

# ADVENT

— CHRISTMAS DEVOTIONAL —

**As November ends and we transition into the Advent Season,** it's important to understand what Advent is. Advent, by definition, is "the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event." As Christians, we know who that notable person is, what notable thing He represents, and the notable event He carried out on our behalf. That is, Jesus Christ was born in a lowly manger, the Word made flesh, lived a sinless life, and died a sinner's death, that we may have eternal fellowship with God. Through His resurrection, all things are made new.

While Easter represents Christ's death and resurrection, Christmas is a time to sit and consider His birth and life. We're to do this with the biblical definition of what it means to consider: it is not a passing thought or a quick reminder, but we're to examine closely (Matthew 6:26), observe well (Luke 12:27, Hebrews 10:24), and look up toward (Hebrews 13:7) Jesus' fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Two things to note. First, during this season we are placing a pause on our normal reading of the Daily Step and studying various passages in Scripture leading up to Christmas. Our staff has provided this tool that you might read with us through each of these passages every day and share your thoughts on the passage as they have. **We hope you find these devotionals helpful and edifying in your personal reading time and that they may inspire you to dive deeper into God's Word.**

Second, many of the selected passages come from the Old Testament. This might seem confusing and counterintuitive; after all, wasn't the whole purpose of Christ's coming to institute the New Testament? But, **our prayer for you in this season is that the more you see Jesus fulfill the prophecies of old, the more you'll fall in love with Him in the new. So, dig in and consider with us the joy of the Advent Season, the joy of Jesus Christ.**

**- ROLLING HILLS STAFF**

# DECEMBER 1

## READ

### LUKE 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”

### REVELATION 5:8-11

And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers

of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,

## REFLECT

I love Christmas. I love the twinkling lights, the smell of fresh baked goods, the hustle and bustle, the beautiful music, the decorations, the gifts, and all the anticipation that the season brings. It was Christmas of 2000 and I was just a month away from giving birth to our daughter. I remember thinking about Mary and the waiting and anticipation she also experienced. “Wonder when I will go into labor? Would it be sudden? Who would be there in the waiting room? Are the bags packed? Do we have enough diapers?” You know, all those first-time mom thoughts. I’ll admit there was worry, there was fear, there was lots of nervousness, but there was also joy and peace. Peace in knowing the delivery of our daughter was going to be okay. Like with Mary and Joseph, I am sure they were going through some of the same emotions as we were. I also know they experienced peace on that silent and holy night.

One of my favorites the angels sweetly sang in Luke 2, “Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.” How crazy to think that a tiny baby was sent into this world to save us from our sins. What a gift from God! What a gift of peace in knowing that He loves us so much. It is also a peace in knowing we can always place our hope and trust, no matter what, in Him. This Christmas and in all seasons of life, I pray that we are always filled with peace, joy, and love.

WRITTEN BY  
**JENNIFER MILLIGAN**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
TO THE SENIOR PASTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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What do these passages teach me about who I am?

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# DECEMBER 2

## READ

### HEBREWS 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the

joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

## REFLECT

For some, holidays are hard. They sense a dark cloud on the horizon post-Halloween that moves in thick until it's fully overhead at Thanksgiving, remaining through Christmas. It could be the geographical distance of family, the empty chair of a particular loved one, or the heartache associated with seasons' past. The idea of the "most wonderful time of the year" hits hard for those who don't feel quite so cheerful. The word "cloud" referencing the cast from Hebrews 11 that launches chapter 12 means "throng, dense multitude, or crowd" (certainly appropriate for Christmas considering the crowded streets and stores).

In Hebrews 12:1, it's a cloud of witnesses, the Greek word for "martyr." Remembering the ancients (flawed men and women that they were) as commended for faith in God, we are to throw off the things that trip us up and stunt our progress and run with purpose. That which surrounds us on any given day, particularly a holy holiday, really can be one of encouragement and instruction. Perhaps this season of Advent can bring a different kind of cloud. It can offer a multitude of reasons and reminders to press in and press on into lives of joy-fueled faith like Jesus, who for joy endured so much, and countless others, whose ultimate prize is only found in us running our leg of the race well.

