

# HOPE IS COMING

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



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Deck the halls. Christmas is coming. This guide is a 25-day countdown to Jesus' birthday. The days ahead are what Christians call "Advent." Advent is a word that simply means "coming." Advent is all about both remembering the impact of Jesus' coming to Earth on Christmas and waiting in hope for what the Bible calls "the second coming of Jesus" when He will return again.

This is for each day of December until Christmas Day. This journal is meant for you to spend time with God once a day; but don't get stressed and give up if you miss days. The goal here is to get you thinking about Jesus this holiday season rather than just gingerbread lattes and pine trees. It's not meant to be a burden.

Here at CSF, we want to remember together that we have hope this Christmas season, no matter what difficulties we may be facing. We have hope because Jesus has come and is coming again.

This guide is set up to take you through the Bible, mostly looking at the lives of Old Testament people who were waiting in hope for the Messiah (Savior) to come. They lived in a time before Jesus' death and resurrection. They needed hope for the brokenness in their lives and so do we.

For 25 days, together as a church family, we will countdown to Christmas by reading God's Words to us, thinking about what God is telling us, remembering the hope of the gospel, praying honestly, and applying what we've read. Think of the challenges to "apply" like one of those Christmas calendars you can get at Walmart with the candy inside.





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It's one of the best parts. Don't feel like you have to do each one; instead, use the ideas to think of others this Christmas season. Remember, Jesus didn't come so that we could all get presents for ourselves. Instead, He gave us the gift of Himself so that we could give Him away.

So, choose a quiet place each day, turn off your phone, and grab your Bible, because hope is coming!

Love,  
The CSF Staff



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### DAY 1

Day 1: Adam & Eve

Read: Genesis 2:4-9,15-17, 21-25, 3:1-7

Think: What would it be like if you had never felt sad or lonely or sick or afraid? What lies do you believe about God when you sin? How has temporary pleasure left you disappointed in the end?

Hope: God created Adam and Eve and loved them too much to let their sins be the end of the story. God had a plan that one day He would make the world perfect again and rescue His children from the pain they had caused themselves. Many years later, although it would cause Him much suffering, God sent Jesus to rescue you from your sin to bring you back into His family. If you accept His forever love, He promises to one day wipe away every tear from your eyes and you will no longer have to wonder what it would be like to live in paradise with Him.

Pray: God, thank you for sending Jesus to rescue me so that my mistakes are no longer counted against me. Thank you that the lie that Adam and Eve believed is not the end for me or for this world. Help me to believe that you aren't withholding good from me when you ask me to obey. Amen!

Apply: Start a thankfulness list. Keep adding to it each day until you reach 100 things you are thankful for. Thankful people are happy people.



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### DAY 2

**Day 2:** Noah

**Read:** Genesis 6:9,11-14,18, 7:17-24, 8:1,18-21, 9:12-17

**Think:** What wickedness do you see in the world and in yourself on a daily basis? What made Noah stand out to God? What would it look like for you to “walk in close fellowship with God” the way Noah did?

**Hope:** Even though Noah was saved from the flood because of his righteousness, he was quick to falter after they reached dry land. As much as we wish we could be righteous, the Bible says that *“no one is righteous—not even one.”*—*Romans 3:10 (NLT)* The Good News of Jesus is that *“God made Him who had no sin, to be sin for us (on the cross) so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”* (*2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV*) What a relief!

**Apply:** Write 2 Corinthians 5:21 above on an index card. Put it on your mirror and try to memorize it this month.





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### DAY 3

**Day 3:** Babel

**Read:** Genesis 11:1-9

**Think:** Have you ever wanted to be famous? What do you think causes that desire? How has pride caused a big mess in your life the way it did in this biblical account?

**Hope:** This story of Babel, in the first book of the Bible, was about people wanting to be worshipped. Therefore, God confused their language. However, in the last book of the Bible, God will unite each of those languages to praise HIS NAME: *“I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar, ‘Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!’”* (Revelation 7:9-10) (NLT)

**Pray:** God, take away the pride in my heart and the desire to be worshipped. Help me to see that this pursuit won’t make me happy. Turn this desire into praising you!

