



WHAT
CHRISTmas
MEANS TO *Me*

DAILY READINGS FOR THE 2025 ADVENT SEASON

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Acknowledgements

Give to everyone what you owe them...if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.
Romans 13:7 (NIV)

I have learned in my years of life that having the manners and humility to say, “Thank you!” goes a long way. Each year’s Advent devotional book takes many hands to bring forth and therefore it is only proper to express deep appreciation to those who give of their time and talents to bring the publication into being.

Thank you to each of the wonderful saints of God who have authored these Spirit-filled daily devotional readings, reflective questions, and prayers. You have done the work of prayerfully searching the scriptures and mining your own life experiences to bring forth such thoughtful offerings. I thank you for your willingness to serve the Kingdom of God, the global church and your local church congregation at Tabernacle Bible Church.

I also want to thank Sister Veronica Maples and Lady Tearrah Brown who managed the administrative and editorial elements of this project respectively.

A special word of thanks must always be given to Sister Camille Scott, CEO of The Clarice Desk (<https://theclaricedesk.com/>) who works behind the scenes each year to prepare the beautiful print and digital layout and design of each book.

Introduction

What CHRISTmas Means to Me!

In October 2025, Tabernacle Bible Church celebrated its 144th Homecoming Sunday, which marks the anniversary of the church. Over these years the Lord has used generations of saints to build and strengthen this local church fellowship; many who came a lifetime before us and many who are yet to come a lifetime after us. This is the Kingdom of God, it expands from generation to generation.

Throughout these many years the Advent Season has continued to be one in which many of us have cultivated many traditions and made many wonderful memories. Time with friends and family in which we slow down our pace of life and focus on the joy of the season rooted in our celebration of the coming of the Christ child. In this season of the life of Tabernacle Bible Church, one of our traditions which has emerged is our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. This is a one-hour worship experience held on the evening of Christmas Eve where we gather together in the sanctuary to sing, read scripture and reflect upon the birth of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

A central component of this experience is lighting the Advent candles. The Advent candles are an arrangement of five candles which sit upon a wreath. Each of the candles represent a different theme of the season: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Christ.

This year's Advent devotional book places a weekly emphasis upon each of the first four candles within the wreath. Our authors from the TBC congregation have prayerfully reflected on the meanings of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love in the Christmas season and written devotional reflections for us to share within.

It is our hope that as you read and pray through these devotionals in this season that you reflect upon What CHRISTmas means to you. We invite you to join us on Christmas Eve (in-person or via livestream) as we celebrate and light the Christ candle together.

Merry CHRISTmas!
Dr. Kneeland C. Brown
Pastor, Tabernacle Bible Church

WEEK 1

Hope

ISAIAH 9:2-6

NOVEMBER 30

Hope in His Promises

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11(NIV)

As we look at the scripture of Jeremiah 29:11, we focus on the word hope. But if you break down the scripture, God is stating that He is not here to forsake us, but rather to give us purpose, peace, and restoration. We all have walked through seasons of uncertainty: job losses, health challenges, and even relationship fractures that leave us wondering if God is still present. Yet, in the midst of these difficult seasons that we encounter, God's promises never fail us. When we look back at how far He has brought us, we can only state that it is only by the grace of God.

We must continue to trust His timing and not always expect an instant yes. In the Bible hope is not mere wishful thinking, but a confident and joyful expectation of God's promises which is rooted in his character and faithfulness. So, remember that in the midst of feeling hopeless, God is working things out for your good. He may not come when you want Him, but He is always on time.

Reflection Questions

1. When was a time in your life when hope made a difference?
2. How do you keep hope alive when things feel uncertain in your life?

Prayer

God thank you for the plans you have for our lives. Help us to continue to trust You and only You, even when man says no. Guide us to understand Your will and fill our hearts with hope and not doubt. Amen

Devotional Contributed By:

Rob Echols, TBC member for 9yrs and Trinisha Echols, TBC member for 30yrs

Rob and Trinisha have been married for 8 years with three children Robert Jr, Brandon, and Zea. They don't claim to be the perfect family, but they lead with love and respect and a commitment to growing together in Christ every day.



DECEMBER 1

Hope in Christ Will Not Disappoint

“And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

Romans 5:5 (NIV)

From the smallest to the greatest concerns, our lives are shaped, directed, motivated, and can even be frustrated by where our hope lies. When we find ourselves leaning on hope outside of God’s will, we are subjected to disappointment and hopelessness. If we are anchored in the Lord, we will be motivated by God’s promises and knowing that God’s love for us will not disappoint.

God’s unfailing love has covered us in our times of doubts, in our unworthiness, and in our shame. God is our true hope that does not disappoint. As believers, we can sometimes place our hope in worldly things, people, and places. In the book of Psalms, chapter 118, God says do not put your confidences in man or in princes (government), but trust in Him, for these things will be destroyed. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God and everlasting God.

When trials and tribulations arise upon us, our Hope, Faith, and Joy should be anchored in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our comforter, our reassurance, and our hope. We can stand with confidence knowing God’s unconditional love for us overshadows any disappointments and calamity in our lives. It does not matter if you are in a situation where there seems to be no outlet. Christ offers hope that does not disappoint. God is the author and source of all true hope.

