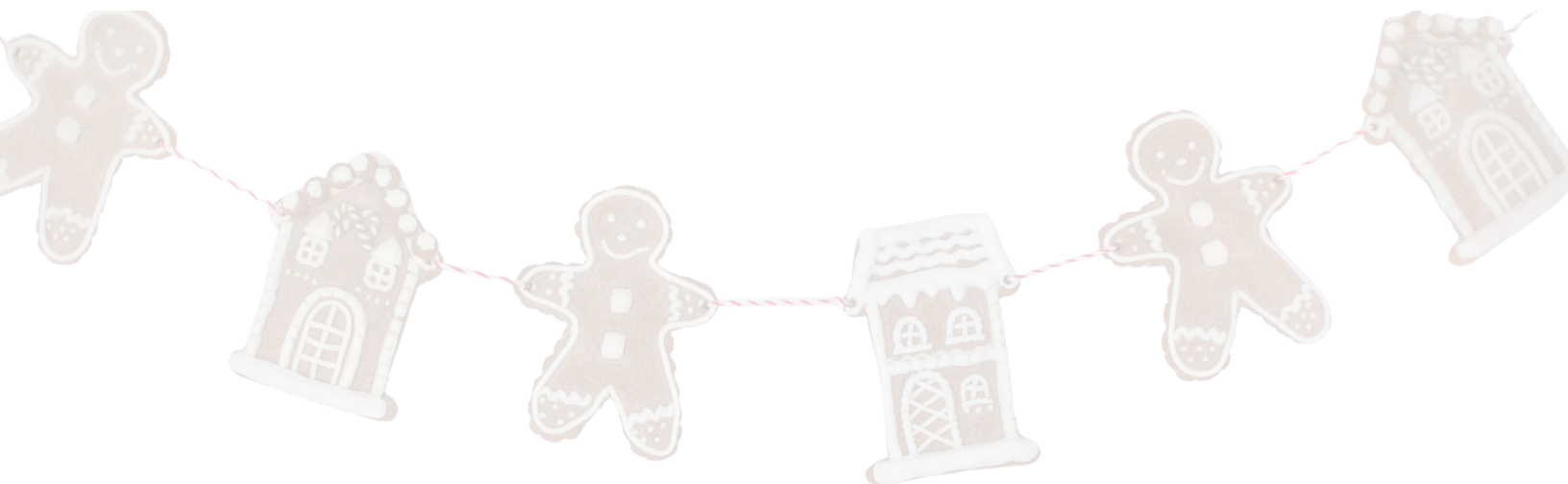
### PRAYER

God,  
Your Word is covered with stories of real people who struggled with unimaginable life situations, yet still had hope and peace. Thank you for Joseph's story and his example of courageous faithfulness. May we learn from him and other stories as we remember to trust in You. Amen.

# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.



# Day 4 JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM



## SCRIPTURE READING

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup>He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

-Luke 2:4-5

Have you ever wondered what Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem must have been like? Honestly, not very much is given to us in scripture other than they journeyed up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David in Luke 2:4. However, a map tells us that in a straight line, that trip one way would be about 65 miles, and in between would have been places of desolate desert areas and rough terrain as they finally had to venture up to the hilltop of Bethlehem.

However, I'm guessing they didn't travel in a perfect line and came across many obstacles and even dangers along the way. Not to mention, they likely stopped to rest, eat, and tend to Mary, who was about to give birth.

The trip obviously came with quite a few stressors and likely took about a week. This could have easily robbed their peace. Yet, their faithfulness in God kept them both safe from the many hazardous and grueling trips, and their spirits lifted so they could make way for the coming Messiah.

## REFLECTION

What do you think the trip was like for Mary and Joseph? Does it give you peace for your own walk in life? How so?

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## PRAYER

God,  
*You are such a good and faithful Father, and we are grateful for Your protection and provision. Just as You safely brought Mary and Joseph out of Nazareth into the town of Bethlehem, we believe You pave the way for us. Please grant us peace on our path. Amen.*





# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.

# Day 5 JESUS IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE

## SCRIPTURE READING

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. -Isaiah 9:6

While it's easy to glaze over the genealogy of Jesus, it's important to understand that the roadmap to His birth comes with a long list of humble roots (Mathew 1:1-17). Yep! Jesus came from a long line of meek, mild, and desperately lost people. So, what does that mean exactly, and why is that important?