**Apply:** Resist the urge to brag about anything today. Instead, look for ways to direct attention and praise toward others today—your friends, teammates, siblings, and God!



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### DAY 4

Day 4: Abraham

Read: Genesis 12:1-3,15:1-6

Think: Abraham believed God enough to leave everything that he knew; he trusted that God would give him a son, even as an elderly man. What is something radical God is calling you to do this holiday season that would require great faith?

Hope: Abraham was an imperfect man, but because he believed that God would keep His promises, he took a leap of faith and he had a son when he was 100-years old. Because of his faith, his great-great-great-great (you get the picture) grandson was JESUS!

Pray: God, my faith is small right now. Help me to trust you and step out this holiday season to obey you in what you are asking me to do.

Apply: It feels risky but invite someone who isn't a Christian to church. Ask the Holy Spirit for the faith to do it and leave the results to God!





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### DAY 5

Day 5: Leah

Read: Genesis 29:1-30

Think: Have you ever felt overlooked, unloved, or picked last? Even though Leah wasn't wanted by Jacob because of her appearance, God chose her for a special purpose! Who in your life feels insecure on the outside and needs someone to show them that God has a special purpose for their life?

Hope: Although Rachel had more physical beauty than Leah, God chose Leah to be a part of Jesus' family tree. Like Leah, even when we feel rejected by people in this world, we can know how valuable we are because of what God thinks of us. His opinion is the only one that matters. We don't have to prove ourselves or earn His love and affection as He has already shown us how much He loves us when He died on the cross.

Pray: God, help me to see myself the way you see me. Help me to show that unconditional love to someone else this week.

Apply: Don't buy anything for yourself this month and give the money to a Christian organization you love (Samaritan's Purse, BibleProject, etc.). See what God can do through you!



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### DAY 6

Day 6: Joseph

Read: Genesis 39, 50:20

Think: What trials have you faced in your life? What has your perspective been like in the midst of those messes? Looking back, how has God shaped you into who you are because of those terrible or difficult things?

Hope: Even though Joseph's charmed life resulted in a pit and a prison, he continued to trust God and eventually God placed him in a palace. Because of his faith, he ended up saving all of Egypt and his brothers from death (Jesus was a descendent of Joseph's brother, Judah, so it's a good thing he continued to trust God!)

Pray: God, living in a broken world can be overwhelming. My pain and struggle are real but I am holding on to you! I know you have a plan to redeem even my worst circumstance for good and for your glory.

Apply:





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### DAY 7

Day 7: Moses

Read: Exodus 11:1-10, 12:1-3,7,11-13

Think: God was serious about rescuing His people, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt. Just like they put the blood of a lamb on their doorpost to say they belonged to God, what in your life says to others that you are a Christian? What do you need rescuing from?

Hope: What you just read is what Jews and Christians call the first “Passover” because the angel of death passed over the homes of the Israelites because of the blood of the lamb. This holiday is still celebrated every year by Jews. The good news that Christians have is that Jesus willingly died on the cross and rose from the dead during the Passover holiday many years later so that no more sacrifices would ever be needed again. None of us need to fear punishment for our sins because Jesus has paid for them once and for all.

Pray: Jesus, thank you for dying so that I could live. Thank you for rescuing me from sin and slavery in my life. Help me to remember that this is why and what we celebrate this Christmas season.

Apply: What friend have you had for a long time whom you have never explicitly told about Jesus dying on the cross for them? Christmas is a great excuse to bring Jesus up casually in conversation. Tell your friend about Jesus this week.





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### DAY 8

Day 8: Joshua

Read: Joshua 6:1-20

Think: What is a dream you have that seems impossible? Write it down and ask God to accomplish it on your behalf! He may ask you to do some crazy things like he did with Joshua, but Joshua witnessed a miracle, and so can you!

Hope: We have a leader today that was even greater than Joshua: Jesus! Jesus is a conquering king. Whatever obstacles you are facing today, the good news of Jesus is that He has overcome them already by His blood shed on the cross AND He has given you the same power that raised Him from the dead to live inside you: the Holy Spirit. So, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9 NLT)

Pray: God, I know that you have put dreams in my heart. Give me faith to trust what you say and follow where you lead, even when it seems crazy! Let me give you the glory when the walls come tumbling down.

