

ADVENT 2024

*Advent is a season of waiting, of stillness in the bustle,
A quiet pause before the rush, a sacred space to wrestle
With hope that flickers faintly in the hearts of those who yearn,
And the promise of a light that on this world will return.
It is the call to prepare, to make room in hearts and minds,
For the mystery of Christ, the peace He brings, the love He finds.
A journey inward and a journey toward the star,
That beckons all of us, no matter where we are.
In each candle's flame, we see a story unfold—
Of prophets, kings, and shepherds, and the miracles they told.
It is a time to remember, to reflect, and to expect,
The coming of a Savior whose love we can't neglect.
So Advent teaches patience, a slow and steady pace,
As we await the moment when God's presence fills this place.
It calls us to be watchful, to keep our hearts awake,
For in this season's quiet, a new hope will take shape.*

In that spirit, we've created a set of Advent meditations that will help you feel, anticipate, listen, and ultimately receive the wonder of this story, not only as a historical event 2,000 years ago but as a perpetual, living invitation.

WEEK 1

Day 1

Quote

Jesus is not God with us temporarily, but eternally. God the Son, never ceasing for a moment to be divine, took on a fully human nature and became

'God with us' forever: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"... Unknown

Meditation scripture

"Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel." ISAIAH 7:14

We know that Immanuel means God with us. This is perhaps one of the most essential pieces of information anyone could understand. For centuries, God's people wrestled with believing and understanding that God was with them. The most frequent command in the Bible is not to fear. This is often followed by the simple statement, "For I am with you." Today, set a goal to remember that God is with you.

What is the significance of believing and understanding that God is with you?

How does that affect you today?

What areas of your life are helped by recognizing that God is with you?

Prayer

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise, Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me. Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation is of

the Christ. May your salvation, Lord, be ever with us.

St. Patrick's

Prayer

Day 2

Quote

Universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, and Harvard began as Jesus-inspired efforts to love God with all one's mind. **John Ortberg**

Meditation scripture

Isaiah 9:6-7

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end."

What does the Messiah being a "Wonderful Counselor" mean to you?

What does his being a "Mighty God" mean to you?

How does his being an "Everlasting Father" impact your life?

Does the Messiah being a "Prince of Peace" help your life? How?

Classic Prayer

Oh God, gather me
To be with you
As you are with me
Keep me in touch with myself
My needs, my anxieties
My angers, my pains

My corruptions
That I may claim them as my own
Rather than blame them on someone else
Oh Lord, deepen my wounds into Wisdom
Shape my weakness into compassion
Gentle my envy into enjoyment
My fear into trust
My guilt into honesty
Oh God, gather me
To be with you
As you are with me.
AMEN
Ted Loder, Guerrillas of grace.

Day 3

Quote

The message of Christmas is not that we can make peace. Or that we can make love, make light, make gifts, or make this world save itself. The message of Christmas is that this world's a mess, we can never save ourselves from ourselves, and we need a Messiah.

Ann Voskamp

Meditation scripture

"The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.'" Jeremiah 23:5

What does "Righteous" mean?

Given today's world, how important is it to you that Jesus is a wise and just leader?

What do you love most about Jesus?

Classic Prayer

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following Your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please You does, in fact, please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, I will trust You always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for You are ever with me, and You will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Amen

Thomas Merton

Day 4

Quote

God is the one who satisfies the passion for justice, the longing for spirituality, the hunger for relationship, the yearning for beauty. And God, the true God, is the God we see in Jesus of Nazareth, Israel's Messiah, the world's true Lord.

N. T. Wright

Meditation scripture

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,

are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

for out of you will come a ruler

who will shepherd my people Israel." (Matthew 2:4–6).

Of all the images Jesus uses as a leader, why does he use a shepherd?

What is the value of him being your shepherd?

What do you appreciate about Jesus?

Classic Prayer

Just for today, help me, God, to remember that my life is a gift,
that my health is a blessing, that this new day is filled with awesome potential,
That I have the capacity to bring something wholly new and unique and good into
this world.

Just for today, help me, God, to remember to be kind and patient to the
people who love me, and to those who work with me too. Teach me to see all the
beauty that I so often ignore, and to listen to the silent longing of my own soul.

Just for today, help me, God, to remember You.
Let this be a good day, God, full of joy and love.

Amen (unkown)

Day 5

Quote

There is only one secure foundation: a genuine, deep relationship with Jesus
Christ, which will carry you through any and all turmoil. No matter what storms
are raging all around, you'll stand firm if you stand on His love.

Charles Stanley

Meditation scripture

The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,

the calf and the lion and the yearling[a] together;
and a little child will lead them. Isaiah 11:6

Our world is full of polarities and enemies. How can the Messiah bring enemies together?

In what ways can you be reconciled to enemies?

Classic Prayer

O divine master
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console.
To be understood as to understand.
To be loved, as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned:
And it is in dying, that we are born
To eternal life.
St. Francis

Day 6

Quote

The Good News borne by our risen Messiah who chose not one race, who chose not one country, who chose not one language, who chose not one tribe, who chose all of humankind!

Nelson Mandela

Meditation scripture

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;

on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:1–2).

How is Jesus a light?

In what ways does he light up your life?

Classic Prayer

Serenity prayer

by Reinhold Niebuhr

God, give us grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

Day 7

Quote

**Every human being who has ever lived has suffered from a messiah complex-
except one.**

John Ortberg

Meditation Scripture

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;

from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

²The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—

the Spirit of Wisdom and of understanding,

the Spirit of counsel and of might,

the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—

³and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

(Isaiah 11:1-3).

The prophecy of the Messiah ties Jesus to King David and his line.

What is the Spirit of Wisdom? What does this look like in everyday life?

What is the Spirit of Counsel and Might? What does this look like in everyday life?

What does it mean he delights in the "In the fear of the Lord"?

How can I delight in the fear of the Lord?

Classic Prayer

The Peace Prayer: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace, Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy; O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. —**St. Francis of Assisi**

For Daily Prayer ..

Affirmation Prayers

(Use these as needed or desired)

"YOU ARE"

You are Wonderful
You are kind
You are gracious
You are generous
You are loving
You are gentle
You are patient

You are holy
You are righteous
You are amazing
You are thoughtful
You are sympathetic
You are compassionate
You are ineffable

You are a cool glass of water on a sun-scorched day
You are shade in the desert
You are warmth in the frost
You are fire in the snow
You are ice in the heat
You are rain in my thirst
You are hope in my desperation

You are oil on my head
You are a kiss when I am hurt
You are a hug when I am lonely
You are warm bread when I am hungry
You are a blanket when I am cold
You are a hand when I am down

You are light in the darkness

You are my Lord
You are my God
You are my Redeemer
You are my Savior

You are my Rock
You are my Salvation
You are my shelter
You are my shield
You are my relief
You are my hope
You are my strength

You are my sustenance
You are my life
You are my future
My heart,
My mind,
My soul
You are!