WRITTEN BY  
**NIC ALLEN**  
NASHVILLE CAMPUS PASTOR

## APPLY

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# DECEMBER 3

## READ

### MICAH 5:1-6

Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us;

with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel,

whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore He shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth;

then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

And He shall stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.

And He shall be their peace.

When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces,

then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men;

they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances;

and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.

## REFLECT

The coming of Jesus Christ wasn't one that was unforeseen. Sure, those who'd met Him doubted that He was the Messiah, born in a lowly manger and coming out of Egypt. Even some of His disciples were unimpressed when they first met Him (John 1:46). And yet, not only does Jesus reshape our expectations of who He is, but He far exceeds them.

You see, the religious leaders of Jesus' day rejected Him because He was nothing like they envisioned. He was born into a poor family and was raised as a carpenter's son. Much of His own people rejected Him because they saw Him as a largely unremarkable person, not the conquering king they thought the Messiah to be. And yet, when we study the Old Testament for the prophecy of Christ, we find that He fits each perfectly. This passage in Micah shows that He will come out of Bethlehem in Israel's time of strife. He will secure for them their salvation on His behalf, and we know today He did this through the propitiation for their sins and the sins of the world. He didn't come to rule through destruction and violence, but through His sacrifice did He secure peace that will reach the ends of the earth. No dictator, visionary, or liberator could boast such a triumph.

This Christmas, think about the expectations you have for God. How does He reshape those expectations according to His Word? How does Jesus meet those promises? How will He do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us"?

WRITTEN BY  
**JACOB THOMAS**  
NOLENSVILLE STUDENT DIRECTOR

## APPLY

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# DECEMBER 4

## READ

### Revelation 19:1-10

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for His judgments are true and just;

for He has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality,

and has avenged on her the blood of His servants.”

Once more they cried out,

“Hallelujah!

The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” And from the throne came a voice saying,

“Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, small and great.”

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready;

it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

doesn't seem like such a jerk in light of the fact that in the end, when all of heaven and earth fade away, our Lord God Almighty is on His throne in victory! He came as a baby in a manger, but He didn't stay there. He lived 33 sinless years and died on a cross for our sins because in the end He wants us to join Him in that same victory over sin and death. Let us rejoice in that this Christmas.

WRITTEN BY  
**STEVE HORTON**  
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

## APPLY

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## REFLECT

“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!” – Revelation 19:7

If we stopped right there, we'd have everything we ever needed to live a joy-filled life. The problem is, oftentimes we don't live in this truth. Instead, we choose to allow the distractions of our everyday life – the alert on our phone, the stress of hosting the next holiday party, the ever-growing Christmas shopping list – these are the things that consume our thoughts in this “most wonderful time of the year.”

But if we pause for a moment to reflect on this passage from Revelation 19, things start to fall into place a little. The person who cut you in line at the department store

## READ

### Ephesians 2:1-10

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us

alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

## REFLECT

It is easy in our lives to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season; buying into the consumerism that Christmas has become in the world. God's Word reminds us of the true meaning of gift-giving. See, this passage explains that the Lord meets us all where we are. Redemption is not something to be reached or attained. Redemptive grace and salvation is the ultimate gift we receive in our time on this earth, even when we least deserved it.

What jumps out of this passage is that we have been saved by the grace of God and the faith He allows us to have in order to believe in Him as the Author of our lives and salvation. He reaches down daily to provide us that grace and to bestow the same on new believers. There is nothing that we can do to cause this or can ever do to repay it once received. No, the power we have within comes from the Lord after redemption to do works in His name.

God's Word reminds us we should continue to give out of the abundance of our hearts all year long, knowing that God has provided us with this gift so that we can serve others freely and joyfully – not because we have to or are supposed to, but because we want to share the love of Christ with others.