Apply:



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### DAY 9

Day 9: Ruth

Read: Ruth 1:1-5, 2:1-12, 4:9-12

Think: How is God calling you to step outside of what's comfortable for you to help support someone else in their time of need?

Hope: One of the most amazing things about the good news is that Jesus will never leave us. No matter how much we continue to mess up, what Jesus did on the cross was enough to cover it all. Just like Ruth, God says, "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay." (Ruth 1:16 NIV)

Pray: Jesus, give me eyes to see people the way you do. Help me to notice someone who needs a supportive friend as they go through a hard time. Give me the courage to step out of what's comfortable for me and to be there for them.

Apply:





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### DAY 10

Day 10: Samuel & Hannah

Read: 1 Samuel 1:9-20, 2:1-10

Think: What's the thing that you have been praying for the longest amount of time? If God gave you what you've been asking for, what would it look like for you to "give it back to God," the way Hannah gave Samuel back to God and use it for His glory?

Hope: What's amazing about God is that He never asks us to do anything He hasn't first done Himself. Like Hannah, God gave up His only son, Jesus, so that we could be close to God again after sin broke our relationship.

Pray: Lord, there is something that I really desire. You know the desires of my heart and delight to give good gifts to your children. Help me to see myself as only a steward of the things that you give me, using them for your kingdom and your purpose. I am asking you to give me this request in Jesus' name.

Apply: Write a note to someone who needs a miracle.





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### DAY 11

Day 11: David  
Read: Psalm 23

Think: Which part of this psalm, written by David, speaks to you the most and why?

Hope: We have all gone through hard things in our lives: suffering, doubt, broken relationships, even the death of a loved one, but we don't need to live in fear of pain or death. Because of Jesus' work on the cross, we can know for certain that our eternity is secure—not because of being a good person—but because we have a Good Shepherd who has laid His life down for us, His sheep.

Pray: Lord, thank you for caring for my every need. You give me strength. You silence my fears. You give me rest. Thank you that you are good, and your love never stops pursuing me.

Apply: Challenge yourself to stay off of social media today.



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### DAY 12

Day 12: Elijah

Read: 1 Kings 17:8-24

Think: Where in your life have you seen God provide when it seemed like there was no hope, like the way Elijah provided for the widow and her son? What areas of your life always seem to have “leftovers?”

Hope: Although it can be frustrating, God doesn't work on our timetable. Oftentimes, God seems late. “But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31 ESV)

Pray: God, as I look back at my life, I can see that you have always provided for me even if it wasn't in the way I expected. Help me to remember that you are always faithful and that I can count on you to be with me through anything I go through.

Apply:



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### DAY 13

Day 13: Elisha & Naaman

Read: 2 Kings 5:1-14

Think: There are things in your life that probably need to be healed: a bad attitude, conflict with your parents, a struggle with anxiety and depression, or constant drama with friends. What is the thing you know God is asking you to do to be healed, but that you are being stubborn about? If you know that God can heal you, what is holding you back from “stepping in the river” just like Naaman did?

Hope: Jesus said, “... if you have faith as small as a mustard seed...nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20 NIV) There is no need to feel shame if your faith feels weak. God specializes in being strong when we are weakest.

Pray: God, I have doubts and struggles, help my unbelief! Bring healing to the areas of my life that I need it most. Give me the faith to trust and obey.

Apply:





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### DAY 14

Day 14: Ezra

Read: Ezra 1:2-5, 3:10-13

**Think:** The Israelites had been captives in a foreign land, stripped of their identity and unable to worship freely for 70 years when the Persian king told them that they could finally go home. Have you ever felt like a stranger in a foreign land? Has your faith ever been in ruins like the temple of Jerusalem? How is God calling you to come back to Him and rebuild your faith?

**Hope:** The good news is that no matter how ruined you may feel or how long it's been since you have truly worshipped God, Jesus bridges the gap for you. Wherever you are lacking, He is always enough. He isn't waiting to scold you. His arms are open wide and ready to embrace you with love.

**Pray:** Jesus, it's with both shouts of joy and tears of gratitude that I come to you today. Rebuild my faith and give me strength to persevere even when I feel like I am in exile in a land that is not my home.