Well, for starters, it gives us a better understanding of the nature of God and that He chooses unlikely characters to fulfill His purpose. Those who are meek and lowly, but faithful and true. Those who are broken and lost, but willing to surrender and submit. Basically, God uses sinners for a greater purpose. He uses us! This is how we fit into the narrative.

As faithful followers of Jesus, we honor Him as the real "reason for the season" because He is our true connection to God, the Father. When we have the right relationship with God, we live in a way that honors and extends His love, as we aim to live in peace with one another. It all starts with seeking Jesus, the "Prince of Peace!"

When we accept Jesus as the Son of God who came into this world as an innocent baby, grew into a holy and sinless man with a purpose to restore the broken, heal the sick, give hope to the lost, and provide a pathway to ensure an eternal destiny, we see Christmas as a call to action - to give and exchange peace. A peace that comes with a priceless purpose!

## REFLECTION

Do you believe that God can and will use you for a bigger and greater plan? How can you embrace this truth and share the gift of peace with others this holiday season?



# Space to Process ...



## **PRAYER**

God,

*As we draw closer to Christmas day, provide opportunities for us to share Your love and extend peace with others to grow Your kingdom. We love you and are so thankful to be a part of your family.*

*Amen.*

**Write today's verse below:**

**Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.**

# Weekend Reflection



## UNSURPASSABLE PEACE

As we conclude this second week of Advent, our hearts turn again to the gentle glow of the Peace candle. It reminds us that peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of Christ. Just as Mary and Joseph trusted God in uncertainty and journeyed faithfully to Bethlehem, we too are invited to walk with quiet courage in a world that often feels anything but peaceful.

This peace does not come from the world, but from the Prince of Peace, whose name is Jesus. It is a peace rooted in His promises, steady in trials, and anchored in eternal hope. As you reflect on this past week, ask the Lord to calm your heart, steady your steps, and prepare your home and soul to receive Him with joy.

## PRAYER


Heavenly Father,  
Thank You for the peace that only You can give. As we reflect on the journey of Mary and Joseph and the birth of our Savior, quiet our hearts and make us ready to receive Christ anew. Help us walk in obedience and trust, even when the road is hard. Fill our homes with Your presence and our days with the peace that passes all understanding. In Jesus' name, Amen.



# Space to Process

Write the most impactful verse  
from this week below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and  
process what God has spoken to you, this  
week.



# WEEK THREE: PEACE

## DAY 1 HAPPINESS VS. JOY

**iBelieve**

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” - John 15:11

### **REFLECTION**

Our human nature naturally craves happiness and the rush of positive vibes that emotion brings, yet Jesus tells us to seek joy. So, is there a difference between the two? While the Bible doesn't clearly note the difference between happiness and joy, we do know that happiness is generally based on our circumstances and can be fleeting, even misleading. Happiness can also miss the element of God's goodness, mercy, and grace. For example, you may be “happy” when your friends are nice to you, but how do you respond when they are not being so gracious and kind?

Joy, on the other hand, comes with a deep inner reflection, allowing us to embrace happiness with permission to experience other feelings such as hurt, pain, grief, or sorrow. Joy allows us to trust God, finding strength in Him, not our current situation, knowing that He gives us a means to live this life abundantly (John 14:6). When life brings trials or relationship confuse or hurt us, we can turn to God for wisdom and discernment, therefor “rejoicing” in His truth that covers us in His love and grace. It makes room for God to prune and grow us as well (John 15:2-5).

What makes you happy? Can you find joy in those moments, trusting God, especially if life takes a detour?

### **PRAYER**

God,

We want to rejoice in You alone and experience the love You so graciously give through pure joy. Help us exude happiness and spread joy this holiday season with our friends, family, and those in need of Your mercy, love, and grace.

Amen.

# Space to Process ...

This third Sunday, we will light another candle on the Advent wreath to represent good tidings of comfort and “joy.” While the past two weeks we have lit purple candles to honor hope and peace, preparing our hearts for the coming Messiah, this week we light a pink candle, often known as the “Shepherd’s Candle” which prompts us to rejoice in the truth that our Lord is near, just as the shepherds did upon hearing the heavenly host declare of Jesus’ birth. As we continue to unpack the precious Christmas story, may it awaken your own heart to see the joy this season brings and allow you to behold the wonders of our awesome God!

**Write today’s verse below:**

**Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.**



OUR  
Lord  
IS  
near.



# Day 2

## THE ANGELS MESSAGE

### SCRIPTURE READING

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

The angels appear several times throughout the Christmas story and weave it altogether quite beautifully as they deliver powerful announcements, provide promises and blessings, and offer guidance and protection to all the characters involved. The angels appeared before Zacharias, Mary, and Joseph, as well as the shepherds.

