



DWELL

ADVENT 2022 DEVOTIONAL



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“... Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man...”

REVELATION 21:3

INTRODUCTION

God created us to dwell with Him in the garden before sin separated us from His intimate presence. From then, God began weaving a tapestry of redemption that can be examined from the protoevangelium (the first gospel) in Genesis 3, the creation of the tabernacle in Exodus, the Psalms, and through the promises of the prophets like Isaiah and Micah. Throughout the Old Testament, we catch glimpses of God working and Israel waiting for this beautiful reconciliation. The hopes and fears of all the years Israel spent anticipating God's promises were wonderfully met when the Word put on flesh and made his dwelling place among us in the Nativity. And just as the ancient Israelites awaited the coming of the Messiah in the flesh, we await the Messiah in glory when the “dwelling place of God will be with man,” as it says in Revelation.

Advent (which comes from the Latin word meaning arrival or appearance) reminds us that we are not so different from Israel after all. While we are reconciled to God through Christ and invited into His presence moment by moment, we are waiting too. This Advent season, set aside a few moments throughout the week to study and savor the story woven throughout scripture of Christ's first coming. Then look to the future with hope for His second coming, when He will return and make all things new and perfect and when we will again dwell in perfect intimacy with Him in the new creation He will usher in.



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SUGGESTED USE

The Dwell Devotional is designed to take us through Advent and into Reset week in the new year, beginning Sunday, November 27th, and ending Saturday, January 7th. The devotionals are weekly and divided into three sections; Exalt, Disciple, and Send. We recommend each week spending 1 day in Exalt, 2-3 days in Disciple and 1-2 days in Send. The Exalt section aims to lead our hearts to worship our true king through a particular hymn. In Disciple, we will meditate deeply on specific scriptures to understand not only what it says but what it means, how it connects to the larger story of scripture, and God's deep desire to dwell with us. Lastly, in Send, we rightly challenge ourselves to respond through action. Here we will prayerfully consider what it looks like to live out the truths and promises we have learned personally, communally, and within our families.

**Please note that Week 5- Gospels begins on Christmas day and will cover Christ's birth. You may want to choose to start this week a little early. The family activity, in particular, would be great to do in the week leading up to Christmas. Or feel free to stay the course and carry the significance of Christ's birth through the following week.*

FAMILY ACTIVITY SUPPLY LIST

Within each weekly Send, there is a family activity. Below is a list of materials you'll need to complete each week so you can prepare ahead of time.

WEEK 1

A cookie tin, old Tupperware, or a shoe box per child

WEEK 2

A bed sheet or blanket, a table, and treats or a favorite story

WEEK 3

½ cup salt, 1 cup flour, ½ cup water, a straw, a cookie sheet, an oven, child safe paint for decorating

WEEK 4

A dark room, two special treats or toys, a flashlight

WEEK 5

A manipulative nativity set (felt, toy, wooden, etc.) and Christmas picture books about the birth of Christ

WEEK 6

Body outlines (provided in week 6 for printing), colors, and a mirror



WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

EXALT

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

Author: Thomas O. Chisholm

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

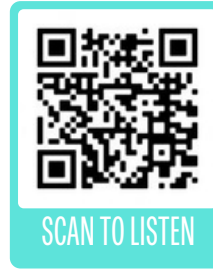
Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee. Thou
changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning, new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. [Refrain]

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
[Refrain]



God's Faithfulness in History

If you have never read the Old Testament, I highly suggest you do. The way that we strengthen our faith is by seeing God's faithfulness woven throughout all of History. In the Garden we see God's faithfulness to Adam and Eve, even after they sin, in promising them a seed that would crush the head of the serpent. In the entirety of the Old Testament, through the prophets, priests, kings, and judges, we see God's faithfulness even in the midst of man's sinfulness. The Promise we sing in the first verse of this song "Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not; as Thou has been, thou forever wilt be," is something we should sing with boldness. God's compassion towards us is most beautifully seen in the Gospel. He has been a compassionate Father and unchanging King.

God's Faithfulness in Creation

God's mercies are new every morning (read Lamentations 3:22-23) and alongside those mercies are the enjoyment of the beauty and goodness of His Creation. "Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." (Acts 4:17) "The heavens declare the Glory of God" (Psalm 19:1) and "all the earth worships you and sings praises to you." (Psalm 66:4) Let us be reminded by this hymn that we "join with all nature" to proclaim the greatness of God's "faithfulness, mercy and love." As we live out the Gospel in our daily lives, we testify with all creation that God is good all the time and that all the time... (I'll let you finish the saying)

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

EXALT

God's Faithfulness in Christ

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:1, 6, 8) Because Jesus decided to die and pay the penalty we deserved, we now receive Pardon from God, Peace with God and are able to stand in the Presence of God where there is "fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forever more." (Psalm 16:11) Allow this truth to bring you "strength for today and bright hopes for tomorrow."

PRAY

God, thank you for being faithful even when I am faithless. Thank you for being a good Father and blessing me with the beauty of a sunrise, a warm cup of coffee, breakfast tacos and laughter. Allow me to remember all your great works so that when my soul fails, and my heart grows weary I can remember the great hope that I have in Christ. Though today may feel dark, the hope of glory is always before me. That even if I fall, you will catch me and that you count all my tears and keep them in your bottle. May your Spirit keep me from evil and guide me in paths of righteousness.

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

PRAY: Psalm 119:171-174

"My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes. My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right. Let your hand be ready to help me for I have chosen your precepts. I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight."

OBSERVATION: What does it say?

Begin today's devotional by reading the passages several times, perhaps even in different translations. Be patient and take your time. Allow yourself to dwell with God through His living word. Remember that the Word of the Lord is right, and the more that we humble ourselves before His beautiful law of liberty and choose to take upon ourselves His yoke, which is easy and light, the more that we will have fullness of joy.

As you read, mark up the passage by highlighting, underlining, boxing, circling, drawing arrows, making lists, and writing questions and observations in the margins.

Mark these things in the text:

- Repeated words, ideas, or phrases
- Word choice or details that seem surprising, unnecessary, emphatic, make you think of other parts of scripture, etc.
- Transition words and phrases (and, likewise, or, but, therefore, so, that, because, since, etc.)
- Lists or patterns
- Who, what, where, when, why, and how? (Context is so important!)
- Commands, warnings, promises, attributes of God, etc.

GENESIS 1

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

8 And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.

12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind.

And God saw that it was good.

13 And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,

15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

GENESIS 1

16 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.

17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,

18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.”

21 So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”

23 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so.

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

GENESIS 1

25 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make man[h] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.

30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

GENESIS 3:1-15

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,

3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him,

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

GENESIS 3:1-15

“Where are you?”

10 And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

11 He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14 The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your o spring and her o spring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

GENESIS 3:20-24

20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

22 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—"

23 Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

What stuck out to you when reading?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:6, John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16-17, and Romams 11:36.

In Genesis one we see God's power to create life out of nothing. God merely speaks the word and all time, space and matter begin to arise. And though that may seem amazing, and trust me it is, He has also done a greater work in our hearts. God has given us the Word, His Son, so that when we receive Him into our hearts a similar work that took place in Genesis 1 also begins to happen to us.

Reread the Genesis 1 account alongside the New Testament passage above and list out the ways in which they are similar.

The Creation Narrative

Heart Regeneration

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

What are some similarities that you saw and how does it make you appreciate or stand in awe of your salvation?

In Genesis, we read that “God said... and there was,” in John 1, we read that all things were created through the word; what are some ways we can bring life and restoration through our words this season?

INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?

How do we see God’s redemptive plan to reconcile and dwell with us worked out in these passages? (Genesis 1, 3:1-15 & 20-24)

“The modern philosopher had told me again and again that I was in the right place, and I felt depressed even in acquiescence. But (in Christianity) I had heard that I was in the wrong place, and my soul sang for joy, like a bird in spring... I now know why I could feel homesick at home.” - G.K Chesterton (Orthodoxy)

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

DISCIPLE

Read: Genesis 17:7, Exodus 6:7, Ezekiel 36:28, Jeremiah 7:23, 30:22, 31:33, and 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

In Genesis 3:1-15 we discover the reason why things don't feel quite normal on earth, and why there is this constant tension in our lives. Rather than trusting in the Word of God, Adam and Eve decided to believe in the lie of Satan and we, being their offspring, do the same. In Adam all died, but in Christ all are made alive. Satan lies to us and tells us to invest in this world, because heaven may not be as real as we think. Satan convinces us that great careers, high achievements, chasing our goals and our "best life now" is far more important than preaching the gospel, living a holy life, and killing sin, and we fall for the same trap over and over again. The Gospel is the only thing that can break the spell that the world has casted over us. When we realize, as Chesterton said, why we feel so "homesick at home," it's because this is not our home. Our true home is with God, and this is the constant narrative in the entire Bible. God repeatedly reminds us that He will be our God and that we will be His people. The desire for home has never left us because we are not yet at home, we have this Edenic Nostalgia left in our hearts and eagerly await our return to Home.

How does the reality of sin and the hope of heaven give you strength to endure?

PRAY

In Genesis 3:1-15 we discover the reason why things don't feel quite normal on earth, and why there is this constant tension in our lives. Rather than trusting in the Word of God, Adam and Eve decided to believe in the lie of Satan and we, being their offspring, do the same. In Adam all died, but in Christ all are made alive. Satan lies to us and tells us to invest in this world, because heaven may not be as real as we think. Satan convinces us that great careers, high achievements, chasing our goals and our "best life now" is far more important than preaching the gospel, living a holy life, and killing sin, and we fall for the same trap over and over again. The Gospel is the only thing that can break the spell that the world has casted over us. When we realize, as Chesterton said, why we feel so "homesick at home," it's because this is not our home. Our true home is with God, and this is the constant narrative in the entire Bible. God repeatedly reminds us that He will be our God and that we will be His people. The desire for home has never left us because we are not yet at home, we have this Edenic Nostalgia left in our hearts and eagerly await our return to Home.

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

SEND

RE-READ: GENESIS 1, 3:1-15 & 20-24

We read in the beginning that when God came to what soon would be earth, it was without form, void and dark. As I sit and meditate on that description of earth it sounds a lot of what I was like when God approached me. I was “without form” in the sense that I didn’t know who I truly was, I tried so hard to be like others or be liked by others that I had no true identity of my own. I was void in the reality that there was nothing that could bring me joy or sustainable happiness. And darkness covered in forms of depression, guilt, and shame. And I am sure that is how God finds most of us. That darkness that pollutes our hearts is called sin; sin is what we all inherit from our father Adam. Sin has caused us to be separated from our Home with God, but it was Christ who chose to die for our sins in order to make our Home, once more, with God.

I truly believe that Genesis 1-3 is an anchor to the Christians soul, in it we find:

The Person of God: He is in authority; no one is telling him how or what to create, God fashioned the earth and all the universe by His own will. He is creative; God did not just make things, but he made them beautiful, sweet, furry, and full of goodness. And He is also gracious; When Adam and Eve sinned, He did not kill them or put them to death immediately but chose to provide a way of redemption.