**Apply:**



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### DAY 15

Day 15: Isaiah

Read: Isaiah 7:14,9:6, Chapter 53

Think: Each of these passages is a prophesy foretelling of Jesus 700-years before He was even born (there are 20 in Isaiah alone)! How do you need Jesus right now as your “Immanuel” (God with us), Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and Suffering Servant?

Hope: What’s amazing about Jesus is that He both understands all of the struggles we go through (Isaiah 53) AND He is sufficient to meet every one of those needs (Philippians 4:19). When Jesus came to the Earth, He was the “Messiah” or “Savior” the world had been aching for. He is what your heart has been aching for.

Pray: Jesus, thank you for humbling yourself enough to come to this Earth, to suffer for me, and to be the Savior that I’ve been searching for. Help me to turn to you when I am in need rather than things that won’t heal the ache.

Apply:





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### DAY 16

**Day 16:** Ezekiel

**Read:** Ezekiel 37:1-14

**Think:** Ezekiel was a prophet (someone called by God to speak on behalf of God to His people (the Israelites). God spoke to Ezekiel in visions. Even if God doesn't give us literal dreams, we all need vision in our lives to see things the way God does. God's people (Israel) were exiled from their homeland, had no king, and no temple to worship God. They got into this mess because they were divided and not following God's commands. It would have been almost impossible to imagine how this situation could be remedied, but God gave Ezekiel this vision to give him hope that the God we serve can bring even the driest of dead bones back to life again. What's dead around you? How is God speaking to you now about His plan to redeem it?

**Hope:** The truth is that we were once like the dead bones in this story. Our sin separated us from God and we were hopeless to fix it, but "God so loved the world that he gave his only son, Jesus, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NIV) Jesus brought us from death to life when He died on the cross and was raised again three days later.

**Pray:** God, as I look around this world, there are so many dry bones. Things seem hopeless. Thank you for the reminder today that you can even save the person who seems the furthest from you. Like Ezekiel, help me to believe it and be a part of the resurrection story you are telling right now!

**Apply:**





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### DAY 17

Day 17: Daniel

Read: Daniel 3:1,4-6,11-12,16-27

Think: Daniel's three friends would rather have died a terrible death than worship fake gods. They believed God would either rescue them or give them the strength they needed to endure it, knowing they would be with Him in eternity. How has the world we live in tried to get you to "bow down" to things other than Jesus? What do you think would give you the same courage these three had to endure whatever persecution you might experience as a result of not following the crowd?

Hope: When the guards threw the three friends into the fire, they saw a fourth man. Most Bible scholars believe this was Jesus! Even when we go through the fiery furnace of life, enduring trials because of our faithfulness to God, Jesus promises to be with us every step of the way.

Pray: Jesus, thank you for "never leaving me or forsaking me," Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV) when I go through trials. Give me courage to stand up for you when everyone else is bowing down to other things.

Apply:



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### DAY 18

Day 18: Hosea

Read: Hosea 2:14-23

Think: Hosea was another prophet of God whose life is an allegory of God's relationship with His people, Israel. You see, Israel was like an unfaithful spouse. Israel kept "cheating" on God with other fake gods by worshipping them instead. They didn't keep the promise they made when they said they wanted to be in relationship with Him. However, in this prophesy, Hosea is telling Israel that God is going to forgive them and take them back, even after all they have done to Him. How have you "cheated" on God?

Hope: The amazing thing about being a Christian is that our ability to stay faithful to God doesn't change His faithfulness to us (2 Timothy 2:13). Just like Israel, we have "cheated" on God with other things. Yet, because of what Jesus has done, we can have a completely restored relationship with Him, not feeling the shame of our past mistakes. This is the hope of Christmas!

Pray: God, thank you for coming to this Earth to win me back even when I was the one who "cheated" on you. Thank you for not keeping a list of my mistakes, but you look at me as pure because of what Jesus has done.

Apply: Buy coffee or another little treat for someone today.