The angelic encounter we see with the shepherds, proclaiming the birth of Jesus, shows how God uses angels for a divine purpose, as they brought good news of great "joy!" The angels are teaching us how to rejoice in the Lord! The best part is that angels are still at work today, moving in the lives of God's people. Hebrews 1:14 tells us that angels are servants of God and still deliver messages through His authority.

### REFLECTION

Read the multiple interactions the angels had with the characters in the Christmas story by reading Luke 1 and Luke 2. What do you think about the angels in the Christmas story?

How can you rejoice in the Lord this week?

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### PRAYER

God,  
You alone are the creator of all, and we are in awe of the wonders of Your hands.

As the angels play such an intricate role in the story of Jesus' birth, help us look to their example on how to praise You in this season.

Amen.



# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.

Day 3

## THE SHEPHERDS RESPOND

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### SCRIPTURE READING:

WHEN THE ANGELS HAD LEFT THEM AND GONE INTO HEAVEN, THE SHEPHERDS SAID TO ONE ANOTHER, "LET'S GO TO BETHLEHEM AND SEE THIS THING THAT HAS HAPPENED, WHICH THE LORD HAS TOLD US ABOUT." -LUKE 2: 15



Can you imagine the sight and wonder the shepherds beheld the night the heavens declared the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ? One minute they are tending to their flock, then all of a sudden, the curtain of heaven is pulled back, and the most wonderful news is given to them – shepherds.

There is so much significance here. While we may picture shepherds as loving and nurturing, possibly because Jesus is referred to as the “Good Shepherd” in scripture (John 10:11), during that time, shepherds were not held in such high regard. In fact, many viewed them as unclean and poor; the lowly, who caused problems as their sheep wandered off and got into mischief. Yet, they were the first to receive word of the Messiah’s birth! That means God chose them first, as a reminder that He sees past outward appearances and perceptions and chooses the poor, meek, and lowly for a greater purpose.

The other beautiful symbolic meaning of the shepherds is that they were told to find “the baby” wrapped in cloth. Shepherds would often wrap newborn lambs in cloth to protect them from potential danger and predators, as well as to keep them clean and unblemished to use for temple sacrifices. Now they would find the “Lamb of God” in this same way, who would eventually be sacrificed to save all of mankind.

### PRAYER

God,  
As we reflect on the character and nature of the shepherds, help us to remain humble and remember that You choose those who are lowly for a greater purpose. Help us place our trust in You and find joy in knowing that You care deeply for us and hold a precious plan for our lives.

Amen.

# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.

# Day 4 JOY IN THE TRIALS



## SCRIPTURE READING

“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. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything”.  
-James 1:2-4

Every character that we met in the Christmas story encountered trials and hardships. From Mary’s concerns about Joseph’s reaction to her untimely pregnancy, to the fear Joseph must have had getting Mary safely to Bethlehem, to the shepherd’s shock upon hearing the angels and wondering how they would find the baby, to us. Yes! We are all a part of this story, too!

God thought of YOU and gave you the story of Christmas to extend a redemption plan that He brought forth with the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the true joy of this season because He tells us that while we will encounter hardships and trials in this life, to be “of good cheer” as He has overcome the world!

As we face challenges in this life, we can hold fast to the truth found in James 1:2-4 that says:

1. Trials test our faith and produce perseverance.
2. Perseverance leads to growth and maturity.
3. We can embrace the struggle as we shift our perspective and choose to trust God.

## REFLECTION

How can you find comfort knowing that you are a part of the Christmas story? Just as the characters struggled with trials, we will most certainly face hard times, but Jesus gives us peace, hope, and joy to persevere or carry on. How can you find joy in hard times?

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# Space to Process ...

## **P R A Y E R**

God,

*You are so very good to us and provide ways for us to turn to You in our time of need. All throughout Your Word we are given ways to seek hope and peace, while embracing joy by trusting You. May we place our trust in You in this season and exude joy, knowing that you are producing perseverance, steadfastness, growth, and a heart to render sheer joy. Amen.*

**Write today's verse below:**

**Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.**

# Day 5 JOY TO THE WORLD



## SCRIPTURE READING

“Shout to the Lord, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy!”  
- Psalm 98:4 (NLT)

What do you think would happen if we made praise and worship our first response to this beautiful holiday season? That means we start by offering God our hearts in thanks and prayer first thing in the morning, touch base with Him throughout the day, and end with a heart full of gratitude before we drift off to sleep.