The Power of God: He has the power to bring life into situations that seem dead and cold, and He can bring light into places that seem dark and lonely.

The Promise of God: Although Adam sinned, God promised a savior, and that promise was fulfilled in Christ. Knowing God as not just a promise maker but also a promise keeper gives us assurance that He is a faithful and trustworthy Father.

Knowing, not just intellectually but personally and emotionally, the character of our God should deepen our faith and reliance on Him as we grow in the knowledge of His grace.

RESPOND: Personally

Is there an area in your relationship with God where He is asking you to be obedient and step out in faith to do something that you know only He can do?

If so, then remind yourself of the character of God when stepping out in faith, because God has proven Himself trustworthy over and over again.

We are so much like Adam and Eve; when God approaches us in our sin, we are prone to run and hide, rather than confessing our sins to Him and asking for mercy and grace.

What are some sins in your life that you need to lay bare before the Lord and have them covered in the blood of Christ?

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS

SEND

RESPOND: Communally

"Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." Proverbs 27:17

Who in your CG or the church can you text or have some coffee with to encourage, or be encouraged by, in your walk of faith?

As we remember the grace of God in our lives this season, act in the same way towards outsiders. Just as God brought us into the fold of grace may we, as a community, take opportunities to do the same to others.

RESPOND: Family

Imagine fitting the Garden of Eden in the palm of your hand, or better yet, in a cookie tin, to save forever. In C.S. Lewis: *Surprised by Joy*, he writes "Once in those very early days my brother brought into the nursery the lid of a biscuit tin which he had covered with moss and garnished with twigs and flowers so as to make it a toy garden or a toy forest. That was the first beauty I ever knew. What the real garden had failed to do, the toy garden did. It made me aware of nature—not, indeed, as a storehouse of forms and colors but as something cool, dewy, fresh, exuberant. I do not think the impression was very important at the moment, but it soon became important in memory. As long as I live my imagination of Paradise will retain something of my brother's toy garden."

Have your children make their own mini garden using a cookie tin, old Tupperware or a shoe box. Be imaginative, explore your backyard or a nearby park and see what mini rocks, twigs, bugs (like butterflies, fireflies, or ladybugs) and flowers they can find. Talk about the things you enjoy from one another's garden and allow this to stir your desire for heaven, where we will forever dwell in the Garden City of God.

PRAY

Lord, thank You for giving us eyes to see Your beauty and a mouth to taste of Your goodness. You have created everything around me and beneath me, You hold all of life together and know when I rise and when I sleep. May I live in Your world as You have called me to, full of faith, obedience, and love. Allow the great light of Christ to shine through me so that darkness may flee, and salvation finds its home. I praise You for all that You have done to bring me from death to life and ask that I may be a testimony of Your glorious grace.

WEEK 1
NOVEMBER 27
GENESIS



WEEK 2

DECEMBER 4

LAW

EXALT

SANCTUARY

Authors: Ryan Williams, Clinton Allen, Wesley Schrock, Evan John, Monica Friese, Moriah Christian CCLI # 7185248

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)



SCAN TO LISTEN

Verse 1

Living in mystery
Who am I that You are mindful of me
How You love me

Verse 2

God of all the universe
Holds the world and holds my heart in
wonder Loving Father

Pre-Chorus

And my heart be found
Make it Holy Ground

Chorus

Make me Your sanctuary, sanctuary
My Father, my Father
Make me your sanctuary, sanctuary
My Father, my Father

Verse 3

Purify the depths of me
Truest gold and pure as precious silver
Nothing better

Verse 4

Make my life an o ering
Lord I long to dwell with thee forever
Precious Savior

Bridge

Fill me up with wonder Up with favor
Up with more of You
Fill me up with glory Up with power
Up with more of You

Make Me Your Sanctuary

We read the term sanctuary in scripture first in Exodus when God commands the Israelites to erect a sanctuary or holy dwelling place, that He may dwell with them. This sanctuary refers to the Holy of Holies, the heart of the tabernacle, where the Lord's presence would manifest over the ark of the covenant, and the tabernacle complex itself. The Lord gave incredibly detailed instructions for the construction of the tabernacle – from the measurements of the pieces to the embroideries in the curtains. As is fitting, He also provided the means to create these elements. It is likely that the gold, silver, and precious stones that the Israelites used to build and adorn the tabernacle are the same precious metals and stones that the Egyptians miraculously surrendered to the Israelites as they fled Egypt. One theme in the tabernacle specifications is the prominence of foliage. This theme is used to recall the Garden of Eden, the last time God perfectly dwelt with His people, and the promise He made there – that the Deceiver would one day be defeated forever.

Fill Me Up

After the Israelites followed the Lord's instructions to erect the tabernacle perfectly, we see the glory of God fill the space so much that Moses could not enter it. The visible presence of God becomes true north for the Israelites. When the presence of the Lord was seen over the tabernacle, which was set up in the center of the Israelite camp, they remained camped in place; when the presence set out, the Israelites packed up camp and set out. They were totally dependent on the direction and attention of the Lord and were aware of it in a way that many of us are not. We often think that if we only could see God, if we only could hear Him audibly, then we would have no issue following. The actions and rebellion of the Israelites show us otherwise, and the truth is that we have better. We have access to God in a way that the Israelites would not have been able to fathom—even more intimate than Adam and Eve in the garden. We do not need to look at a building to check for the presence of God or even walk alongside Him for a chat. If we are believers in the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to atone for our sins and give us new life, then the Holy Spirit, the presence of God, dwells inside of us. We are filled up with His presence.

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

EXALT

I Long to Dwell With You Forever

Read back through the hymn above and note the actions of the singer and the actions of God. There is only one action that the singer performs: longing to dwell with the Lord. As we walk into this week centered on the Israelites' relationship to God in the Old Testament, remember the Lord's first desire: that we know and trust Him (Exodus 29:46, Leviticus 26:11, Isaiah 30:15). The Lord is the one who determines holy ground (Exodus 3:5), the Lord is the one who fills us up with His presence (Exodus 30:34), the Lord is the One who is building all believers up together into a dwelling place for God (Ephesians 2:19-22). Our role is to long to dwell with Him and lean into His presence, to release our own ideas of true life and follow Him to the true tree of life.

PRAY

Father, You are above all things, and yet You make Your place with me (Isaiah 57:15). Your presence brings light and freedom, God. It is terrifying to think that You know me fully, but I revel in being fully known. Who am I that you are mindful of me? Who am I that You know my name?

I admit that I have built safe havens, sacred places for things that are not You. I honor and protect things of this fleeting world where I should be making a place for You alone.

Help me remove unholy things from Your perfect throne. Please shape my heart to long to dwell with You desperately. Purify my thoughts, my motivations, my actions, and my words.

Thank you for your mercy, God. Thank you for sending Jesus to fulfill the law that I could not keep. I praise You, and I will praise you with my whole being.

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

DISCIPLE

PRAY: Psalm 119:12-14, 18

"Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes. With my lips, I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches. Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."

OBSERVATION: What does it say?

Begin today's devotional by reading the passages several times, perhaps even in different translations. Be patient and take your time. Allow yourself to dwell with God through His living word. When we hear references to God's law, we often cringe, roll our eyes or rush past the words. We lean heavily on the New Covenant that Jesus established and on Paul's words that we are free! And yet, Christ himself says He did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Scripture is deep with praise of God's law, His precepts, and His commandments. In fact, the scripture this week is a testament to the beautiful promise to those who love and follow God's law: God dwelling with us. May the Lord open our eyes this week, so that His law may be wonderful to us.

As you read, mark up the passage by highlighting, underlining, boxing, circling, drawing arrows, making lists, and writing questions and observations in the margins.

Mark these things in the text:

- Repeated words, ideas, or phrases
- Word choice or details that seem surprising, unnecessary, emphatic, make you think of other parts of scripture, etc.
- Transition words and phrases (and, likewise, or, but, therefore, so, that, because, since, etc.)
- Lists or patterns
- Who, what, where, when, why, and how? (Context is so important!)
- Commands, warnings, promises, attributes of God, etc.

EXODUS 25:8

8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.

EXODUS 29:45-46

45 I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God.

46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

DISCIPLE

LEVITICUS 26:3-13

3 “If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them,

4 then I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

5 Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely.

6 I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land.

7 You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.

8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

9 I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you. [10] You shall eat old store long kept, and you shall clear out the old to make way for the new.

11 I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you.

12 And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.

13 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

DISCIPLE

What stuck out to you when reading?

How did humans encounter the presence of God before building a sanctuary? (ex: Genesis 3:8, Genesis 12, Exodus 3:1-5, Exodus 19:16-18, Exodus 20:18-19)

When is the last time God physically walked amongst his people?

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

DISCIPLE

LOOK UP THESE ELEMENTS FOR CONTEXT AND CLARITY. CONSIDER:

- What was it used for?
- Who was able to access it?
- Is it used interchangeably with other terms?
- How did the presence of God manifest in it?

Sanctuary

Refer to Isaiah 8:14; Ezekiel 11:16

(Bonus: What are other uses of the word “sanctuary” throughout history?)

Tabernacle

Refer to Exodus 40:16-38, Hebrews 9:1-7

(Bonus: What does “tabernacle” mean in Hebrew?)

Tent of Meeting

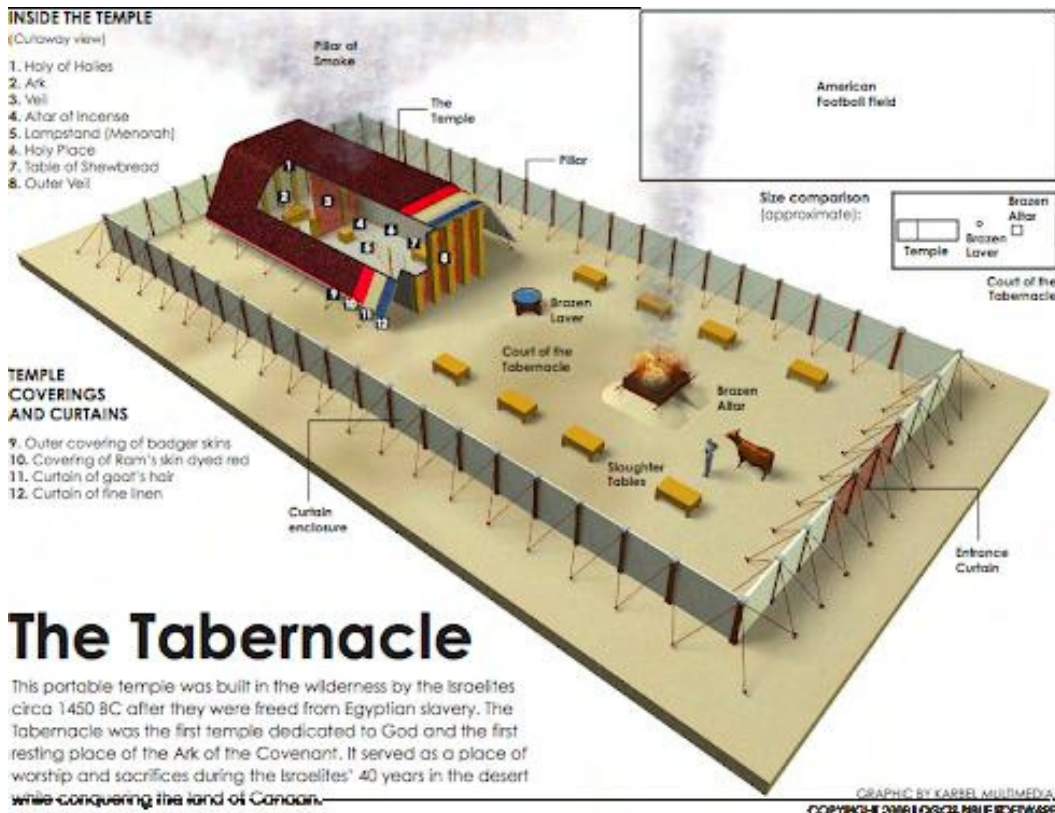
Refer to Exodus 29:42-43, Exodus 33:7-11

During the year or so that erecting the tabernacle took place, Moses met with the Lord in a temporary sanctuary set up outside the camp called the tent of meeting. After the true tabernacle was completed, this tent of meeting was never mentioned to be used again. The portion of the tabernacle that housed the Holy Place and Holy of Holies is also referred to as the tent of meeting.

