

# HOPE-FULL LIVING

SPECIAL EDITION

Celebrate the  
season of

*Advent*



• Daily Devotions for This Holy Season •

MONDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

# The Light of Hope

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

*Luke 1:28*

As we light the first candle on the Advent wreath, we're reminded of the hope we have in God. I can imagine what Mary must have thought when the angel Gabriel appeared, and she learned of God's plan for her to give birth to Jesus. While it seemed impossible to her at first, she soon realized she was a servant of the Lord and placed her trust and hope in him.

In today's ever-changing world, we're faced with many life challenges that sometimes seem overwhelming and impossible. Like Mary, we need to place our hope and trust in God. Nothing is impossible with him. He is always faithful and keeps the promises he has made to us. Let the light of hope shine in your life today!

*Betsy Becker Niedringhaus  
Ballwin, MO*

**Dear Father,** thank you for the gift of your Son.  
Amen.

**Reflect:** How do you place your hope in Jesus?

**Read:** Luke 1:26-38

TUESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

# O Come, O Come— and Hurry, Lord!

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When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.

*Psalm 56:3-4*

Do you ever get the feeling during these Advent and Christmas seasons that we continue to be faced with more problems and catastrophes around us? Me too! I feel this way when I see how we often treat others in mean and senseless ways ... when I see how we sometimes live only for ourselves instead of reaching out with love to others ... or when I feel so sorry for myself that I have little energy left to encourage others.

It is at exactly during these times that I need to remember Psalm 56. It reminds us that our Lord comes not only during Advent. He comes to us each day with forgiveness, in spite of—and because of—our problems, sins and the messes we make in life. Hooray and amen!

*Rich Bimler  
Bloomington, IL*

**Lord,** keep coming when we least expect you and when we most need you. Amen.

**Be mindful:** Focus more on others than yourself, knowing the Lord has already come to us.

**Read:** Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 35:4



WEDNESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

# Remembered

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The Lord has remembered us; he will bless us.

*Psalm 115:12*

As parents of three children, we often needed their forgiveness. The busyness of our lives resulted in the need for two cars. While these dual autos served to ease our transportation needs, they did not eliminate all our challenges. On more than one occasion, one or the other of us forgot to pick up our youngest daughter from her location at the designated time.

Fortunately, we can trust that our heavenly Father remembers each of us, and by name, all the time. Chosen, loved and blessed with forgiveness found in Jesus, like Mary we pray, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

*Judith Christian  
St. Louis, MO*

**Heavenly Father, thank you** for calling me by name and gifting me with grace found in the sacrificial love of Jesus. Guide me to joyfully serve you and others as you will. Amen.

**Do:** Like Mary, praise God. Let your spirit rejoice in his promises.

**Read:** Luke 1:26-38, 46-55

THURSDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

# Good News

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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.”

*Luke 2:10*

All of us, whether we are young or old, need to know we are loved. The birth of Jesus, God coming to the earth in human form, lets us know how very precious we are to God. This is indeed good news!

Advent is a time for us to recognize not only our longing for God, but God’s longing for us. God’s great desire for a relationship with us is embodied in Emmanuel—God is with us. “Fear not!” the angel says to the shepherds, and to us as well. When we know deep in our hearts that God is with us, there is no room for fear.

God’s love stills our minds and makes peaceful our thoughts. God’s love beckons us to welcome Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, into our lives this Advent.

*Sally Macke  
St. Louis, MO*

**Jesus, Emmanuel,** in my times of fear, help me remember you are with me. Amen.

**Do:** Take a moment to quiet yourself and invite Jesus into your heart.

**Read:** 1 John 4:18



FRIDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

# The Look of Love

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Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."

*Matthew 1:23*

I once asked a friend, "How does God love me?" He thought for a while and then said, "I guess through me God loves you." I believe that deep within all of us is a longing to love and be loved, to know that someone cares and will never leave or forsake us. Unfortunately, some people spend a lifetime searching for that kind of love; it seems forever beyond their reach, like the words of the song by Johnny Lee: "Lookin' for love in all the wrong places ..."

That's what makes the message of Advent so wonderfully special. God wanted his love to be real for all the world to see, and so God gave us Jesus. We no longer need to search for love. God's love comes looking for us.

How does God love you? He takes his love, puts flesh and blood on it, and calls him Jesus.

*Edward Arle  
St. Charles, MO*

**Heavenly Father,** let your love shine in me. Amen.

**Shine out:** Radiate God's love in all you do.

**Read:** Isaiah 7:10-17

SATURDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

# Expectant Waiting

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Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.

*Luke 2:25*

How are you experiencing Advent this year? Do you feel your heart throbbing with expectant waiting? Recently my wife and I waited eagerly for the birth of our first two great-grandsons. Our hearts rejoiced at God's precious gifts. We also waited expectantly for the wedding of a grandson. His fiancée lived with us for several months while student teaching near our home, and her wedding planning enthusiasm rubbed off on us.

In Luke's Gospel, we meet an older believer named Simeon who came to the temple year after year waiting for the Messiah, trusting that he would not die before holding the Christ Child in his arms. God fulfilled his promise for Simeon, and for us as well. Jesus was born in a manger on the way to his saving death on the cross.

*Stephen J. Carter  
Oakville, MO*

**Lord, flood my heart** with the joy of expectant waiting. Amen.

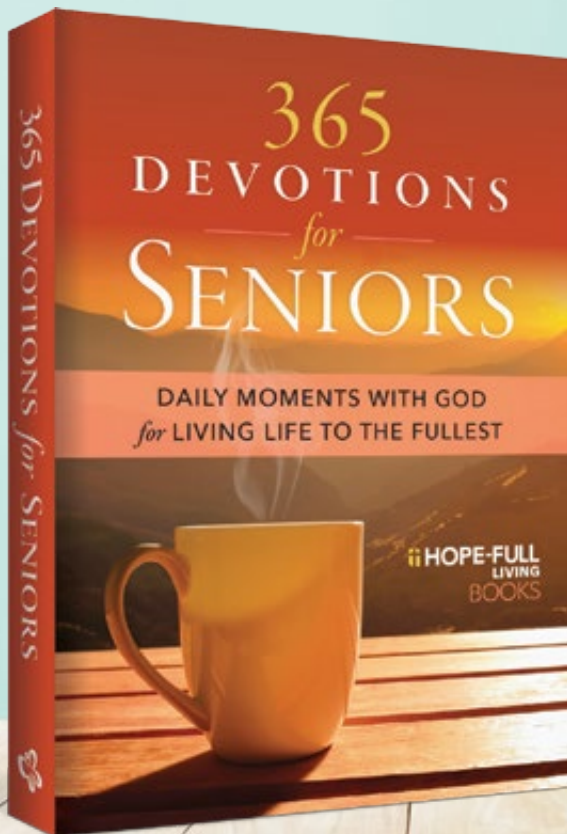
**Share:** Express your Advent eagerness with someone today.

**Read:** Luke 2:22-38





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