WRITTEN BY  
**JASON HITCHINGS**  
MEN'S & SPORTS DIRECTOR

## APPLY

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# DECEMBER 6

## READ

### 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses

against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

## REFLECT

Reconciliation. Do you have a moment in your life where you had to reconcile with someone who really hurt you? Do you have a moment in your life where you had to come with complete humility in order to have them in your life? When we look at the reconciliation found in Jesus Christ, we see the utmost humility in God sending Jesus to rescue us even though we pretty frequently turn our backs on Him. Reconciliation for us came in the form of a baby boy who came to make the old things new, so that we could find life to the fullest. I look at my sin and my mistakes and see someone unredeemable, but God looks at me and sees the righteousness of His Son. That is the ultimate reconciliation. As you meditate and pray on this Scripture today, thank God that He has made us His righteousness through the reconciliation we find in Jesus' coming.

WRITTEN BY  
**KYNDAL KEARNS**  
STUDENT WORSHIP LEADER

## APPLY

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# DECEMBER 7

## READ

### Hebrews 1:1-4

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and

the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the Word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

## REFLECT

Have you ever seen a child who looks so similar to their mom or dad that you don't even have to ask who their parents are? Their features, attributes, or mannerisms are so akin to their parents' that you automatically know who their father or mother is.

Now can you imagine what it was like to have Jesus, the Son of God, here on earth? His Father was the Creator God, the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, the King of Kings – and His Son humbly came as a baby boy to the earth.

Born in a manger.

Born of a virgin.

Born to be the sinless Savior who would bring salvation to humanity.

The perfect, holy, radiant, sovereign God sent His exact representation, Jesus, to earth, so that He could fulfill the prophecies that Christians from the beginning had waited for – *longed* for.

Just sit in that truth right now. Think of the sacrifice that was. Let it sink in – that the Son of God came to save you.

When was the last time that you sat and wrote down the incredible things about Jesus? Do that now. Spend five, ten, thirty minutes – as much time as you'd like – to simply thank Jesus for His miraculous sacrifice and write specific attributes of Jesus that you are grateful for this Advent season.

WRITTEN BY  
**CHLOE ROJAS**  
COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATOR  
& SPECIAL EVENTS ASSOCIATE

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## READ

### Ephesians 2:11-22

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man

in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

## REFLECT

When you are traveling, there is a certain feeling that overcomes you when you miss home. You realize how far you are from the things that comfort you. When you feel that distance, the last thing you feel is peace. In fact, you feel like there is something deep missing inside you.

In this passage, you see Paul telling us that Jesus “came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near” (Ephesians 2:17). We are all reading that truth at a different part of our journey (as did the Gentiles and Jews this passage is speaking about). Some of us are far off, and some of us feel the deep nearness. This message of peace is for all of us along the road. The homesickness we feel in travel is a picture of the desire for peace in our hearts with our spiritual homesickness. The message of the Gospel is peace for all in the here and now, but also a perfect peace to come.

Advent is the movement towards remembering the Prince of Peace who came and will come again in the second advent. The moment when peace became a person and the moment when peace will be a true reality at the end of all things. Sit in the truth of peace promised us in this moment and forevermore in our going home. Praise Him for this gift.

WRITTEN BY  
**JACOB SCRIMPISHIRE**  
DISCIPLESHIP PASTOR

## APPLY

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# DECEMBER 9

## READ

### Philippians 3:12-20

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will

reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

## REFLECT

You can simultaneously be a resident of many different places all at once! From your country of origin, to the state you live in, to the specific town, and even the neighborhood. With each of these groups or places, you can identify and connect. However, your true identity doesn't come based on the state you were born in! In fact, true citizenship is not based on earthly geography but heavenly! Because of your citizenship being in heaven, you do not have to be overwhelmed by all of the struggles in your earthly homes. Because of Jesus, you do not have to be anxious about the trappings and shortcomings of this world, because our Savior came down from Heaven, and because of Him, Heaven will be our permanent home. As you prepare your heart for this most joyous Christmas season, take some time to reflect on just how significant the birth of Christ is. The Christ child, coming in a lowly manger, gave us a new citizenship! Because of Jesus, I can press forward with faith in my life knowing that Jesus is holding it all together.

