

LIVING



THE GOSPEL LIFE

daily devotions for christians on a mission

■ The Season Of Advent ■



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Mission Statement

To inspire, challenge and equip Christians in a missional approach toward a faith in action: a faith seeking to express itself in the home, the neighborhood, the workplace, the school, the community and the congregation.

Sunday, Advent Week One

“Stir Up” Time

*The hour has
come for you to
wake up from
your slumber
because our
salvation is
nearer now
than when we
first believed.*

Romans 13:11

*Challenge:
Ponder the
traditional Ad-
vent “stir up”
prayers. Check
them out in
your hymnal
or online.*

*Read:
Matthew 25:1-13*

Advent is “stir up” time. The Advent call shouts, “It is high time to wake up from your slumber. It is time to get up and get ready.”

Get ready for what? Another holiday splurge? Another round of selling and shopping, planning and partying, credit-carding and celebrating?

Not at all! Advent is a time to stir up the soul, a time to get ready for the Lord’s coming.

Whether we are young or old, we pause to invite Jesus to come into our hearts and then to share His coming with those we meet.

Lord Jesus, make us ready for your coming to us now and then at the end of time.

*—Walter M. Schoedel
Webster Groves, MO*

Monday, Advent Week One

Revealed

*Behold, the
Lord God
comes with
might.*

Isaiah 40:10

*Challenge:
Reveal the
mighty love
of Jesus in
great and
small ways
today.*

Read:

Isaiah 40:9-11

2 Corinthians

5:18-21

The prophet announced that the Lord himself was coming—with might. Really? According to the angelic announcement, the Lord of heaven and earth arrived in helpless weakness: “You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12).

God often does things that way. His divine power was hidden, carefully wrapped in an infant’s swaddling cloths. By his mighty power he saved us from sin, death and the devil, not with thunderbolts and flashes of lightning, but in the helpless weakness of his own Son on a cross. In our lives too, the mighty love of God is hidden, revealed in such very small things—washing the dishes, taking out the trash, offering a kind word or sharing the good news of Jesus with someone who needs to hear of the hidden might of our God.

Lord God, I pray that your love will be revealed in my words and actions.

—Carol Geisler
Manchester, MO

Tuesday, Advent Week One

Neighborhood Party

*...for I must
stay at your
house today.*

Luke 19:5

*Challenge:
How might
God use
you through
Christmas par-
ties this year?*

Read:

Luke 19:1-10

How do you witness to your neighbors in the Christmas season? We have struggled for twenty years in a neighborhood which seems to value privacy over social interaction. Three years ago, one neighbor hosted a party with nine homes in attendance. We met a couple with a vibrant faith adjusting to retirement, engaged in small group conversations to get acquainted and experienced a meaningful conversation with an avowed atheist who was grieving the recent death of his mother. I had a brief opportunity to care and to share my faith. How well did we bear witness to the Christ Child? We don't know. We continue to pray for open doors.

We take comfort in the story of Zacchaeus. Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, I must stay at your house today." He concludes with, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

*Lord, touch our neighbors through
our lives.*

—Stephen J. Carter
Oakville, MO

Wednesday, Advent Week One

The Candle Effect

Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.
Matthew 5:15

Challenge:
Light a candle at home and sing "Silent Night."

Read:
1 John 1:5-7
John 1:9-13

Every Christmas Eve, one of the most touching moments in worship for many is when we all light candles while singing "Silent Night," a beloved tradition in many churches around the world.

The flickering and waving of the candle light has the ability to make us sense the power of God in our midst and reminds us of the fact that Christ is indeed the Light of the world who has come into this dark world of sin to save us.

But Christ also said to each one of us, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 4:14). We are called to be that flickering and waving light of Christ to others. We can be the light of Christ in how we shine with joy, how we glow with hope, how we warm a room with the love of the Lord. Let your light be a beacon to all that Christ is born in each one of us today.

Let us flood the world with your light flowing in us and through us, O Lord.

—Mark Zimmermann
St. Louis, MO

Thursday, Advent Week One

Are You Ready?

...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season...
2 Timothy 4:2

Challenge: Each time you hear or utter the phrase "Are you ready?" let it remind you of being ready for Jesus.

*Read:
Luke 3:1-6*

I would not be able to count the number of times I have asked or been asked, "Are you ready?" With five children, it was used often.

Waiting for a carnival ride to begin, starting school or any new activity, the same question was asked, "Are you ready?" When stomachs began to grumble, the question became, "When will dinner be ready?" When my husband was waiting for me, he would ask, "How soon will you be ready?" We ask the mechanic, "When will the car be ready?"

Advent is a time when we need to ask ourselves, "Am I ready?" It doesn't matter how many times we have celebrated the Christmas season, we still need to prepare our hearts and minds so we are ready, once again, to be amazed by the wonder of Jesus' birth.

Jesus, help me prepare my heart so I am ready.

—Gloria Doty
Fort Wayne, IN

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." —Luke 4:18-19

Living the Gospel Life seeks to equip, challenge and inspire Christians who are on a MISSION.

It is an exciting and even holy endeavor, for Christians on a mission are fulfilling the mission of Christ.

From the moment it was revealed, *Jesus' ministry was a ministry of action*: announcing, releasing, healing, enlightening, freeing, proclaiming.

- His ministry was not global, but local.
- It was hands-on and spirit-motivated.
- It was grounded in Scripture and in prayer.
- It was oriented toward a goal: "to give his life as a ransom for many." *Mark 10:45*

This is the mission to which Jesus calls his followers. It is an appropriate mission to reflect upon *during the Advent season*, when we are called to turn from self-seeking ways and to journey down God's path.

May these Advent devotions inspire you, even challenge you, to a faith that is active, vital and alive in the Spirit of our Lord during this holy season.