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

DISCIPLE

All of the parts and pieces of the Tabernacle can get confusing if we don't take the time to picture them, but the Lord had purpose in each instruction and placement. Read Exodus 40:1-8, Hebrews 9:1-7 and review the diagram below locating the main elements of the Tabernacle.



INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?

How do we see God's redemptive plan to reconcile and dwell with us worked out in these passages? (Exodus 25:8, 29:45-46; Leviticus 26:3-13)

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

DISCIPLE

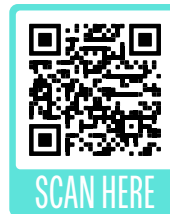
Read Exodus 3:14-15. God refers to himself specifically as “lord” in our English translation. What is the significance of “lord” (Yahweh) spelled in all-capitals as opposed to “lord” (Adonai) in standard lowercase?

Scripture is best interpreted with Scripture. It doesn't contradict itself, and related verses will often shed light on the meaning of a passage. Some bibles have cross-references included on each page or a concordance in the back. If not, you can use online resources like openbible.info or blueletterbible.org.

What do these verses say about God's character – that He would persistently create ways to and promise to dwell with the Israelites?

BONUS

Click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code for a breakdown of the presence of God as a theme throughout scripture.



NOTES

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

DISCIPLE

PRAY

God, you long to dwell with me. You long to show me who You are. You have been weaving a story of reunion from the moment humans hid from Your presence. Your ways are perfect and Your law is sweet. Thank You for revealing Yourself to me, for sharing Your personal name with me, for pursuing a relationship with me unendingly. I do not deserve Your attention, and so I bask in the deep grace that You offer through Jesus Christ. May I never lose my wonder at the work of Your hands.

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

My Soul Shall Not Abhor You

The idea of God's soul abhorring us may seem drastic. We are so accustomed to images of God as a good shepherd, a forgiving father running to a wayward son, and a generous host that we forget the reality of our condition without His grace. We were, before God's grace and redemption in our lives, enemies of God (Romans 5:10) and children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). We also have the ability to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). So, can we assume that it is not far fetching nor undeserved to be a source of abhorrence to the Lord? The possibility of God abhorring us gives even greater joy to His promise to make His dwelling among mankind. He promises that His very soul will not detest us.

The King James Version translates verse 11 as: I shall set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. The Lord did not begrudgingly set His tabernacle among the Israelites, and He does not begrudgingly set His Spirit in our bodies. Like the shepherd that goes after his lost sheep, like the father who embraces his wayward son, and like the party host that invites the very least and forgotten people to his celebration, our God joyfully chooses to be with us.

That You Should Not Be Their Slaves

Throughout the Israelites' introduction to their new life – looking toward the Promised Land, receiving the Law, building the tabernacle and holding feasts – the Lord implores them to remember that they were (past tense) slaves in Egypt and that the Lord God brought them out (past tense). The annual festivals, the message they were called to pass down to their children, even their calendar, helped remind the Israelites of those two facts (Exodus 13:8-9). So, let us ask ourselves: Why are those two facts so important? And what does it have to do with me in the 21st century?

It is important to make note of the "that" dividing the verse. Why did God lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt? So that they would not be slaves. It is simple and clear. The Israelites are God's chosen people, His children, and He needs no other reason to free them than that. God's language here is reflected in Paul's letter to the Galatians –

*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore,
and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.
Galatians 5:1*

Why did Christ set us free? For freedom. And what have we been freed from? From striving to be justified by the law and from slavery to sin.

Like the Lord called the Israelites to leave slavery behind and walk in their freedom, to walk erect and unburdened by a yoke of oppression, we are called to walk in our freedom in Christ. We are called to put off our old self, renew our minds and put on our new self in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:22-24). Christ freely offers us His yoke and His burden, which are easy and light. In fact, Jesus carried the burden of our sin, the burden of the cross, to His own death so that we might be released from the burden of carrying the consequence of our sin. And because of His death and resurrection, we imperfect temples are able to be filled with the presence of God.

Let us praise God for the lengths that He has gone to dwell with us and let us live in that reality.

SEND

RESPOND: Personally

Based on the passages from this week, how is Christ our EXAMPLE to follow?
(Ephesians 2:17, Luke 18:16)

Is there something or someone in this week's scripture that reminds you of the person or work of Jesus and is an example to follow? Often the characteristics of other people point to Christ. Christ is the complete and perfect example for us.

How has Christ FULFILLED where we failed?

Are there roles, relationships, or characteristics ruined by sin?
Jesus fulfills every promise and command of the law; something we could never do. He is the true and better leader, king, friend, husband, Passover lamb, servant, priest, prophet, temple, etc.

How did Christ make ATONEMENT for our sins?

Do you see ways in which Christ takes the punishment even though he did no wrong?
Jesus traded places with us, taking upon himself the wrath that sin deserved for our lawlessness and giving us the righteousness of God. We are often not the hero in the story; we're more likely the enemy.

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

SEND

RESPOND: Personally

How does Christ give us his POWER to walk in?

How does Christ give us his power as he invites us to partner with him in ministry?
The same powerful Spirit that was in Jesus now lives in us as believers! Now we can actually follow his example originally set for us, and if/when we fall short, we have the gospel that forgives.

RESPOND: Communally

What does dwelling with your neighbors look like? What needs (emotional, spiritual, physical) have you seen in your neighborhood that the Lord might lead you to meet?

What neighbors have you neglected to invest in? Why?

Who can you ask to partner with you in building relationships within your neighborhood?

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW

SEND

RESPOND: Family

We are so used to accessing God without ceremony that it may be hard to imagine the separation God's holiness deserves. Forgetting that holiness can lead us to take God dwelling with us for granted.

To visualize this with your family you will need:

- A bed sheet or blanket
- A table
- Treats or a favorite story

1. Put a sheet over your dining room table and have one parent sit underneath. This represents God dwelling in the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle.

2. Designate one person to have access to join you under the table. They represent Moses and the later High Priests.

3. Ask everyone else to sit on the couch to wait to hear what "Moses" says. They represent the Israelites.

4. When "Moses" joins you under the table, share a treat with them or read a story together. They will then go tell the people on the couch what they heard/received from you. (If it is a treat, you can ask them to share one treat with everyone to avoid a mutiny.)

5. After a few rounds, or the kids get too antsy, the grownup comes out to sit with them all on the couch. This represents God dwelling with us, Jesus coming to earth to walk amongst us, and the New Jerusalem where God will dwell with us forever.

6. Bring the treats or story and share with everyone!

**If you only have two people available, you can require your child to follow specific instructions before coming under the table (like jumping jacks or a secret knock.) Then surprise them by coming out and acting out the instructions yourself. This represents Christ paying the spiritual debt that we owed so that we can have access to the Father through the Holy Spirit.*

PRAY

Praise You, God, for Your steadfastness throughout time. Praise You for being mindful of me. Praise You for purifying me. Praise You for choosing to dwell with mankind. Please come alive to my neighbors, coworkers, friends and family this season. Please use me and Your work in my life to showcase Your intentionality, power and nearness. God, I submit myself to becoming Your sanctuary, on Your terms, for my good and for Your glory. Help me to dwell with You this Advent season as You long to dwell with me.

WEEK 2
DECEMBER 4
LAW



WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

EXALT

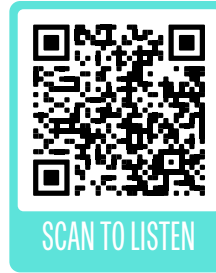
COME THOU FOUNT

Authors: Robert Robinson
[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it
mount of God's redeeming love.

Here I raise my ebenezer,
Here by thy great help I've come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.



Streams of Mercy

If grace is God withholding from us what we deserve, then mercy is God giving to us what we do not deserve. In the hymn we sing about “streams of mercy” ever flowing full of God's good gifts to us. Gifts like the warm sensation of the sun on your skin, or a home full of laughter and joy. Gifts in the form of friendships, relationships, children, and pets. But God's greatest gift is seen on the mount of execution, or Golgotha, where we fix our eyes on God's redeeming love. This is why the hymn writer urges us by saying it “calls for songs of loudest praise.” We sing for many reasons; getting good grades, passing our classes, a promotion at work or finally being able to go on vacation, and all those things are good gifts from God. How much more should we sing when we realize that God has given us His Son so that rather than being condemned to an eternity without God, we are given an eternity with God. This world can only give momentary, fleeting pleasures, but God promises everlasting joy.

Here I Raise My Ebenezer

In 1 Samuel 7:12 we see the Ebenezer that Samuel the prophet made when God rescued them from the Philistines. Moments before we read that the Philistines were about to attack the people of Israel while they were gathered at Mizpah. As the army approaches Samuel is sacrificing a lamb on behalf of the people of Israel as a sin offering. At the moment the Philistines drew near to attack the Lord “thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated by Israel.” (1 Samuel 7:5-10) Samuel saw the faithfulness of God to protect and help them so he took a stone and set it up and called its name Ebenezer, for he said, “Till now the Lord has helped us.” And even now God continues to help us. Jesus sought after us while we were still sinners, wandering from the fold of God. And just like Samuel offered up a perfect lamb, so the Lord offered up His spotless lamb, Jesus, to interpose with His precious blood. So, we raise our Ebenezers, whether it be our eyes to the heavens, our voices with praise, our hands in surrender or whatever God is calling you to raise up as a reminder of our great help found in Jesus Christ.