Honestly, the hustle and bustle of the season can really steal our joy and rob us of the blessing that comes when we allow the holiday hymns and songs to resonate into our hearts, minds, and souls. So, today, as we head into the final week before Christmas, let’s take a moment to pause, pray, and praise God for all that He has done, all that He is doing, and all that He will do in the future.

Create space and margin in your day to listen to music that will flood your heart with joy. Joy to the World resounds with such a beautiful message. How can we tune in and turn on the joy in our lives and spread God’s love in our homes, communities, schools, churches, and beyond?

## REFLECTION

What is your favorite Christmas song and why do you like it?  
How can you be a light and share joy with others this coming week?

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## PRAYER

God,  
As we draw closer to Christmas day, help us focus on the real joy You offer us through Your Son, Jesus. Provide ways for us to spread holiday cheer and joy to everyone we come into contact with, and be a ray of light in a world that so desperately needs Your love.  
Amen.

# Space to Process ...

Write today's verse below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.







# Weekend Reflection

## **REJOICING IN THE NEARNESS OF CHRIST**

As we light the pink candle this Sunday (the Shepherd's Candle), we pause to consider the kind of joy that filled the night sky over Bethlehem. It wasn't the kind of joy that depends on gifts, gatherings, or perfect circumstances. It was the kind that comes when heaven breaks through and the heart hears the good news: Christ is near.

The shepherds, though lowly and overlooked, were chosen to hear it first. Their joy was not found in status, comfort, or ease, but in the truth that the Savior had come for them. And He has come for us, too.

This joy remains even in trials, not because we feel lighthearted, but because Jesus gives us something deeper: His presence, His promises, and His peace. Like the angels, we can praise. Like the shepherds, we can respond. And like Mary and Joseph, we can trust and press on, knowing God's plan is always for our good and His glory.

This Advent, let joy not be a fleeting emotion but a settled assurance. Jesus is with us—and that is enough.

## **P R A Y E R**

Lord Jesus,  
We thank You for the joy that does not waver with our emotions or change with our circumstances. Help us rejoice in Your presence, even when life feels uncertain. Teach us to be like the shepherds: humble, willing, and ready to worship. Fill our homes with true joy, and may that joy flow out to a world in need.

Amen.

# Space to Process ...

Write the most impactful verse  
from this week below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and  
process what God has spoken to you, this  
week.



# WEEK FOUR: LOVE

## DAY 1 GOD IS LOVE

### iBelieve

#### **SCRIPTURE READING**

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”  
- 1 John 4:8

#### **REFLECTION**


What is love? Thankfully, God tells us in His Word. Yet, if we want to truly know God, we must seek to understand how He defines the greatest commandment – love, and then live it out. Read the verses below out loud:

“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice in injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.” -1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.” -1 Peter 4:8

“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.” -Colossians 3:14

“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.” -Romans 12:9-10




God's Word is clear. Love is patient, kind, content, humble, honors others, and embodies peace. Love covers a multitude of sins and unifies us as believers. Love clings to what is good while calling out evil. God's love also commands us to pray for our enemies, grant forgiveness, and extend a sincere and helping hand to the lonely and lost. Phew! That's a lengthy list. And quite frankly, it is not very easy to carry out. That's because Biblical love is vastly different than that of the world. Where our human nature wants to honor "self," God's love commands us to be selfless.

God's love is even more invaluable to us at Christmastime, as it helps to understand the pure and perfect love that we can give and receive. Love is an exchangeable gift that started with the greatest gift of all. The gift that God gave to us in the form of a precious baby that grew up to be a man who showed us all how to love others and then sacrificed His life so that we can truly live! When hearts are a little softer this time of year, it creates a perfect opportunity to share God's love. Oh, and what a priceless gift it is to share!

Do you feel you love the way God is commanding you to? How can you spread God's love this week to family and friends?

### **PRAYER**

God,  
Thank you for covering Your Word in the truth about love. Help us embrace these virtues, live them out, and carry them with us into the new year as we strive to show love to others.  
Amen.



# Space to Process ...

This final Sunday before we celebrate the birth of our King, we will light the candle on the Advent wreath that represents love. Love. Such a powerful and purposeful word. A word that wraps this season up so beautifully as it speaks to the very heart and nature of our Almighty Creator.