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### DAY 19

Day 19: Jonah

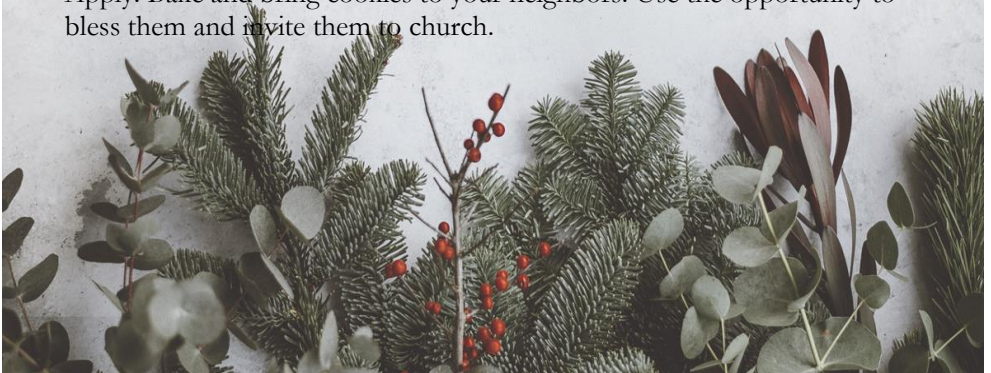
Read: Jonah 1:1-17, 3:1-10

Think: None of us can relate to being swallowed by a fish, but all of us can relate to running from what God has called us to do. Although stepping out of our comfort zones and obeying God can take a great deal of courage and strength upfront, look at the miracle we are choosing to miss out on if we say no! When Jonah finally went to Nineveh and warned them of God's imminent judgment, the entire city repented and was saved. Scholars say that there could have been 150,000 people saved simply because Jonah finally obeyed!

Hope: "The Lord...is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent." 2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)  
God was patient with Jonah and He was patient with the Ninevites. Because of Jesus, we don't have to face the wrath that our sin deserves. How comforting that God isn't waiting with lightning bolts to strike us down when we mess up! Instead, He gently calls us to learn from our mistakes and turn toward Him!

Pray: God, give me the courage to go and tell others about what you did through Jesus on the cross. Although I may want to run and avoid awkwardness at all costs, you are already softening people's hearts to hear and receive your grace. Help me to obey you right away!

Apply: Bake and bring cookies to your neighbors. Use the opportunity to bless them and invite them to church.





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### DAY 20

Day 20: Mary

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

Think: Over 400-years has passed since our last reading and we now enter the New Testament. All of the prophecies about the Messiah (Savior) coming are about to finally be fulfilled! How perplexing that God chose for Jesus to be born to a poor, unmarried teenage girl! How would you feel if you were Mary? Why do you think she was able to have faith that all of this was real, and that God chose her to bring Jesus into the world? What was her response when she embraced God's purpose for her life?

Hope: Although none of us will ever get to say that we had the honor of birthing the Savior of the world, God always chooses the unlikely to accomplish His great purposes! The good news of Jesus is that we not only get to be forgiven of anything we've done wrong, but that God wants to use us, too!

Pray: God, I want you to use me in your plan to save the world through Jesus! "Here am I, send me!" Isaiah 6:8 (NLT) I know you have chosen me for a special purpose.

Apply:



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### DAY 21

Day 21: Joseph

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

Think: At first, Joseph doubted what God was doing in Mary and was going to divorce her. In your life, how have you initially doubted what God told you to do? What kind of ridicule do you think Joseph was choosing to accept when he married Mary? How have you been ridiculed in your life for your faith and how has it been worth it?

Hope: Fun fact: Joseph's family tree can be traced back to King David in the Old Testament. All of the prophecies said that the Messiah would come through the lineage of David! And it finally happened: Jesus had come. The message of the Christmas season (Advent) is that Hope (Jesus) has come. We no longer have to wait for a Savior. He is here, and He is Jesus!

Pray: God, thank you that I can have hope because of Jesus no matter what is happening to me and around me. Thank you that the waiting is over, and I get to experience your forgiveness, freedom, and eternity with you because Jesus has come...hope has come!

Apply: Help your mom or dad cook dinner tonight or play with your siblings while they cook if they don't want help.





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### DAY 22

Day 22: John the Baptist

Read: Luke 1:57-60, 67-80, Mark 1:1-8

Think: John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin and God orchestrated things so perfectly that He used John as the one who would prepare the way for Jesus. John's role was to prepare people's hearts to hear the good news Jesus was about to bring. How does God want to use YOU as a messenger right now to prepare people's hearts to embrace the love of God?