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

EXALT

Oh To Grace How Great a Debtor

Grace is not just an action but a person, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,” (Titus 2:11) and to that person, Jesus, we are indebted to. I am sure most of us have some sort of debt, whether it be credit cards, student loans, buying a new car or even an iPhone, we live in a world surrounded by debt. The reason we have that debt is because there was something we wanted, something we desired, and the bank decided to front the cost of that desire so long as we pay it back... with interest. God's grace has been ultimately seen in the person and work of Jesus Christ. By His death our debt to sin has been paid in full, and now, rather than being slaves to sin, we are slaves to Christ. This is why the Apostles begin the majority of their letters calling themselves “slaves” or “servants” of Christ, because once you become a Christian you no longer serve your flesh and the desires of your flesh, rather you desire to serve God and His Son Jesus. Author and preacher Jerry Bridges once wrote “Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace.” And because of this grace we can ask God to take our wandering hearts and seal them “for Thy courts above.”

PRAY

Holy Father, may I daily be reminded of the cost of Grace. That it took the death of Your only Son to bring forth redemption and life for sinners such as myself. May that reality lead me to sing songs of praise to my Savior Jesus Christ, who saw me wandering from the fold of God, and rather than leaving me to my demise chose to rescue me and claim my life as His so that I may claim His death as mine. Thank you, Lord, for paying the large debt of sin that I could never pay so that I may one day dwell with you and live with You in glory.

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

DISCIPLE

PRAY: Psalm 119: 30-32

"I have chosen the way of truth; I have set Your ordinances before me. I cling to Your testimonies, O LORD; let me not be put to shame. I run in the path of Your commandments, for You will enlarge my heart."

OBSERVATION: What does it say?

Begin today's devotional by reading the following passages several times, perhaps even in different translations. Be patient and take your time. Allow yourself to dwell with God through His living word. As Christians we have chosen to follow Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. As we read through His word may we cling tightly to the testimony of God, so that as we run this race of faith, we are not put to shame but rather our hearts are enlarged to receive all that God has for us in Christ, whether suffering or success, for His glory.

As you read, mark up the passage by highlighting, underlining, boxing, circling, drawing arrows, making lists, and writing questions and observations in the margins.

Mark these things in the text:

- Repeated words, ideas, or phrases
- Word choice or details that seem surprising, unnecessary, emphatic, make you think of other parts of scripture, etc.
- Transition words and phrases (and, likewise, or, but, therefore, so, that, because, since, etc.)
- Lists or patterns
- Who, what, where, when, why, and how? (Context is so important!)
- Commands, warnings, promises, attributes of God, etc.

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

DISCIPLE

PSALM 85

1 Lord, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

2 You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you covered all their sin. Selah

3 You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.

4 Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us!

5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

6 Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?

7 Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

8 Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.

11 Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.

12 Yes, the Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

DISCIPLE

What stuck out to you when reading?

In verses 1-7 how does the Psalmist look back on God's character in order to encourage his prayer to God?

Read Ezekiel 36: 22-28 and 2 Chronicles 7:14.

The Psalmist is pleading to God for revival and restoration for the land and its people. **According to the Ezekiel and 2 Chronicles passage, what part does god play in the process of revival and restoration and what part do we play?**

INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?

How do we see God's redemptive plan to reconcile and dwell with us worked out in psalm 85?

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

DISCIPLE

Read John 14:27.

The author writes in Psalm 85 verse 8 that “the Lord will speak peace to His people... but let them not turn back to folly.” How do the words of Jesus in John 14:27 keep us from turning back to sin?

The ending of Psalm 85 verse 13 can also be translated to “His footsteps will make a way.” According to Hebrews 10:19-20, how has Christ made a way for His people?

PRAY

Lord, I thank You for being faithful, gracious, and full of steadfast love. Thank you for forgiving my iniquity, covering my sin, withdrawing Your wrath, and granting me Your salvation. I ask that You give me the strength to turn away from my sin and desire You more and more.

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

SEND

RE-READ: Psalm 85

ALSO READ PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8, ROMANS 5:8-9

We are reminded of God's faithfulness in the chorus of the song "Do It Again;"

*"I've seen You move, You move the mountains
And I believe I'll see You do it again,
You made a way, where there was no way
And I believe I'll see You do it again."*

If we look back at our lives, prior to our salvation and even after, I am sure we can see clear signs of God providing a way when there was no way. In the beginning of the Psalm, we see how the writer recounts the goodness that God has had over His people in the past. He says, "You were favorable, You restored, You forgave, You covered, You withdrew, You turned" and that compels him to then say, "Restore us again." The psalmist ultimately desires a right relationship with God, and this is what we have in Jesus Christ. God did not only move mountains to save us, but as we read in Philippians 2, He moved past time and space and "emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men... He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Christ is God's response to the question asked by the writer "will you be angry with us forever?" Because of verses like Romans 5:8-9 we can sing words like "and on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied" (In Christ Alone). This Gospel truth should allow the seeds of hope to sprout acts of faith, love, and restoration.

Ultimately the right response to what the cross has done is found in verse 6 of psalm 85; "...that your people may rejoice in You." When we stare at the finished work of Christ we ought to celebrate and cheer for joy. When the young boy David defeated the giant Goliath, the Israelites didn't stand around una ected, the scripture says that "the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines..." and the women sang saying "Saul has struck down his thousands and David his ten thousands." (1 Samuel 17:51 & 18:7) As the Church we ought to surge the gates of Hell because Jesus promised that they "will not prevail," (Matt 16:18) and sing songs of victory like "Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free. Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me. You have broken every chain, there's salvation in your name" (Living Hope).

As Christians, on this side of eternity, we still desire (as the Psalmist did) to be at Home with God, to live in a place where sin and death no longer exist and where "faithfulness springs up from the ground and righteousness looks down from the sky." as George Macdonald once said "God's thoughts, His will, His love, His judgments are all man's home. To think His thoughts, to choose His will, to love His loves, to judge His judgments, and thus to know that He is in us, is to be at home;" And this we will forever experience in Heaven. Until then, we have His Word that points us to His acts of faithfulness and the work that Jesus did on the cross. Not only that, but He has also left us with His Spirit, that revives us daily and reminds us of who our Father is. And on top of that, He provides us with a body of believers (the Church) that can make earth feel a little like Home, and when we feel alone on this journey, they remind us that we are together.

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

SEND

RESPOND: Personally

Write down, whether on your phone or in a journal, some of the big ways God has shown up in Your life. Whether it be something miraculous or not. Use this as a reminder of God's faithfulness towards you when you feel discouraged or tempted.

As we read 2 Chronicles 7:14, God calls us to turn from our wicked ways and humble ourselves. Where can you seek humility before God and repent of sin?

RESPOND: Communally

Confessing sin or desires to one another can be difficult, but the Scriptures remind us that doing so brings healing and allows us to know how to pray and edify each other. Choose one person or a group, however comfortable you are, to either confess a sin you're struggling with or a desire that you have so that they can pray for you and keep you accountable.

Many of us struggle with anger, or resentment from past or present hurts, but as we read Christ has taken our sin and quenched God's wrath so that we may live free and forgiven. **Who in your life do you need to seek forgiveness? Where can you apply the same grace that God has given you and allow your anger to turn away from someone else on account of what Jesus has done for them?**

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS

SEND

RESPOND: Family

Think about a tradition your family has held over the years, maybe it's baking cookies and decorating them, or maybe it's finding the perfect ornament to hang on the tree. Think about this tradition and how it impacted you as a child.

Is there a way you can implement your childhood traditions now with your own family?
If you didn't have traditions as a child, what were some traditions you hoped to do that you can now implement with your children?

Salt Dough "Ebenezer" Ornaments

What you will need:

- ½ cup salt
- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup water
- A Straw
- An oven
- Child safe paint

Mix ingredients together and roll out to ¼" thickness. Have your children place their handprints into the dough and use a straw to poke a hole at the base of the handprint to hang the ornament. Bake at 200 degrees Fahrenheit for 2 hours. Once done and cooled, your children can paint them. While making, explain what an ebenezer is and discuss how God helps us and is faithful. Explain how this ornament can remind them of God's love and faithfulness in their lives over the Advent season.

PRAY

Lord, I praise You and give You glory for all the times You have chosen to answer my prayers. I thank you for listening to me when I speak with boldness or cry out in despair. You do not judge me based on my merit, but rather on the merits of Jesus, and because of that I am allowed to approach Your throne of grace with confidence. Therefore, I ask that You make me fall more in love with You, Your Word, and Your Church. Allow me to love what is good and hate what is evil and to never get tired of doing what is right in Your eyes.

WEEK 3
DECEMBER 11
PSALMS



WEEK 4

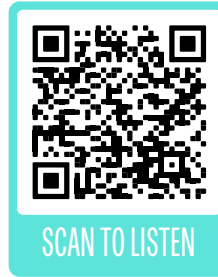
DECEMBER 18
PROPHECY

EXALT

O COME O COME EMMANUEL

Translator: John Mason Neale

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)



O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O wisdom from on high,
Who ordered all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show
And teach us in its ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times did give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O Come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
Unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save, and
give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
And bar the way to death's abode.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come O Bright and Morning Star,
And bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
And turn our darkness into light.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O King of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
And be yourself our King of Peace
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O Come O Come Emmanuel is not your average Christmas hymn. We don't hear that things are calm and bright. There aren't bells or any angels singing hallelujah, and after singing it, don't you feel this sort of aching in your soul?

The people of Israel were aching, long suffering, awaiting the one who would come crush the head of the serpent. They were waiting for the great high priest, the one who would perfectly fulfill the law and keep the covenant. Waiting for the mighty King who would rescue and deliver them. They waited long and they waited hard amidst a broken world, separated from their true home. They pleaded with God and lived in the hope and assurance of a promise. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

We, too, can connect with these lyrics (hence the aching soul) because we, like Israel, are longing and waiting. We also desire for our Wonderful Counselor's wisdom to guide our paths (verse 2) and for him to display the majesty and glory that makes him our Mighty God (verse 3). We need rescue from sin and death (verse 4). We need the Son to be our light in the pressing darkness (verse 5). We need unity among God's people and peace over the chaotic waters we find ourselves in this side of heaven (verse 6). We have been promised that the fullness of these things will be ours in Christ when He comes to make all things new. The haunting melody of this hymn perfectly captures the feeling in the lyrics. A desperate longing, a difficult waiting. The tension of what is and is to come is a mark of the Christian life. We live in the already but not yet this side of heaven. Take a moment to ponder, what do you find yourself longing and waiting for? Why is your soul aching?

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PROPHECY

EXALT

The haunting melody of the hymn ebbs and flows like a wave slowly rising and falling with each breath. It swells and builds through lines 1-4 and culminates in crashing glory upon the shore as we lift our voices to sing the highest notes of the song and exhale a cry of "REJOICE." Rejoice? Did we not just sing about this horrible longing and need? Did we not plead for God to show his faithfulness? Yes, indeed we did, and isn't this so true of our lives. We can look around and look within and know that things are not as they should be. Part of us still carries Eden, and we know it is where we belong. It is right to hope in the promises of God, we must set our gaze upon the risen Savior so that despite the ache for promise to be fulfilled, we can rejoice.