Love offers us such much hope. Love gives us insurmountable peace. Love allows us to experience exuberant joy! Love is what brings us to this very moment, because it is all part of God's plan, from the very beginning to the end, where we, as faithful believers, will share eternity with Him. Hallelujah! Praise be to our God for His unwavering, unyielding, and abundant love.

As we draw closer to Christmas day and anticipate all the beauty this season and time of year holds, let's be intentional about spreading hope, peace, joy, and love by reflecting on the greatest gift ever given to us - Jesus Christ!

**Write today's verse below:**

**Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.**



LOVE  
*offers*  
US  
*hope.*

# Day 2

## GOD'S LOVE BREAKS SILENCE

### SCRIPTURE READING

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means "God with us". Matthew 1:23

The people of Israel had long awaited a Messiah, and prophets from the Old Testament proclaimed that a Savior from the lineage of David would emerge from Bethlehem and destroy their enemies. However, God had a loving but complicated relationship with His beloved people. Due to their rebellious ways and some even succumbing to sinful strongholds, the closeness they once had with God dissipated, and He became eerily quiet - for 400 years (Malachi 4: 5-6). So, when that silence was suddenly broken by a "babe" in a manger, it wasn't really what the Jewish leaders were expecting.

While God's timing is perfect, His plan usually comes with some unexpected twists and turns, and quite a few surprises. Our Messiah's birth story is no different. It was all a well-orchestrated plan for Israel and the entire world. Just consider each character in the story.

Better yet, take a moment to gaze upon that nativity scene.

God chose the meek, mild, lowly, and "least" in society to play a vital role, therefore fulfilling a long-awaited prophecy. Jesus' humble beginnings show the nature of His character (Luke 2:6-7). The echoes of His first cry, piercing a shattered world, signal that God entered the earth in human form (John 1:4). Jesus had come to restore hope, bring back peace, extend joy, and restore a relationship built on unwavering love.

### REFLECTION

Do you ever feel like God is silent?

How can you come before God with a meek and mild heart yearning to hear His voice?

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# Space to Process ...

## **P R A Y E R**

God,

We are so thankful that Jesus gives us a way to connect with You. As we come to You in humble prayer, we give You our hearts and seek forgiveness where we have failed to tune in to the precious sound of Your voice. We ask that you speak to us and show us how we can embrace this season with peace, hope, joy, and love.

Amen.

**Write today's verse below:**

**Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.**



Day 3

## JESUS' LOVE SAVES US FROM A FALLEN WORLD

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### SCRIPTURE READING:

GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS TO DELIVER US FROM THE PRESENT EVIL AGE, ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF OUR GOD AND FATHER, TO WHOM BE THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN. GALATIANS 1:3-5

The birth of Jesus is merely the starting point to salvation. The rest is based on a decision – by us. The apostle Paul shares a poignant message with the church of Galatia about this very topic and that not all roads lead to eternal life. We must choose to live differently. We must choose peace when the world is overcome by chaos. We must choose grace when the world is seeking revenge. We must choose Jesus and shine “His love” in a world riddled with sin and overcome by evil.

Thankfully, Jesus is our ultimate intercessor and helper, and He provides us with ways to “fight” the enemy and evil snares of this fallen world. It starts with leaning into our faith and understanding the depths of His love. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. We can be strong in the Lord when we suit up in a way that portrays Who we stand for, Who we serve, and Who we honor and love. As we tether ourselves to Christ, He saves us from a lost, broken, and fallen world. He covers us with His peace and fights the battle for us. And He wins!

Christmastime poses a great time to don the “Armor of God” and be in fervent prayer, as the enemy usually doubles down and attacks what is most sacred. If tensions are rising in your home, joy feels absent, or your peace is rattled by stress, realize that it is likely a spiritual battle. Lean into Jesus, suit up, and fight for God’s love to prevail.

How do our prayers defend us against the snares of the devil? How can You seek Jesus and ask for His help if this holiday season isn’t exuding the hope, peace, joy, and love in your heart or home?

# Space to Process ...

## **PRAYER**

Jesus,  
You entered this fallen, dark, and broken world as an innocent baby. You grew into a fearless and sinless man and died on a cross for me. I wholeheartedly believe that, and I am ever so thankful for the richness of Your love that provides a pathway to salvation.  
Amen.

**Write today's verse below:**

**Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.**

# Day 4 LOVING LIKE JESUS



## SCRIPTURE READING

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

-John 13:34-35

Loving like Jesus comes with a heart to serve others with grace and compassion. It allows us to embrace forgiveness. It comes with sacrifice and unconditional love. It sparks hope, speaks peace, embraces joy, and illuminates God’s faithful love.

