

LIVING



Creations
Communities
Sainthood

THE GOSPEL LIFE



■ The Season of Advent ■

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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

Wait and Wonder

*You will be
with child and
give birth to
a son and you
are to give him
the name Jesus.*

Luke 1:31 NIV

*Challenge:
Notice waiting
in your daily
living. Help
your family or
friends connect
their waiting
to Advent
waiting.*

*Read:
Psalm 130
James 5:7,8*

Every mother who waits the long nine months for her baby to be born understands the waiting, the aching for someone to arrive. Advent is a time of waiting, of longing, too. Mary knew that waiting. She had time to prepare, to ponder what it would mean to give birth to God's Son, her Savior and the Savior of all people. That time of waiting was a blessing for preparing heart and soul to receive God's greatest gift.

So, the next time you find yourself waiting, remember Mary waiting for Jesus to be born. Prepare to welcome him this Christmas. Wait and wonder at God's abundant love in sending Jesus.

*Make me patient, Lord, as I wait
this Advent tide. Prepare my heart to
welcome Jesus.*

*—Donna J. Streufert
South Bend, IN*

Monday, Advent Week One

In Person

*“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).
Matthew 1:23*

Challenge: Take time to be present with someone who is lonely or hurting, remembering that Jesus is with us.

*Read:
Matthew 1:18-23
John 1:14-15*

I am so thankful for the blessing of videoconferencing! I can connect with and “see” my children and grandchildren who live far away. We didn’t have that luxury when my children were growing up far from grandparents.

As wonderful as the technology is, it still doesn’t compare with a real in-person visit, though. Hugs are impossible through video! Our grandchildren know about us through video calls, but they actually “know” us because we travel to spend time with them in person.

God knew that his children would never fully know him from a distance, so he came to be with us in the person of Jesus. No other “god” lived among his people and then sacrificed his life to save them. Only Jesus is Immanuel: God with us!

Jesus, thank you for coming to this world and living among us to show us the way to salvation.

—Diane Bahn
Cypress, TX

Tuesday, Advent Week One

Advent Buzz

Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?

Luke 24:32

*Challenge:
Gather, listen
and share your
Advent joy
today.*

*Read:
Luke 24:13-32*

Every year early in December our home Bible Study group gathers to celebrate our weekly journey together in God's Word. From the moment we enter for appetizers through the potluck meal at tables to the informal gathering to share and hear the Christmas story, the house is filled with an Advent buzz—conversations one on one and in small clusters—never far from our Advent Savior promised in the Scriptures.

I recall the account in Luke 24 of those two disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, grieving the death of Jesus, meeting a stranger who asked questions and opened to them the Scriptures about his saving mission. When he broke bread with them, they recognized him and as hearts burned within and hurried to join the other disciples with a joyful buzz that never ends.

Lord, help us join in your Advent buzz with others.

—Stephen J. Carter
Oakville, MO

Wednesday, Advent Week One

What's Your Situation?

*So, brothers,
in whatever
condition
each was
called, there
let him
remain with
God.*

1 Corinthians 7:24

*Challenge:
Discuss each
person's
situation in
the Christ-
mas story.
What has the
Lord called
you to do?
How are you
responsible
to God, to
the Child?
Recommit!*

*Read:
Joshua 24:15
Matthew 1:18-
2:18
Luke 2:4,5,7*

Mary was called to carry the child. Joseph was called to defy tradition, taking a pregnant woman as his wife. The angels were called to bring messages of good news. The shepherds were called to spread the good news. The Wise Men were called to bear gifts, then bear witness in far lands. Jesus was called to bring light into darkness.

Each December, we're called to celebrate the Child's birth. So, celebrate! Advent is also a great time to review and renew the situation to which God has called you. How will you "keep your situation" next year?

I hear your call, Lord. I'll remain in my situation to your glory. Amen!

*—K.S. Wuertz
Leslie, MO*

Thursday, Advent Week One

Luminarias

*... that
you may be
blameless
and innocent,
children of God
without blemish
in the midst of
a crooked and
twisted gen-
eration, among
whom you
shine as lights
in the world ...*

Philippians 2:15

*Challenge:
Set luminarias
along your
driveway to
welcome holi-
day visitors.*

*Read:
Matthew 5:14-16*

Many of you may already be familiar with luminarias, which are candles set in sand inside paper bags. Many churches and neighborhoods set them out on Christmas Eve. Luminarias have the effect of making a moment feel special as you walk or drive beside them.

As lights for Christ in the world we have the opportunity to shine along the paths that others drive or walk upon. We can glow with the forgiveness and love of the Christ Child. Our brightness from the Lord can serve as a welcoming invitation to draw near to the One we came to enlighten the whole world with his salvation.

*Let me illuminate the paths of others
with your mercy and grace, O Lord.*

*—Mark Zimmermann
St. Louis, MO*

Friday, Advent Week One

An Advent Log

Years ago our family celebrated the Advent season by using an Advent log. You place 22 candles on a log and light one candle each day during Advent. As you light a candle, you read a verse of Scripture, talk about it and close with a prayer.

Why not light your Advent log this year as you read Psalm 119, a stanza a day. This Psalm is an acrostic poem; the verses of each stanza begin with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Read the stanza. Ponder what you have read in terms of your Advent journey. What do you hear God saying as you reflect upon the coming of our Lord?

Lord Jesus, help me listen to your words as they give direction to my daily Advent journey.

—Walter M. Schoedel
Webster Groves, MO

*I promise to
keep your
words.*
Psalm 119:57

*Challenge:
Write your
own acrostic
poem for
your Advent
pilgrimage.*

*Read:
James 1:22-25*

Saturday, Advent Week One

Born in Our Likeness

*And being
found in hu-
man form,
he humbled
himself ...
Philippians 2:8*

*Challenge:
This Advent,
involve chil-
dren in acts of
love and ser-
vice for those
in need.*

*Read:
Philippians 2:1-11*

What does it mean that Jesus came to this earth as a child? Why not on clouds of glory with an angel army and loud brass bands? Part of the answer surely reveals his desire to identify with the weak and lowly. Jesus was born a child.

Think of your love for the children in your life. Consider your responsibility to them. Advent gives you time to prepare children for that most exciting day of the year, Christmas. Help them know Jesus as an infant, a toddler, a school boy, a young man, born in their likeness. Help them learn the music of Advent and Christmas so they can actively participate in his praise. Help children understand Jesus was born in their likeness. Lead them to love him.

*Jesus, your humility fills my heart
with love for you!*

—Donna J. Streufert
South Bend, 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.

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