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promises is faithful."
Hebrews 10:23

God is faithful. If we stop to look, we can see it in our own lives, and we can see it in every page, every paragraph, sentence, word, and letter of scripture. Israel awaited an unknown savior in Christ, but we already know the one with wisdom from on high, the great Lord of might from Jesse's stem. We know the morning star, King of all nations, and Prince of Peace. We know Emmanuel. He is God with us, our savior Jesus Christ whose Spirit dwells within those who believe. O come O Come Emmanuel is the assured cry of our souls longing to dwell with our God. As Israel awaited the birth of Christ, we await his return to make all things new. As you hear this hymn this Christmas season, I pray that you would worship rightly longing and truly rejoicing in anticipation and hope for His triumphant return. God with us has come, is with us, and will surely come again. O come O come Emmanuel.

PRAY

Take time today to specifically lay before the throne of grace the things that your soul longs for this season. Meditate on how they are met fully in Christ and rejoice thanking him for His faithfulness.

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PROPHECY

DISCIPLE

I PRAY: Psalm 119:97, 103

"Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day... How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

OBSERVATION: What does it say?

Begin today's devotional by reading the following passages several times, perhaps even in different translations. Be patient and take your time. Allow yourself to dwell with God through His living word. As Christians we have chosen to follow Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. As we read through His word may we cling tightly to the testimony of God, so that as we run this race of faith, we are not put to shame but rather our hearts are enlarged to receive all that God has for us in Christ, whether suffering or success, for His glory.

As you read, mark up the passage by highlighting, underlining, boxing, circling, drawing arrows, making lists, and writing questions and observations in the margins.

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- *Transition words and phrases (and, likewise, or, but, therefore, so, that, because, since, etc.)*
- *Lists or patterns*
- *Who, what, where, when, why, and how? (Context is so important!)*
- *Commands, warnings, promises, attributes of God, etc.*

ISAIAH 9:2-7

2 The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,

on them has light shone.

3 You have multiplied the nation;

you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you

as with joy at the harvest,

as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

4 For the yoke of his burden,

and the staff for his shoulder,

the rod of his oppressor,

you have broken as on the day of Midian.

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PROPHECY

DISCIPLE

5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle
tumult and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

ISAIAH 11:1-10

1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

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4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

5 Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.

7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

9 They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

10 In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal
for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his
resting place shall be glorious.

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PROPHECY

DISCIPLE

MICAH 5:2-4

2 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.

3 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.

4 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.

What stuck out to you when reading?

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DISCIPLE

Read Romans 15:8-13, Revelation 22:16, and Acts 13:22-23.

These verses help bring clarity that who Isaiah and Micah are talking about is indeed the Messiah, Jesus. It was promised that He would come through the line of Jesse, the bloodline of King David. If you'd like to know more, you can find a genealogy of Jesus in scripture in Matthew 1:1-17. The individuals found there should astound you! God truly desires to dwell with Israel and Gentiles alike.

Go back to the passages in Isaiah & Micah.

Make a list of all the words that describe who Jesus is and what He will do.

WHO HE IS...

WHAT HE BRINGS...

What words and phrases that describe Jesus do you find most meaningful? Why?

What does your heart most long to receive from Christ in this season?

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PROPHECY

DISCIPLE

INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?

How do we see God's redemptive plan to reconcile and dwell with us worked out in the Isaiah and Micah passages?

This season can often cause us to focus on created things rather than our creator. In truth, it's not a what that we are longing and waiting for, but who. Use these cross-references to gain a deeper understanding of these powerful names for our Savior.

Scripture is best interpreted with Scripture. It doesn't contradict itself and related verses will often shed light on the meaning of a passage. Some bibles have cross-references included on each page or a concordance in the back. If not, you can use online resources like openbible.info or blueletterbible.org.

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

1 Corinthians 1:30 & Colossians 2:3

MIGHTY GOD

Jeremiah 23:5-6 & Psalm 45:6

EVERLASTING FATHER

Proverbs 8:23 & Hebrews 2:13-14

PRINCE OF PEACE

Isaiah 11:6-9, Micah 5:4-5 & Ephesians 2:14-18

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DISCIPLE

How do these verses and any other cross-references you found add understanding to these names and depth to your longing for Christ?

Which of these names are most difficult for you to believe and hold as truth? Why?

How does the truth about who Jesus is help you prepare your heart to celebrate His birth?

PRAY

The A.C.T.S. model for prayer guides us in adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication as we pray. Take a few minutes on each as you close out the Disciple section of this week's devotional.

ADORE:

Spend time adoring Christ as your Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting, Father and Prince of Peace.

CONFESS:

Take time to confess which of these names is most difficult for you to believe and hold as truth.

THANKSGIVING:

Thank our gracious God for his Son, fulfilled promises, and future promises we find in this week's scriptures.

SUPPLICATION:

Make requests to our God who hears.

SEND

RE-READ: MICAH 5:4

The bible is full of imagery relating to shepherds. In Micah 5:4 we see that the sheep of the shepherd's flock shall dwell secure. Dwelling with the Lord is a promise that we are safe, secure, desired, and loved. The good shepherd is our protector, defender, rescuer, assurance, reward, blessing, peace, healer, keeper, and provider. Read the following versus and meditate on how they beautifully and deeply display God's desire to dwell with us through the imagery of a shepherd and his flock.

"For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country."

Ezekiel 34:11-13

"The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Psalms 23

"He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young."

Isaiah 40:11

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and they know me, just as the Father knows me and I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."

John 10:14-15

Notes:

RESPOND: Personally

Reflect on Isaiah 9:2-7, 11:1-10 & Micah 5:2-4.

Is there a SIN you need to repent of?

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SEND

Is there a **PROMISE** you need to claim?

Is there an **EXAMPLE** you are called to follow?

Is there a **COMMAND** to obey?

Is there a **TRUTH** God is calling you to cling to?

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SEND

RESPOND: Communally

The whole world seems to be waiting for what's next believing and hoping that it will provide something better. We all believe at times that something we seek will fill the void with in us and give us what we lack. But the passages of scripture in Isaiah and Micah help us to understand that it's not a what we are in need of but a who. Jesus, Emmanuel, is the answer to every struggle and longing of our souls. Go back to the Disciple section and review what these scriptures tell us about who Jesus is and what He brings to us.

Who in your life needs to see that He is a Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, the King of a kingdom with no end, etc.? When and how will you share this with them?

RESPOND: Family

For this activity you will need...

- 2 treats or special toys per child
- A Flashlight
- A very dark room
- Aluminum foil works great to black out windows if you don't have black out curtains.

Preparation: Hide the treats or special toys in the darkest room in your home. Be sure to leave just a little showing, but for the most part hidden. The treats or toys should be impossible to see in dim light, tricky with a flashlight, and easy to see with the lights on.

Activity: Outside of the dark room read the following verses as a family:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness on them has light shone." - Isaiah 9:2

"I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." - John 8:12

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." - John 1:4-5

First, be sure the dark room is as pitch black as possible. Then taking your children by the hand, guide them to the center of the very dark room and sit down. Tell your children that there is a treat hidden in this room (don't mention that there are 2, we want them thinking there is just one), and that if they can tell you where it is, they can have it. Give them 30 seconds or so to look around the room and see if they can spot the treat. Once the time is up and the treat is not found, discuss with your children that looking for the treat in this room is like living without Jesus. We are like the people mentioned in the Isaiah passage walking in darkness in a land of deep darkness.

SEND

Second, further explain that when Jesus came to earth to be with us, He gave us access to a light that shines into the darkness, Himself! This is what life is like with Christ. His bright light shines into and through the darkness revealing to us by the Spirit His goodness, love, and life. Give your children a flashlight and allow them 30 seconds or so to look around the room for the hidden treats and toys. If they spot one and can tell you where it is, go and grab it for them. Celebrate that in Jesus we no longer have to fear the darkness! If your child doesn't, find the treat or toy, that's okay. We will make sure they find it next.

Finally, point out that the flashlight was a much better way to try and find the treat than sitting in the dark. This is what life is like before heaven. We can experience and enjoy the wonderful powerful light of Christ, but it's not yet perfect. We are still in a land of deep darkness. God however has a plan for us to perfectly experience Him in a world full of glorious light. He has so much more to offer! He says that when Jesus comes again, and God promises that He will, His light that shines in the darkness will never go dark again. We will one day experience the fullness of Christ's light and it will be so bright that we won't even need the sun in the sky! We will be with the Lord always and forever. Turn the lights on in the room and allow your children to find all the remaining treats. Help them see the power of Christ's light in the world and God's desire to give far more abundantly than we could hope for or imagine through His Son. Help your children see that in this season we remember Christ's coming that brought light into the world, and we look forward to His return to shine light on all things in all places and bring us to our perfect heavenly home.

PRAY

Emmanuel you are the promised one that the prophets foretold. Through you we have seen a great light, one that shines in the darkness and will not be overcome. In you we have a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Your kingdom will be established and upheld with justice and righteousness for all eternity. You Jesus have come to dwell among us, and we trust that you will do so again. Help us in the longing and waiting to remember that you are faithful. Help us to rest secured as the sheep of your flock good Shepherd. In you we dwell secure.

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PROPHECY



WEEK 5

DECEMBER 25

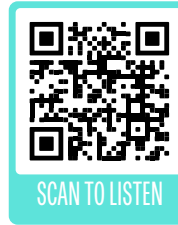
GOSPELS

EXALT

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Author: Phillips Brooks

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)



O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless
sleep The silent stars go by
Yet in the dark street shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep the angels keep
their watch of wondering love
Oh morning stars together,
proclaim thy holy birth.
And praises sing to God the king,
and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently
The wondrous Gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive Him
still The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born in us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
Oh, come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Immanuel!

This lovely hymn was penned by Phillips Brooks after his own pilgrimage to Bethlehem by horse from Jerusalem one December evening in 1865. Brooks saw this sleepy little town and considered how the darkness of its winter night was not so different from the spiritual darkness Christ shined His eternal light into at His birth. With the birth of the holy child in Bethlehem, we who were walking in darkness - without hope and full of fear - have the privilege of seeing and savoring the great Light of the World.