WRITTEN BY  
**JASON HALE**  
NOLENSVILLE CAMPUS PASTOR

## APPLY

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# DECEMBER 10

## READ

### John 14:1-14

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him."

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus

said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in my name, I will do it.

## REFLECT

These fourteen verses carry with them so much power and mercy. Not only do we see exactly who Jesus is in the lives of believers, but Jesus also presents us with an immense power. "If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." He doesn't say when or how, but He will. Even when, like Phillip, we fail to see Him right in front of us, the challenge is to recognize His work in our lives.

Jesus begins this passage encouraging the believer not to be troubled, for God our Father has made a place for us in Heaven. We are not made to walk through this life alone. The Father and Christ Jesus walk the path beside us. The Holy Spirit dwells within us. Whatever we ask, God will work for our good and His ultimate glory.

In this Advent season, as the stress of Christmas and the holidays looms in the shadows around us, do not be troubled. The Lord has a plan and a place for you. Ask Him to guide your paths and He will. Pray today that you will recognize God's power in your life and wisdom to see His presence around you.

WRITTEN BY  
**SAMANTHA WHITT**  
LEADERSHIP PIPELINE ALUM

## APPLY

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## READ

### Matthew 6:19-33

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your

body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

## REFLECT

*Do not worry.* A lot easier said than done, right? For far too many of us, worry defines our every day. Each decision, each plan, each goal we may have – all of these come with a fear attached to them, as we worry about the outcome, the unknown, the uncertainty. Then, we come to this passage in Matthew 6.

I don't think it's any accident that the passage about storing up treasures in heaven precedes the passage about worry – because isn't it true that so many of our worries are tied up in our finances or material possessions? We worry because we don't know if we'll have enough – or we worry because we want more. Especially in a time like the Christmas season, we have to fight the urge to worry about more, more, more.

So, what if, instead of worrying or searching for more, we sought the Kingdom of Christ first? What if we chose to live in peace, in joy, in the present moment instead of allowing anxiety to define our existence?

Friend, this is possible – but only in Jesus. Peace, life, freedom from fear and worry are found in the person of Christ, and we can find that today, in the midst of this season that is, actually, supposed to be about Him. Today, will you come to Him with your worries? Will you take just a few moments to bring your worries or desires to Him, trusting Him to be sovereign over them all and confessing the areas in which you have fallen short? Then, see the Prince of Peace bring peace in your life this Christmas.

WRITTEN BY  
**CHLOE ROJAS**  
COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATOR  
& SPECIAL EVENTS ASSOCIATE

## APPLY

**What do these passages teach me about who God is?**

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**What do these passages teach me about who I am?**

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**What practices are there to emulate?**

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# DECEMBER 12

## READ

### Romans 5:6-11

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now

been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

## REFLECT

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” – Romans 5:8

One of my favorite Christmas memories is my now-wife Kasey’s, reaction when she saw the engagement ring I had hidden on the tree. She was very surprised that the fun scavenger hunt ended in a marriage proposal. I demonstrated my love for Kasey with a ring and a marriage proposal. She said yes because I had demonstrated that I was nice, kind, loving, funny, and super good-looking (my words, not hers).

When I compare our love to the love that God demonstrated, I am beyond astonished. God demonstrated His love for us by sending His Son to die for sinners. We had demonstrated rebellion, indifference, and wrath, yet God demonstrated love. Christ died so we didn’t have to die for our sins. God proposed something greater than marriage: salvation and to be our God. Have you said yes to God’s proposal? If you said yes, in what ways are you demonstrating God’s love – a love that loves the unlovable and proposes the unimaginable?