## REFLECTION

Are you loving your family members, friends, neighbors, and even strangers with grace, humility, and compassion?

Are you serving them with a selfless heart? How can you love others like Jesus today?

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Love. It’s the running theme of this entire season. And, it sounds so simple, right? Love God. Love others. Yet, with it being Christmas Eve, the day before we honor the birth of Christ our Lord, as much as we may long to center our actions around “love,” we often fail to understand what that action and choice really look like.

Perhaps this is why in John 13:24, Jesus delivers a “new” commandment to His beloved disciples. Obviously, this isn’t a “new” commandment, but rather a reinforced message. Jesus shares these words during the Last Supper, then furthermore, demonstrates this love by washing the feet of each of His disciples, including the one who He knew would betray Him (John 13:2-5).





# Space to Process ...

## **PRAYER**

God,

*Help us be mindful of how we share and spread Your love this season. Provide ways in which we can reflect Your loving nature through our actions of service. Please soften our hearts and humble us to see others the way You do, extending love with compassion and mercy.*  
Amen.

**Write today's verse below:**

**Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.**

Day 5

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!

## SCRIPTURE READING

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

(Light the center white candle on your Advent wreath)

Rejoice! Today is the day we celebrate the birth of our Messiah. It's a day we have all anticipated and eagerly awaited. It is finally here! Praise be to God!

Can you imagine how this excitement must have filled those in the Christmas story? They must have surely been flooded with emotion and in awe of the wonders of our God! Mary now holds the Savior of the World in her shaky arms, becoming a young mother to the King of Kings. The anticipation is over as Joseph begins to see God's promise unfold and be brought to life. He is now the Son of God's earthly father.

The shepherds arrive on the scene and behold the Messiah.

The proclamation of the heavenly hosts declares His arrival. The wait is over. The weary world rejoices. A Savior has come! As you gather with family and friends, may you cling to the truth that hope, peace, and joy fulfilled this prophecy. But love... Love came to us in a manger. Love is God. Love is Jesus. Love is in us! May we remember the ultimate gift of His love and abide in Him today. Happy Birthday, Jesus!

## REFLECTION

Be sure to step aside and get quiet sometime today to reflect on the all-consuming nature of our God's love. Then just listen. How will you take this message of hope, peace, joy, and love into the new year and live on a mission for Jesus?

# Space to Process ...

## PRAYER

*Jesus,*

*We honor You today. Thank you for loving us so much that you came into this world so that we may truly live. May we keep that in mind as we go about our day and celebrate with fun and festivities. May we carry Your love with us into the new year and spread hope, peace, and joy. We love you!*

*Amen.*

**Write today's verse below:**

**Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God is speaking to you, today.**

# Weekend Reflection



## **IN THE QUIET, LOVE WAS BORN**

As we come to this fourth Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of Love. This is ordinary love, but the perfect, sacrificial love of God. This is the love that sent Christ into our world—not because we deserved it, but because He is love (1 John 4:8). This final candle wraps the entire season together, reminding us that Christmas is not about sentiment but about salvation.

In the hush before Christmas morning, we remember that the love of God broke centuries of silence and entered a dark, weary world through a manger. Jesus did not come to give us a cozy tradition. He came to redeem us. His love meets us in our struggles, restores what sin has broken, and points us to the eternal. As you prepare your home and heart for Christmas Day, ask the Lord to help you love as He has loved us: with truth, with grace, and with purpose.

## **P R A Y E R**

Lord Jesus,

You are the fullness of love in human form. Thank You for coming down to us, lowly, humble, yet holy. Teach us to love with patience, mercy, and truth. Let our homes reflect Your light this Christmas, and may our hearts remain fixed on You as we step into a new year.

Amen.






# Space to Process ...

Write the most impactful verse from this week below:

Take some time to reflect, journal, pray, and process what God has spoken to you, this week.





Alicia Searl is a devotional author, blogger, and speaker that is passionate about pouring out her heart and pointing ladies of all ages back to Jesus. She has an education background and master's in literacy. Her favorite people call her Mom, which is why much of her time is spent cheering them on at a softball game or dance class. She is married to her heartthrob (a tall, spiky-haired blond) who can whip up a mean latte. She sips that goodness while writing her heart on a page while her puppy licks her feet. Visit her website at [aliciasearl.com](http://aliciasearl.com) and connect with her on Instagram and Facebook.