"The hopes and fears of all the years...." Let the weight and depth of these words sink in by considering the entire narrative of Scripture and Israel's tumultuous history. Think back to what you read during the first week of Advent: Adam and Eve failed to function as representatives or priests in the garden and were cast out of God's presence. Generations later, Israel failed miserably too. In the tabernacle and temple, God had dwelled in their midst once more like in the garden, yet they still refused to walk as a "kingdom of priests," as "a holy nation" (Ex.19:6) when they willfully chose to worship idols. The Israelites entered their Promised Land only to be justly cast out when they fell to Babylon in 586 B.C. After decades of Babylonian exile, their captor fell to Persia, and many Israelites were able to return home to rebuild the temple and city wall under Persian rule. Hundreds of years later, along came Alexander the Great (330 B.C.), imposing Greek rule on this region until Rome obligingly stepped in to rule the Jewish people in 63 A.D. Internal strife, revolts, and silence from God marked this long period of time for God's people nearly five hundred years since the last prophet Malachi had spoken. Jewish religious leaders broke o into groups that valued different, often extra-biblical traditions (best known are the Pharisees and Sadducees) that fought for authority and power. And though they had invited Rome in to provide stable leadership, the Jewish people were now oppressed by the rules and regulations of this new world power. Israel may not have been enslaved to Egypt as in the days of old, but they again desperately needed a Deliverer.

In his song, "Deliver Us," Andrew Peterson voices the longings of God's people,
*"Our enemy, our captor is no pharaoh on the Nile
Our toil is neither mud nor brick nor sand
Our ankles bear no calluses from chains, yet Lord, we're bound
Imprisoned here, we dwell in our own land"*

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GOSPELS

EXALT

God's people were back in their own land, governed by the Romans, and weighed down by the burdens inflicted on them by their own religious leaders. For those trying to follow Deuteronomy 6 and love the Lord with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength, this must have felt so wearying. "Yahweh, break this silence if you can," Peterson continues in his song. What hopes and fears must the people of God have been carrying for generations as the dear Christ was preparing to enter in? Would God keep the promises of Isaiah and Micah? Or would He stay silent forever? Would they always be bound by one oppressive leader or another? Would they ever be near to God again?

As the Israelites went about their daily work, longing for the deliverer and anointed king from the line of David, God was using a different kind of king, the Roman Caesar Augustus, to prepare the way for Christ to come and begin fulfilling all of the words promised by the prophets. Proverbs 21:1 says, "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." Caesar's decree ensured that the virgin-yet-pregnant Mary, with Joseph from the line of David, would find their hometown of Bethlehem at the time of the Messiah's birth. Silently yet masterfully, God was at work preparing a wonderful gift for His people, ensuring that each detail of Christ's life from the very beginning would seamlessly meet all of His promises. All of their hopes and fears WERE met in Christ, beginning in Bethlehem! God would again dwell with His people through Christ (John 1:14), and Christ would do what Adam and Eve, and Israel could not do. Hebrews 9:11-12 says that Christ "appeared as the high priest" and "secured for us eternal redemption." No, God did not answer with immediate redemption from the political power of the day. Instead, He answered with this wondrous gift of salvation for any who would ask for it in faith.

What hopes and fears do you need to lay before the Lord this Christmas?

We worship a God who is at work in both the bigger picture of human history and in the small details of His creation. He who secured each detail of His saving work will surely care for those whose meek souls come to Him in humility. As Christ came to live with us on earth, may His love and spirit be born again in your hearts this Christmas season as you celebrate God's great love and trustworthiness.

PRAY

God, I praise You for the wondrous gift of salvation that comes through Christ. I am in awe of how You worked all things for the good of your people—through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Thank You for not just delivering Israel, but also sending Christ for all who come to Him in faith. I confess that I often, like Israel, expect You to move in one way, yet You have the power to beautifully defy our expectations. Help me to come to You open-handed with my hopes and fears, with a humble and meek spirit, trusting in Your goodness and care. You desired to dwell with us from the beginning of creation, and I pray You would abide in me today and every day.

DISCIPLE

PRAY: Psalm 119:89-90, 129-130

"Forever, O Lord, your word, is firmly fixed in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast ... Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple."

OBSERVATION: What does it say?

Begin today's devotional by reading the following passages several times, perhaps even in different translations. Be patient and take your time. Allow yourself to dwell with God through His living word. As Christians we have chosen to follow Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. As we read through His word may we cling tightly to the testimony of God, so that as we run this race of faith, we are not put to shame but rather our hearts are enlarged to receive all that God has for us in Christ, whether suffering or success, for His glory.

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- Commands, warnings, promises, attributes of God, etc.

JOHN 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

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GOSPELS

DISCIPLE

7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light,
that all might believe through him.

8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about
the light.

9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was
coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through
him, yet the world did not know him.

11 He came to his own, and his own people did not
receive him.

12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his
name, he gave the right to become children of God,

13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh
nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and
we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the
Father, full of grace and truth.

LUKE 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city
of Galilee named Nazareth,

27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the
house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord
is with you!"

29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern
what sort of greeting this might be.

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30 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

34 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

37 For nothing will be impossible with God.”

38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

MATTHEW 1:18-23

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

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DISCIPLE

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,” (which means, God with us).

LUKE 2:1-21

1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

LUKE 1:26-38

6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

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GOSPELS

9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

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

14 "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"[d]

15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS

DISCIPLE

What stuck out to you when reading?

Christ's birth fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies. What promises did God make and keep?

| Old Testament Prophecy | New Testament Fulfillment | Promises Made & Kept |
|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Isaiah 9:6-7 | Matthew 1:2-23 | |
| Isaiah 7:14 | Luke 1:31-33 | |
| Micah 5:2-4 | Matthew 2:4-6 | |
| Malachi 4:5 | John 1:6-8 | |

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS

DISCIPLE

What names, titles, and/or descriptions are given to Jesus that highlight His deity?

What do the angels tell Mary and Joseph that Jesus will do during His life?

With all of this talk about Jesus being the Son of The Most High, reigning forever with the throne of David, what stands out to you about the description of His birth in Luke 2:7?

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS

DISCIPLE

INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?

*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.*

The hymn, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” beautifully displays Christ’s full deity and full humanity. The Son of the Most High, who was with God and was God in the beginning of creation, was pleased to lay His glory by, cloth Himself with frail humanity, and make His dwelling among us in order to save His people from their sins. Reread John 1:14 (again) and consider the word dwell:

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The phrase dwelt among us comes from the Greek word, skēnoō, which means “to tent, encamp, or reside as God did in the tabernacle” (Strong’s Dictionary). You could essentially read this verse as, “And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us ...” This “skēnoō” dwell, is only used in the New Testament by John in John 1:14 and in the book of Revelation. It has a connotation, or a feeling, of protection and communion.

What Old Testament system/structure is John alluding to with this unique word?

Why do you think John chose to write that the Word “tabernacled with us” when describing Jesus’ incarnation?

Take some time to read and reflect on Hebrews 1:14-16 and 9:1-14. Compare this to what you studied in Exodus during Week 2 of this Advent guide, and what you’ve read of Christ’s birth accounts.

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS

DISCIPLE

Why was it important that Christ come in the manner that He did, both fully human (born of Mary, tied to David's lineage) and fully God (Son of The Most High, conceived of the Holy Spirit)?

Based on these Hebrews passages, how is Jesus the true and better tabernacle? How is He the true and better high priest?

PRAY

God we thank You that from the creation of the garden to the construction of the tabernacle to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, You have desired to shelter and commune with Your people. Thank You that You sent Jesus—fully God, and fully man—to pitch His tent among us: fully man, in order to sympathize and represent us, and fully God, so as to have the power to conquer sin and death. How beautiful it is to see Your great story of eternal redemption unfold, starting with this baby swaddled in His mother's arms. You were not slow to fulfill those promises as some count slowness (2 Peter 3:9), and You are not slow to fulfill Your promises now. Knowing that we can confidently draw near to the throne of grace thanks to our Great High Priest, Jesus, we draw near to You this Christmas. What a privilege! Help us in seasons of doubt to trust in the story You are still writing for the restoration of our weary souls.

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS

SEND

RE-READ: John: 1:1-14, Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-23, Luke 2:1-21

Do you struggle to hope in the promises of God? Does this hope ever feel risky?

In the beloved children's novel, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, Mr. Beaver declares to our heroes that Aslan is coming to save Narnia from the perpetual, Christmasless winter imposed on the land by the evil white witch. As reality dawns on them that this king is an imposing lion, Susan asks, "Is he — quite safe?" to which Mr. Beaver replies, "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you." While trusting God requires great courage, His goodness and love ensure that following Him is a sure bet.

In our Bible passages, the "safe" and self-preserving option for Joseph would have been to divorce Mary quietly and move towards a new, less complicated arrangement. Though Mary's faith is undeniable in Luke 1:37, it's likely that she suffered ridicule and gossip as her belly began to grow while she was still betrothed to Joseph. What her body must have endured, traveling those many miles to Bethlehem on a donkey only to give birth in a stable! The angels had given Mary and Joseph a word from God that equipped them to act in obedience and faith, but we can imagine they had their fears and doubts. Will our acts of faith put us to shame, or will our endurance and obedience be rewarded? Will this child really save us from our sins? Like Mary and Joseph, we have the Word of God at our fingertips. Hebrews 1:1 says that God speaks to us now through His Son, the Incarnate Word. Jesus, the very nearness of God, is the evidence we need of the trustworthy and steadfast love of God, yet we still need help with our unbelief. Was Christ's work on our behalf really enough?" *"Will He really come and make all things new? Will the suffering and longing we see in this life be restored one day in heaven? Some days it feels so risky to say that the answer to all of our questions is a resounding yes. But consider Romans 5:3-5:*

"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. For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly."

Hope in God isn't risky. It doesn't put us to shame. Love came down to make His home with us. He poured Himself out to us while we were still full of doubt. The King of all creation humbled Himself to the form of a baby who needed to be cared for by a human mother. He walked among us, understanding our pain and weakness, and used that suffering as a way to show us His desire to heal us from our sins. The endurance of Mary and Joseph was rewarded in the birth of Christ. Though He was the Son of God, Luke dignifies Mary by acknowledging that Jesus was her firstborn son too. In fearing God, we don't have to fear what He is calling us to in life. He is weaving a tapestry of redemption for all of humanity, and He sees and loves you on the most intimate level. You can have hope now that your pain, your waiting, and your work is not in vain.

RESPOND: Personally

This is the point of advent, isn't it? To look back on what God has done, in order to look forward with hope at what He will do and what we are called to do—while we wait for His final restoration. He walked with Adam and Eve in the garden, He met with Israel in the wilderness through the tabernacle, and He dwelled with us on earth through Christ, our Immanuel. While we wait for Him to perfectly dwell with us again, as it says in Revelation 21, we are called to "labor in thy power."

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS

SEND

READ COLOSSIANS 3:16-17 AND HEBREWS 10:19-25, AND REFLECT ON THESE QUESTIONS:

Is there a **SIN** to repent of or avoid?

Is there a **PROMISE** to claim?

Is there an **EXAMPLE** to follow?

Is there a **COMMAND** to obey?

Is there a **TRUTH** to cling to?

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS

SEND

RESPOND: *Communally*

An international student from Italy once shared that he was disheartened that no one knocked on his door with a welcome basket of muffins when he first moved to the United States. For months he had lived as a sojourner here alone. Where was the hospitality he had come to expect from American sitcoms and stories? While the majority of our neighbors may not long nor expect us to knock on their doors with an invitation or gift any other day of the year, they are more likely to welcome it at Christmas.