WRITTEN BY  
**PATRICK HAMILTON**  
NASHVILLE CAMPUS PASTOR OF MINISTRIES

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 13

## READ

### Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that

we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

## REFLECT

When you hear the phrase, "the set time had fully come," what do you picture? Is it your first mortgage payment on that house you dreamed of for years? Maybe it's your child's graduation as they finally take their first step into adulthood? Whatever that picture is to you, one thing is clear: it's a culmination of time, work, and planning that reflects who you are.

But what about God? Where did He spend most of His time at work, planning the culmination of who He is? Paul writes in Galatians that the ultimate picture of who God is and the work He's doing is found in Jesus. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we're given a clear picture of what God's been up to since the beginning of time. Through Christ, God's love for humanity is reflected and He is most glorified. We can only know who God is through Jesus. How do we know this?

Paul continues that not only does God's grand design culminate in Christ, but through Christ we inherit all the blessings and joy God has to offer. We're brought into the family, which means we can partake in the rich inheritance that God had planned for us since Genesis 1. Know that through Christ, you can call God your Father ("Abba"). Through Christ, we can do great things that bring our Father glory and make Him known.

WRITTEN BY  
**JACOB THOMAS**  
NOLENSVILLE STUDENT DIRECTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 14

## READ

### 2 Corinthians 5:14-16

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves

but for Him who for their sake died and was raised.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer.

## REFLECT

The Christmas season is probably my favorite time of the year. The hustle and bustle makes it a busy time, but in the air is a feeling of joy and love. As believers, we are reminded of the ultimate love shown by God. We sing and tell the story of a Savior who came in the form of a baby. Jesus! Emmanuel! God with us!

It's beautiful to think that God Himself came down to us. While we spend time reflecting how Jesus came to dwell among us, be reminded of why He ultimately came: This helpless baby would grow up to be the ultimate sacrifice for our sin to restore us back to God.

Jesus' sacrifice expresses true agape, unconditional love. But we know the story doesn't end in His death. He rose again! Just as there is new life with the birth of a baby, Jesus brings new life to all who believe. He redeems, restores, and reconciles us into a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 tells us that since Christ died for all, our old selves died with Him on the cross, and we live in new life. To express our love back to Him, we no longer live for ourselves. Rather, we live for Jesus. We follow Jesus' example and live like Jesus.

Verse 16 says, "So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view." In other words, see people as Jesus sees them. Love people as Jesus loved them. Love everyone always. In this season of giving, look for ways you can love others. In what ways can you express Christ's love to your family even more? How can you go out of your way to love your neighbors? What random acts of kindness can you show to a stranger while you're out shopping for gifts? See people as Jesus sees them and love them.

WRITTEN BY  
**ROBERT BOWMAN**  
LEADERSHIP PIPELINE ALUM

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 15

## READ

### Isaiah 7:14-15

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive

and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when He knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

## REFLECT

Isaiah is known by many biblical scholars as “the Fifth Gospel.” Why? Because it’s packed full of prophecy that points to Jesus Christ. Consider Isaiah 8:14 – Jesus would be a stumbling block to the very people He lived with (1 Corinthians 1:23). Or maybe Isaiah 9:6-7 – how Jesus will reign on high and every knee shall bow down to Him at His Second Coming. If you’re ever wondering how Jesus’ death on the cross changed our lives forever, simply meditate on the foundational truths found in Isaiah 53:5 (or all of Isaiah 53 for that matter, He is our Suffering Servant).

But let’s look at Isaiah 7:14-15. He will be born to a virgin, and He shall be called Immanuel, God with us. Let that sink in. The Creator of the universe took on the flesh and came down to us. He lived among us, He dined among us, He faced the same trials and temptations that we do. How do we know this? Look at verse 15: “when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.”