Hope: John's message was, "Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us (Jesus coming), to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace." Luke 1:78-79 (NLT) If you've ever felt like you were in darkness, walking through the shadow of death or ever needed peace, know this: the light of heaven, Jesus, has come!

Pray: God, fill my heart with peace today as I remember that your light has come. May that light fill me up in such a way that, like John, I can't help but go and prepare the way for others to hear about you!

Apply: Start identifying someone younger than you that you can mentor this next year.





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### DAY 23

Day 23: Nativity

Read: Luke 2:1-20

Think: Throughout the entire Old Testament, the Jews were expecting a conquering king to one day save them, and yet God chose for Jesus to come as a baby and be born to a poor teenage girl. What was His first outfit? Rags. Who were His first visitors? Stinky shepherds. How would He save us? Not by victory with the sword, but by dying a criminal's death on the cross. He is worthy of all praise, glory and honor, yet our God is humble! How does God's humility move your heart to worship Him today?

Hope: John 1:14 (The Message) says, "The Word (Jesus) became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood." How comforting it is to know that our God humbly moved in next door! We do not worship a God who is a distant, angry Santa. We celebrate our Savior who is "Immanuel" (God with us)!

Pray: God, thank you for coming near to me by sending Jesus. Thank you for modeling your humility in the nativity story and giving me hope, not just at Christmas, but all year round and for eternity.

Apply: Read the Christmas story to your family on Christmas morning.



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### DAY 24

Day 24: Cross

Read: John 19:17-30

Think: The entire culmination of Jesus' 33-years on Earth was this moment. It seems pretty anti-climactic. Thousands of years of waiting for the Savior and now He dies? We may be tempted to think that maybe He was only a man and our hope for a Savior was just wishful thinking, but what Jesus did that day on Golgotha was all a part of God's plan. 1 Peter 3:18 (NIV) says, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." Hebrews 12:2 (NLT) says "Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame." Reflect on how Jesus chose death on the cross for you.

Hope: What we need most in this life is forgiveness. All of us were far away from God in our selfishness, greed, hatred, and lust. Our sins separated us from Him in His perfection. But God's love for us was so strong that He was willing to sacrifice Himself in our place. He took the punishment we deserve so that we could be close again. That's what Jesus really did when He died. Your hope is that no matter what you've done, how bad it seems, or how long you've strayed, Jesus has taken away your sins and made you clean.

Pray: Jesus, thank you for taking the punishment that I deserved and giving me complete forgiveness. Thank you that the waiting is over, and Hope has come!

Apply:





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### DAY 25

Day 25: New Heaven & New Earth

Read: Revelation 21:1-7, 22-27

**Think:** Even though we are forgiven of our sin, we still live in a world broken by sin and surrounded by people who have not accepted God's gift of hope. It's exciting to think about heaven and Jesus returning, but, until then, we have a job to do. Jesus, after He was resurrected from the dead, and right before he went back to heaven, gave us the important last words in (Matthew 28:19-20 NIV) to "go and make disciples." It's important his command was not wait until you feel less awkward, or wait until you know more about the Bible.

**Hope:** Although it's hard to wait, there will be a day soon when we get to be a part of this restoration that the book of Revelation talks about. Jesus will return. There will be no more tears or pain or death. When Jesus came back to life on Easter Sunday, He was foreshadowing our future "resurrection." Pastor Timothy Keller puts it like this, "The resurrection of Christ means everything sad is going to come untrue and it will somehow be greater for having once been broken and lost." What are you most looking forward to about heaven? After reading how wonderful heaven will be in Revelation, how does that compel you to tell your friends and family about Jesus? Who are three people God is putting on your heart right now to tell?





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Pray: God, thank you that one day all of my pain will be gone, and I will get to see you face to face. Give me the power of your Holy Spirit to share the HOPE of Jesus with everyone I meet so they too can experience eternity with you. Amen!

Apply: Pick a new Bible plan that you will start the day after Christmas on the “YouVersion” or “Read Scripture” Bible Apps.