Glen Scrivener says this in his 2021 post on The Gospel Coalition: “The world grinds to a halt at Christmas, and there is still a cultural memory that somewhere, somehow, it has to do with Jesus. When the season is so prominent, sharing its reason is the most obvious and natural thing. Your non-Christian friends are least shocked when you share Christ at Christmas” (Scrivener, 2021).

As your busy schedule slows, consider your neighbor—literal or metaphorical—who would be blessed by your hospitality during the holidays. Do you know someone who is displaced or alone for the holiday? Who can you invite into your Christmas or New Year's celebrations? Knock on their door, send that text, and invite them into feast over good food and the Bread of Life. Let them taste and see that He is good this Christmas. If you have children, consider including your neighbors in the family activity that follows.

Who is someone I know who could use hospitality this Christmas/New Years?

What activity are you already planning that you could include them in? How can you use this as an opportunity to share how Christ truly is the heart behind your hope and joy at Christmas?

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS

SEND

RESPOND: Family

What child doesn't get excited about opening gifts on Christmas? It is a privilege as a parent to be able to bless your child with good gifts this holiday. Before that first gift is unwrapped, pause to teach your child(ren) about the better gift, given to us by a good, good Father in Christ.

You will need:

- A manipulative nativity set (felt, toy, wooden, etc.)
- Christmas picture books about the birth of Christ. Here are some suggestions:
- The Christmas Promise Storybook by A. Mitchell
- The Story of God with Us by K. Padgett and S. Gregorie
- Room for a Little One by M. Waddel
- All is Bright: When God Came Down One Silent Night by C. Anderson
- Christmas in a Stable: Touch and Feel Board Book by R.G. Greene

If you don't have any, use any Bible or children's resources that tell of Christ's birth. Some examples include the Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd Jones or The Big Picture Story Bible by David Helm.

Throughout the week, read picture books about the nativity and the birth of Christ. Review the story and the people in it with your Nativity set, and reinforce these main points:

- God had a great plan to rescue people from sin and be with them forever. The prophets told people about God's plan. They said God would send a Messiah: Jesus! Jesus would be born into the world as a baby and live a perfect life and die on the cross to rescue people from sin.
- Jesus is God's Son, the Prince of Peace. Jesus was born to bring peace between God and us. God loves us and sent Jesus to earth to forgive us.

Ask your child(ren) observation questions to review comprehension. Examples below:

- Who told Mary that she would give birth to Jesus?
- What did the angel tell Joseph that Jesus would do?
- Where did she and Joseph have to go before Jesus was born?
- Where did Mary lay, Jesus, after he was born?
- Who first came to visit Jesus in the manger?

If your child is old enough, encourage them to retell and/or reenact the story, incorporating siblings, cousins, friends—whoever you are celebrating with—to act out the story incorporating the angels, Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and the shepherds. Encourage them to use the Nativity set figurines as puppets or to put on a play using their own props & costumes!

PRAY

God, we were once far from You, and yet because of Christ, we have the privilege of drawing near to the throne of grace. The baby you sent to human parents in a manger really did redeem us from our sins and bring peace between God and man. The garden and the tabernacle both point to the truth that Jesus invites us to walk with You and then others in beautiful communion. Thank You. Help us in our unbelief to hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering. And let us consider how to stir up our fellow believers to love and good works and to share the light of Christ with those who walk in darkness. Come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel.

WEEK 5
DECEMBER 25
GOSPELS



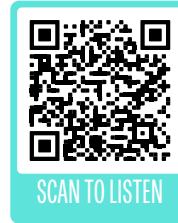
WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

EXALT

ALL GLORY BE TO CHRIST (TO THE TUNE OF AULD LANG SYNE)

Author: Dustin Kensrue CCLI #7008232

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)



Should nothing of our efforts stand
No legacy survive
Unless the Lord does raise the house
In vain its builders strive

To you who boast tomorrow's gain
Tell me what is your life
A mist that vanishes at dawn
All glory be to Christ!

All glory be to Christ our king!
All glory be to Christ!
His rule and reign we'll ever sing,
All glory be to Christ!

His will be done
His kingdom come
On earth as is above
Who is Himself our daily bread
Praise Him the Lord of love

Let living water satisfy
The thirsty without price
We'll take a cup of kindness yet
All glory be to Christ!

All glory be to Christ our king!
All glory be to Christ!
His rule and reign will ever sing,
All glory be to Christ!

When on the day the great I Am
The faithful and the true
The Lamb who was for sinners slain
Is making all things new.

Behold our God shall live with us
And be our steadfast light
And we shall ere his people be
All glory be to Christ!

All glory be to Christ our king!
All glory be to Christ!
His rule and reign will ever sing,
All glory be to Christ!

One beautiful element of this hymn is its deep roots in scripture, a depth that is not necessarily apparent at first glance. The highlighted portions above are derived straight from Revelation, a book of the Bible that is often avoided as too mysterious. In the wake of Christmas, Revelation is a perfect place to steep ourselves in the joy of hope and the incredibility of Christ's future coming. After all the centuries of waiting for a rescuer, centuries of faith, and trust in God's promises, we get a glimpse of the perfection that awaits believers in the final chapters of Revelation.

AFTER LISTENING TO THE HYMN, READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES FROM REVELATION:

All glory be to Christ! - Revelation 4:9-11

Let living water satisfy the thirsty without price - Revelation 21:6

The lamb who was for sinners slain is making all things new - Revelation 5, 21:5

Behold our God shall live with us and be our steadfast light - Revelation 21:3, 22-23

PRAY

God, Your promises are unfathomable and unbroken. When You say You will make all things new, when You say You will give us living water for free, and when You say You will dwell with us, I know that You will. My hope will not put me to shame. I confess that I try to build my own house apart from You. I boast in my future, in the plans I make, and in the things I will accomplish. I crave to receive the glory that You deserve. And yet, I am weary in this world. I am weary with the pace of life, the pace of communication, the pace of expectation. I need rest from my own striving. I need rest from the busyness of the holidays. Please refresh my soul, Father. As this new year begins, set my heart on You, God. Thank you for the rhythm of the seasons. The calendar change reminds me of newness and purity. I long for the day, Lord, that you make all things new. Please meet with me this week as I read Your Word.

WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

DISCIPLE

PRAY: Psalm 119:81-82

*"My soul longs for your salvation;
I hope in your word.
My eyes long for your promise;
I ask, 'When will you comfort me?'"*

OBSERVATION: What does it say?

Begin today's devotional by reading the passages several times, perhaps even in different translations. Be patient and take your time. Allow yourself to dwell with God through His living word. We get to read the good news that after all of the longing and waiting, all of the perseverance and clinging to the promises of God, the day will come when God will comfort us completely. All barriers between Him and us will be gone, and He will not only wipe our tears but also be our light.

As you read, mark up the passage by highlighting, underlining, boxing, circling, drawing arrows, making lists, and writing questions and observations in the margins.

Mark these things in the text:

- *Repeated words, ideas, or phrases*
- *Word choice or details that seem surprising, unnecessary, emphatic, make you think of other parts of scripture, etc.*
- *Transition words and phrases (and, likewise, or, but, therefore, so, that, because, since, etc.)*
- *Lists or patterns*
- *Who, what, where, when, why, and how? (Context is so important!)*
- *Commands, warnings, promises, attributes of God, etc.*

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.

2 CORINTHIANS 6:16

16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols?
For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,
"I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

DISCIPLE

REVELATION 21:1-7

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

What stuck out to you when reading?

WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

DISCIPLE

List the “former things” that will pass away when God makes all things new.

What do the words “it is done” remind you of elsewhere in scripture?

In comparison to idols, why is it significant that God is a living god?

INTERPRETATION: What does it mean?

How do we see God’s redemptive plan to reconcile and dwell with us worked out in these passages? (1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Revelation 21:3-4)

WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

DISCIPLE

After reading through so many parts of the Bible this season, what does it mean to be a temple of God?

The story of scripture is one whole, not 66 separate stories bound together. That means we can simultaneously read the same theme in the last book of the Bible and the first book of the Bible even though they were written thousands of years apart. Use these cross-references to gain a deeper understanding of God's commitment to dwell with His children:

Leviticus 26:3-13.

Genesis 3:7-11.

How does remembering the perfection of God walking in the Garden of Eden add to the beauty of God walking amongst us forever in the New Jerusalem?

Ezekiel 37:26-28

How do these verses and any other cross-references you found add understanding to God's unending desire to dwell with His people?

PRAY

Father, thank you for Your Word. Thank You that You don't give up on me. You are eternally patient and faithful, even when I am faithless. Thank You that You choose to dwell with me, a sinner. Please mold me and sanctify me this week as I reflect on the truth that I am Your temple. I am not my own, as much as I want to be at times. Help me surrender fully to You, Father. I will praise you with all of creation, Holy, holy, holy God.

WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

SEND

RE-READ: 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Revelation 21:1-7

In Week 2, we read God's command in Exodus coupled with a promise: "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Exodus 25:8). Then over the course of scripture and history, we saw the Israelites, and later believers attempt to do just that. First, the Israelites built the tabernacle to perfection, following God's specifications without fail. They contributed precious metals and jewels with joy, and spent a year sewing, hammering, smelting, and intricately carving what would house the very presence of God. And for a time, we see God's presence amongst them. But only for a time. Like Adam and Eve before them, the Israelites forget the goodness of God. They go their own way, follow their own wisdom, and our patient God eventually releases them to chase after their own desires.

Over the course of centuries, we see the effect of God's absence and the hope of His return threading through each story in scripture. In Psalms, the psalmist longs for righteousness and repentance in Israel so that God's glory might return to their land. King David, who wrote many of the psalms, in fact, offers to build a temple of splendor for the Lord but learns that his son Solomon will be called to do it. After King Solomon is called to and builds a temple of splendor for God, the Israelites again resist God, the temple is destroyed, and the people are overpowered. For years, the prophets look toward a faithful king while warning about and mourning the destruction of the temple, and in the gospels, Jesus declares that His body is the temple.

Then here, in the final books of scripture, we see that we, the believers are the temple. And not only are we being built into a dwelling place for God, we see that God is the one doing the building through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22). The first stanza of our hymn this week pulls directly from Psalm 127, acknowledging that only what the Lord builds can truly stand. So let us be encouraged that we sinners, dependent wholly on the selfless sacrifice of Jesus Christ, are being built by unseen, holy hands into an unending dwelling place to harbor the precious, unmatched presence of our perfect, glorious, heavenly King – the presence on which the Israelites depended, for which the prophets yearned, which the gospel enables, and for which our souls are carved.

RESPOND: Personally

Interestingly, the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament were large, rather empty complexes. They were designed to hold specific things and those things only. We know that in our culture, it is hard to leave empty space unfilled – in our schedules, in our heads, in our houses. We as temples are designed to be filled with one thing: the Spirit of God, but we consciously and unconsciously crowd our lives with lesser things.