God didn’t just come to be with us, but He came to live in the very same way as us, yet did not sin (Hebrews 4:15). Friends, in this time of Advent, we are reminded that we do not serve a God who is aloof, disconnected, unconcerned with our presence. He steps down into the muck and mess and grime that is this fallen world. And we can know that in our deepest fears, our longest sufferings, our sorest regrets, He is with us, because He experienced each of these feelings in His own sinless form. He is with us, both in Spirit and in flesh. Remember that this Christmas, what a comfort He is to our weary souls.

WRITTEN BY  
**JACOB THOMAS**  
NOLENSVILLE STUDENT DIRECTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 16

## READ

### Luke 24:24-25, 46-49

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"

### Luke 24:46-49

and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

## REFLECT

God has a purpose for you. He has a plan for your life. He has known this purpose since long before you were born. When Jesus was born on this earth, God was with us. He wanted to be with us, but He also came so that one day He would fulfill the plan and purpose God had set. Jesus was born so that He could one day be that ultimate sacrifice for all of us.

When the women went to the tomb they did not find Jesus there, but Jesus was not missing. They just didn't see Him in the midst of their sorrow and doubt. Have you ever been there? Something is happening or has happened, and you are struggling to know where Jesus is? Let me remind you that in that time you may not see Jesus, but He sees you.

This Christmas, I hope and pray that you are reminded that God sees you, God loves you, and God has a plan and purpose for your life.

WRITTEN BY  
**BRANDON BILLUPS**  
HIGH SCHOOL PASTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 17

## READ

### James 4:1-10

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do

you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that He has made to dwell in us"? But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

## REFLECT

"Let There Be Peace on Earth: and Let it Begin in Me" is a song that came to mind when I read today's passage. I looked it up and discovered it was written in 1955 by Jill Jackson, who said she wrote it after finding the "life-saving joy of God's peace and unconditional love." She was apparently suicidal before she wrote the song, before God's peace broke through to her.

In James 4:1-2, we find the heart of human conflict: sinful desires that rage within us. Interestingly, the battle is not first between individuals, but first within the individual. Passions are at war within us: "you desire" and "you covet" are internal wars. Then the fight moves outside: "so you murder," "so you fight and quarrel." When we follow this road, we try to get what we want for ourselves, frustrated by those standing in our way.

Instead, through repentance and by humbling ourselves, we show trust in our loving heavenly Father to provide in His perfect timing, which brings the very peace on Earth and goodwill toward men which Christ came to make available.

WRITTEN BY  
**LAURA CHAPMAN**  
CARE & CONNECTIONS PASTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 18

## READ

### 1 Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from

the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

## REFLECT

I struggle to believe it, but I am a grandfather now. My official title is actually "Pops." All of the "grand parenting is great" verbiage is actually right on – it is great! Since Penelope was born on March 3, 2020, I have been praying for her future – her relationship with Jesus, her future spouse, her decisions, etc. I can't wait to see how the Lord uses her in the years and decades ahead. I pray for her because her future is not promised. I pray because my heart's desire is that she will follow the Lord's perfect will for her throughout her life.

I then turn and read today's passage in 1 Peter. It's about a birth as well – the birth of the Savior. The difference, however, is that Jesus' birth, life, and death came with certainties and hope. Not the hope that the Bears will win the Super Bowl, but the hope that is the expectant certainty of what is to come. I pray for the best for Penelope, but the best is truly to come for those that love Jesus. There is an inheritance in Heaven that can't spoil waiting for us. There is salvation that is ours when we put our faith in Christ. This Christmas, don't wish for a spiritual breakthrough, claim the promises that are real from this passage and cling to Jesus!

WRITTEN BY  
**ERIC ROJAS**  
EXECUTIVE PASTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 19

## READ

### Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we

rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

## REFLECT

Late one night, at the end of Oak Island in North Carolina, I walked outside to enjoy the ocean breeze. Standing there, I was paralyzed by how dark it was. I could only see the moon and a few lights from some neighboring houses. If it wasn't for the waves crashing, I could almost imagine the water was completely still.

As I stood there, something incredible happened. This beautiful landscape began to unfold right in front of me. I could see the crest of the waves, the grass swaying on the sand dunes, the bridge to the beach, and even people walking by! And I almost missed it by focusing on how dark the night was.