Write your name beneath the figure drawing on the next page. This body is a temple. Fill the body with doodles, words, or descriptions of things that you are worshiping besides God. These are idols that are taking up space in the temple.

To help yourself discern what that might be, ask yourself:

- What do you fall asleep thinking about and wake up thinking about?
- What do you hold so tightly that to lose it would cause you to question the goodness or existence of God?

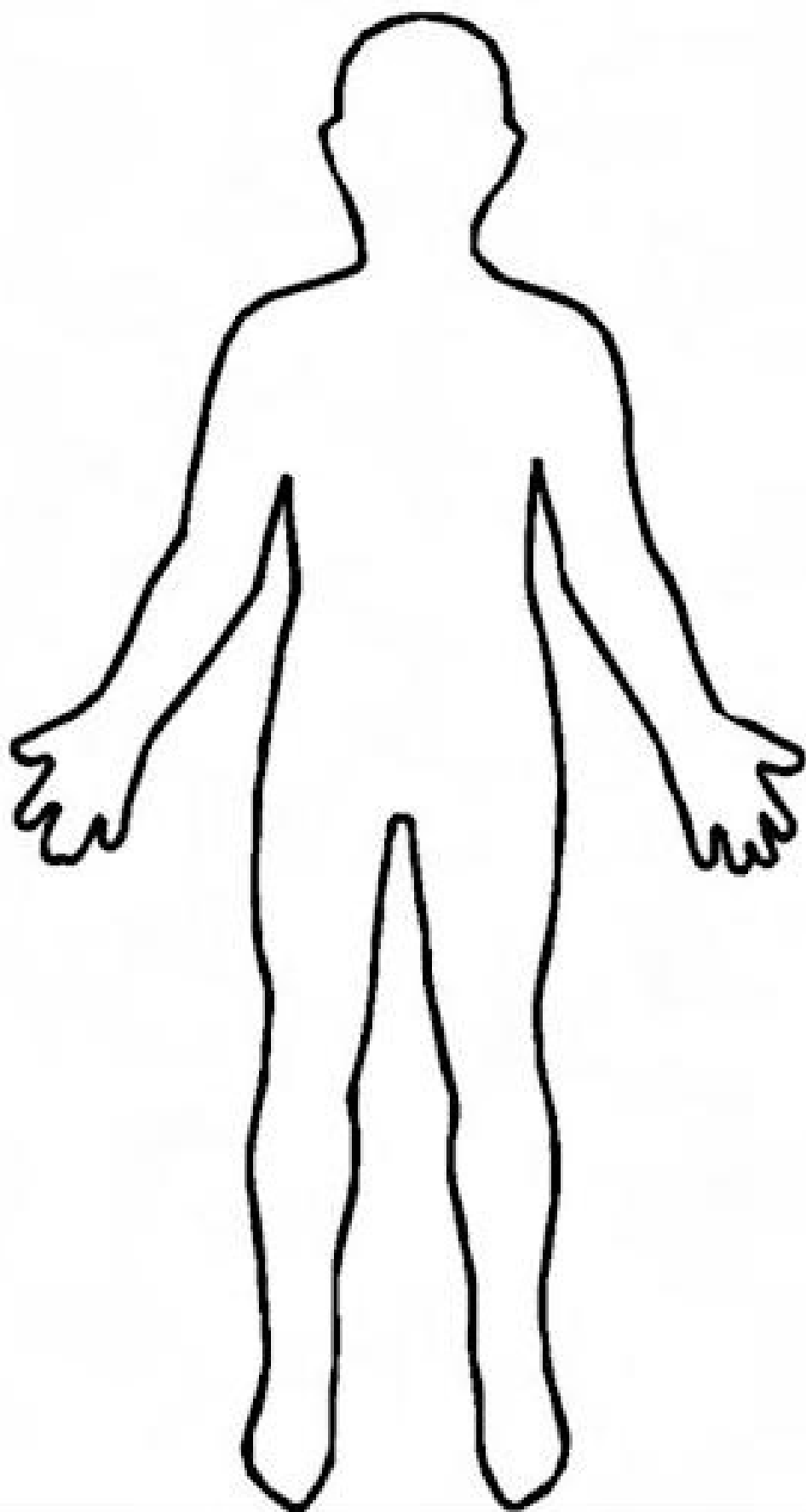
Now color in the entire figure, over all the idols, and cross out your name. In its place, write the words "Temple of the Living God."

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own."

1 Corinthians 6:19

WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

SEND



WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

SEND

How can you begin to remove the idols from your heart so that the only thing on the throne is God Himself?

How can you begin to remove the idols from your heart so that the only thing on the throne is God Himself?

What scripture speaks about your specific idols or tendencies?

Utilize any resources your Bible may have at the back, like a concordance or topical index, or utilize online resources like openbible.info or blueletterbible.org. Try to find a passage or verse for each item you wrote down.

RESPOND: Communally

One beautiful aspect of God making us into His temple to dwell with us is that He is not only doing it with us individually. Ephesians 2 says that all believers are being built together into a dwelling place for the Lord. We are not meant to walk with God alone, and if we don't lean into the blessing of community, we will miss a major element of God's intentions.

Who from church can partner with you in destroying your idols from the exercise above?

WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

SEND

How can we mirror God's heart to dwell with His people in the way we interact with our neighbors, coworkers, classmates, families, etc.?

RESPOND: Family

It can be hard to visualize being filled with an invisible God, and we need to remember that our children may not yet have the Holy Spirit inside them. When you have time with your family around a meal or activity, you can begin to open up about the way you used to be before you knew Jesus. Share your testimony, focusing on how Jesus filled you with joy, hope, peace, etc. If it's helpful, use the figures below to repeat the exercise above, explaining to your family what you held as most important before Jesus filled your life.

Also, feel free to cut out the figures at the end of this study for the kids to decorate. Encourage them to fill the body with colors, jewels, sticks, etc., until it looks like a body that God would like to live in. After decorating, take them to a mirror and show them the body that God does want to dwell in – theirs.

Talking points:

- God first dwelt with people in the Garden of Eden, then in temples, then in us.
- Even though we are not perfect, not always kind, selfless, or gentle, God chooses to make His home inside us.
- We can't see God fill us, but our thoughts, words, and actions can show us and others that He is in us.
- Other things continually try to take God's place in our lives, but we can help each other to remember that we are made to worship only God.

Memorize as a family:

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

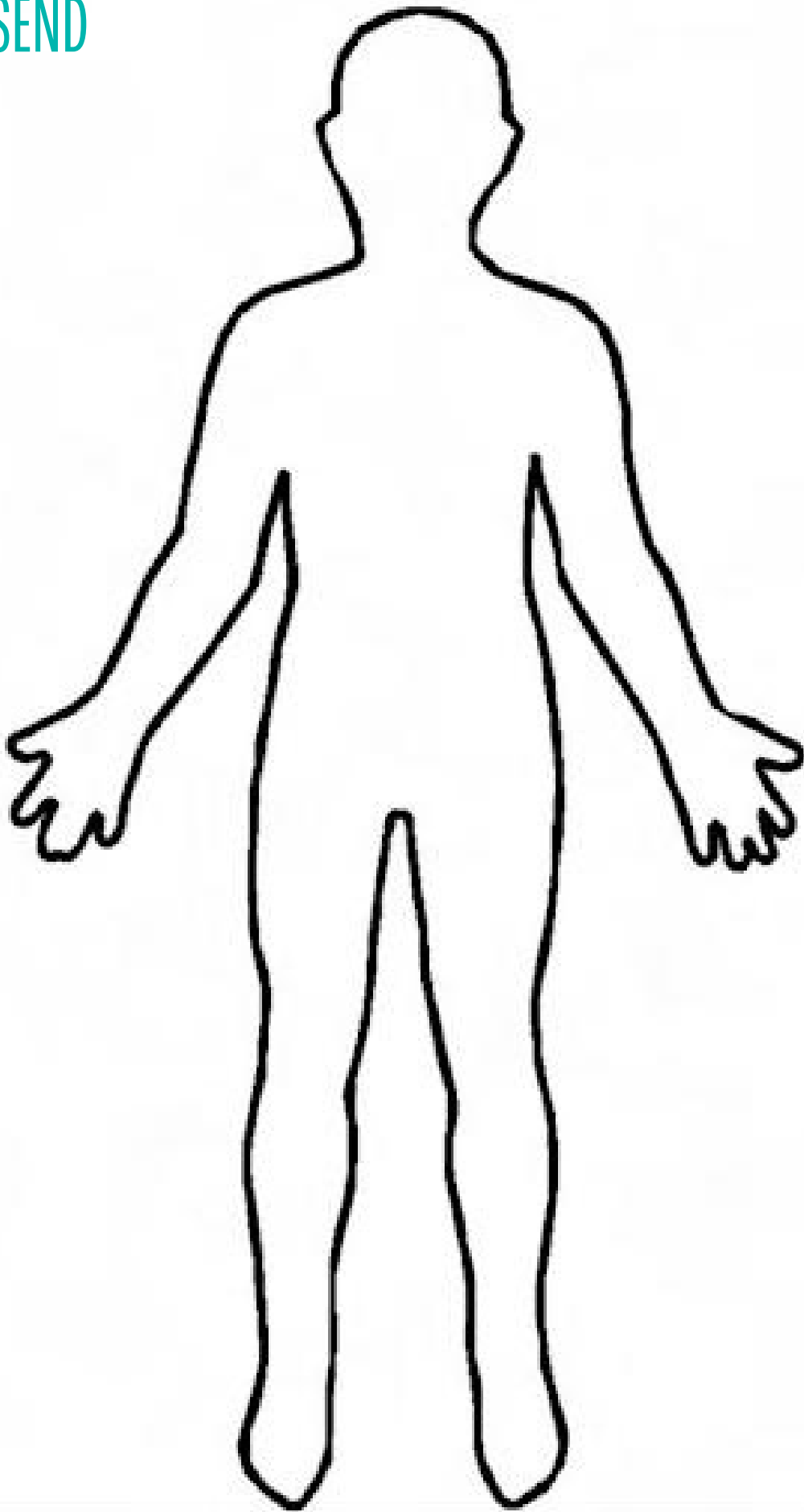
Revelation 21:3

PRAY

Father, I pray that we see and worship the fact that the entire Bible is threaded with Your desire to dwell with us. It is incredible that we are able to start in Genesis and end in Revelation, centered on the same idea. Though we broke the perfection You initiated in the first days of the world, You will re-institute a perfection sweetened by our complete redemption. You remove our sin from us as far as the east is from the west and draw near to us Yourself. Please lead us this year. Help us remove idols from Your throne. Help us lean on our family of believers to encourage one another toward You. We long to dwell with You forever in glory, Holy Father! We praise Your name above all names, forever and ever.

WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION

SEND



WEEK 6
JANUARY 1
REVELATION


THE WELL



DWELL