When we are in the midst of our struggles and sufferings, it is easy to lose hope because of the darkness and brokenness around us. But hope is the expectation of fulfillment, and through hope, we have confidence. Just like the beach was there in its entirety, so too is the fulfillment of God's promises. So when things seem the darkest, instead of putting your hope in the uncertain things of this world, place your hope in Jesus, who was sent to save us. You never know – He might reveal something you never expected!

Take a moment and reflect on what is happening in your life. Are you focusing on your struggles or uncertainties? How can you shift your focus from that to the hope of God's promises?

WRITTEN BY  
**LAURA ANNE HAYWOOD**  
COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 20

## READ

### James 1:22-24

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and

not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

## REFLECT

James, the brother of Jesus, provides us with an important lesson in these three verses: the importance of doing what is right when you hear it. Taking in what you learn and implementing it is biblical, and James is telling us why. When we don't need the Word, it's like we are "looking in the mirror and forgetting what you look like when you turn away." If you aren't implementing the things you're being taught then you'll forget what you even heard in the first place. How can we keep the Word of God on our hearts and lips if we forget it as soon as we finish hearing a teaching or reading a passage?

One way to help remember and implement the teachings and truths that we receive from our pastors and mentors could be to take notes. Writing something down helps you to remember it, and you'll always have it to go back to. Another way could be to memorize Scripture. Find a passage that you want to be on the forefront of your mind and heart and learn to say it by heart. Speaking the verses over and over will help you to live them out. Find a friend to test you as you try to learn it too! We're all in this together!

WRITTEN BY  
**MARTY BEDWELL**  
LEADERSHIP PIPELINE RESIDENT

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 21

## READ

### Philippians 3:1-11

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church;

as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

## REFLECT

Do you remember the red cup controversy of 2015? That was the year Starbucks decided not to print any traditional imagery on its seasonal cups – opting instead to serve coffee in plain red, with nothing but their familiar green and white logo. For some, this was a win for religious inclusion, for others it was seen as an assault on traditional Christian values. Social and mainstream media was flooded with millions of angry posts, comments, tweets, articles, interviews, and opinions. The so-called “War on Christmas” had begun.

Philippians 3 begins with a call to rejoice, followed by a warning: Paul tells us that our joy is like a safeguard and that we must watch out for those who would subvert our faith. But, looking closely at the text, we see that the real danger doesn’t come from people who want nothing to do with religion or traditional values. It isn’t the ones who say, “Happy Holidays” instead of “Merry Christmas.” No, the “dogs” and “evildoers” in the text are good, moral, church-going people who stand on tradition and follow all the rules. By all accounts, they’re the good guys. But they wear their own righteousness like a badge and have forgotten that hope is only found in what Christ has done for us – not in what we could ever accomplish on our own.

This Christmas, let us remember that we have more reason than anyone to be joyful and that our joy is not so fragile as to be stolen by a marketing campaign. As recipients of grace, let us be all the more gracious toward others.

WRITTEN BY  
**JOEL HUDSON**  
NASHVILLE WORSHIP PASTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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# DECEMBER 22

## READ

### Romans 8:18-39

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## REFLECT

Paul knew suffering and anxiety and futility. Paul knew persecution, perplexity, and peril. He was ultimately beheaded for his faith, but his experiences with these “light momentary afflictions” as he called them in 2 Corinthians 4 only served to remind him of the incomparable glory he would experience in Heaven. He knew all creation was groaning under the futility it was subjected to by our sovereign God for the purpose of hope. That hope rests not only in salvation through Christ in this life, but

also in our adoption as sons and daughters and the redemption of our bodies in the next life, where we will be physically joined with Christ for eternity.

Paul also knew the promises of Christ and that “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” We may forget that salvation in this life is not the end of the road. Paul carries on from verse 28 to say, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.” God’s plan for us did not end at justification through salvation, but extends to glorification.

Despite the challenges we face mentally, emotionally, socially, financially, and spiritually, we know if God stands with us, no one can stand against us, and no one can separate us from the love of Christ who intercedes for us at the right hand of God. Christ’s finished work on the cross ensures us salvation, but it’s His resurrection that promises us glorification. Just as Christ fixed His gaze on the cross, we also fix our gaze on glory. Just as Christ overcame death, we also will overcome adversity. Just as Christ lives, we also will live.

WRITTEN BY  
**ETHAN FOSSETT**  
LEADERSHIP PIPELINE RESIDENT

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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What do these passages teach me about who I am?

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What practices are there to emulate?

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# DECEMBER 23

## READ

### Psalm 95

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In His hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are His also.

The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land.

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.

Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

For forty years I loathed that generation and said, "They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways."

Therefore I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest."

## REFLECT

Whenever we feel prone to falling into the temptation of doubting Christ's birth and resurrection, we'd do well to remind ourselves of the promises found in Scripture, especially the Old Testament. You cannot read Psalm 95 and believe Jesus was a "Plan B," that God called an audible when Israel failed to obey His commands. How can we not think of Jesus when reading about the "rock of our salvation," "a great King above all gods," that we are the "people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand?"

What emotions does this passage garner from you? Do you feel moved to worship and respond with a joyful noise? Can you not help but consider the depths of the earth, the heights of the mountains, the chaos of the sea that is wielded in His guiding hand?

Whatever your reaction is, I pray that it is not this: to harden your heart and ignore the truth as clearly portrayed throughout all creation. This Advent season, I pray that you remember the promise fulfilled in Christ, who was "chosen before

the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake" (1 Peter 1:20). Contemplate that for a second: He knew you long before you were conceived, and He knew you were in need of a Savior that could only come about through His own sacrifice! Friend, don't let your heart be hardened to this truth, but respond in thanksgiving today.

WRITTEN BY  
**JACOB THOMAS**  
NOLENSVILLE STUDENT DIRECTOR

## APPLY

**What do these passages teach me about who God is?**

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**What do these passages teach me about who I am?**

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**What practices are there to emulate?**

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# DECEMBER 24

## READ

### Ephesians 6:10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as

shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the Gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

## REFLECT

This world is a battlefield! Every day, there is a spiritual war going on against an enemy who is very real and very intense. We may not know the exact approach or from which direction the next attack will come, but we know the threat exists because God tells us to stay alert. We also know because we have already experienced it in the trials, the lies, the temptation, and the brokenness.

But God does not leave us with just a warning. He does not leave us to fight this battle unequipped and unprepared. He has provided us with all that we need to stand firm and the strength to do so. Our job is to put it on, stay alert, and be in prayer.

But how many times do we get caught up in the busyness of our day and walk straight into the battlefield without that armor? When we are unequipped and ill-prepared, we attempt to fight in our own strength. And we all know how that goes. So take a moment today to take inventory of your armor. Are you using ALL that God has provided you to stand firm?

WRITTEN BY  
**KATHY KOON**  
COUNSELING DIRECTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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What do these passages teach me about who I am?

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What practices are there to emulate?

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# DECEMBER 25

## READ

### Titus 3:1-11

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured

out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

## REFLECT

Merry Christmas! What an awesome day. I'm so grateful that Christmas is not just gifts and food. It's a day when we celebrate the Savior appearing. It says in Titus 3:4 that when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. We know Christmas Day was just the beginning of Jesus' life here on earth. I love that He came not just to save us, but for us to take that good news and go and do good in our world, wherever that might be. It says in verse 8, "those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone." So today, yes, we celebrate all that Jesus has done, but let's take that celebration into our world today. Find ways to celebrate Jesus by doing what is good for others today.

WRITTEN BY  
**DAVID CURTIS**  
WORSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP PASTOR

## APPLY

What do these passages teach me about who God is?

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What do these passages teach me about who I am?

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What practices are there to emulate?

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