Reflection Questions

1. Where does your hope lie?
2. How has God’s unfailing love comforted you in a time of disappointment?

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I claim the promise that Your hope does not disappoint us because of Your love. I trust in Your unfailing love and ask that You continue to fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that I may always have hope and faith in You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Brother Samuel and Sister Cherelle Bankole TBC members for 10 years

The Bankoles were married at Tabernacle Bible Church in 2016. Blessed with four beautiful children. To God be the Glory!

DECEMBER 2

Hope on His Shoulders

“For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:5-6 (ESV)

Isaiah 9:5-6 talks about someone who carries the government upon His shoulder, someone who is a wonderful counselor, someone who is a mighty God, someone who is an everlasting father, someone who is a prince of peace. I've always heard of these titles before, but to me they mean more than just mere words or prophetic titles in a book that describe Jesus Christ. They are a survival for me.

Ever since January of this year, there has been a heaviness I can't seem to shake. My body won't heal, my mind is cloudy, and hope feels like something that only other people have. Sadness creeps in, and this voice of sadness tells me that things will never change. But even in this fog of sadness and uncertainty, something tugs on me and pulls me out. I look at the sun beaming through the blurry clouds. I feel the wind moving through the trees. I watch nature continue despite me feeling like I can't. God's creation speaks to me in the sense that Hope is still here. The One Isaiah spoke about is not a distant individual. He is the Wonderful Counselor in my times of mental health decline. He is the Prince of Peace when my soul is forever uneasy. My circumstances haven't instantly changed, but I don't carry it all alone. The government of my life is no longer on my shoulders; it rests on my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That is my hope.

Reflection Questions

1. Where in your life do you feel the weight is on your own shoulders, and how would you put that weight on the LORD's shoulders instead?
2. What title of Jesus in Isaiah 9:6 speaks to you the most in this season of your life and why is that?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, continue to be my counselor in my time of need. You are the Prince of Peace who quiets the storm that goes on within life's struggles. Continue Lord to teach me to hope in Your mighty strength.

Devotional Contributed By:

Michael Rogers, TBC member for 2 years

Michael Rogers is a student who is continuing to learn about life's journey with the LORD Jesus Christ.



DECEMBER 3

His Name Says it All

“For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)

Christmas 2020 began slow and sweet. Soulful Christmas and Gospel music filled our home. Myra and I talked about why we love this day. We celebrate Jesus’ birth. We give thanks for family. Then her phone rang. Her mother was rushed to the hospital for emergency surgery. The next day brought harder news: a ventilator, a fifty-fifty chance, and then sepsis in her blood. Myra’s face changed. Her voice cracked. Fear rose. We called on the name of Jesus. I held her and prayed, “Lord, cover Myra’s mom with Your grace. Place Your healing hand on her.” Our living room became a waiting room with fear swirling.

When we think back to that Christmas, Isaiah 9:6 comes to mind. A child is born. A son is given. His name says it all. He is our Wonderful Counselor when decisions hurt. He is our Mighty God when strength fails. He is our Everlasting Father when we long for care. He is our Prince of Peace when storms refuse to calm. We anchored our hearts in Him. Peace with God guarded us. We clung to God’s promise in Jesus. Faith held on, even as tears fell. And HOPE in Jesus held through the night.

The day after Christmas, Myra flew to Lansing, Michigan. Jesus carried her to the hospital waiting room. He was her strength and calm when fear rose. After two and a half weeks, her mother survived and recovered fully. We rejoiced!

We remember what carried us. Not the odds. Not the updates. Not our emotions. Faith anchored us. Hope strengthened us. Peace with God steadied us.

This is Christmas for us now, HOPE remembered, joy reborn, peace received, and open hands to serve as God leads.

Reflection Questions

1. When crisis hits on a holy day, what will you anchor your heart to; is it the One called Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace?
2. How will you carry faith, hope, and peace into your next waiting room and who needs to see that in you today?

Prayer

Jesus, Wonderful Counselor, our souls are anchored in You. Strengthen us in hope. You are our Mighty God. In the storms, hold us in Your arms and keep us steady. In Your mighty name we give thanks and praise. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Andrew and Myra Ford, TBC members for 3 months

Andrew and Myra love pointing people to the hope found in Jesus. They are grateful new members of Tabernacle, parents to three daughters and one son, and grandparents to one granddaughter.

DECEMBER 4

Hope that Transcends Circumstance

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

Romans 15:13 (ESV)

It’s easy to say Jesus is the reason for the season—to put up Christmas lights, decorate a beautiful tree, spend time with family, open presents, and enjoy the magic of good ole Santa Claus. For many, that’s what CHRISTmas means.

But what happens when life takes a turn?

When health begins to decline, loved ones are suddenly gone, jobs are lost, and hope feels like it’s slipping away—all while the holiday season is upon you—what then does CHRISTmas mean?

In those moments, CHRISTmas shifts from celebration to contemplation. The sparkle of the season may dim, but the light of Christ shines even brighter. CHRISTmas becomes less about outward expressions and more about the inward truth of Emmanuel—God with us.

CHRISTmas proclaims hope not because everything is perfect, but because God came to be with us in the imperfection. As Romans 15:13 reminds us:

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

Even when joy and peace feel distant, the Holy Spirit fills us with a hope that abounds. It’s not wishful thinking—it’s a confident expectation rooted in faith. CHRISTmas is a reminder that God stepped into our broken world to bring healing, peace, and eternal hope. Hope is a gift from the Holy Spirit.

Reflection Questions

1. What does CHRISTmas mean to you in this season of life?
2. Who around you might need a reminder of the hope CHRISTmas brings?

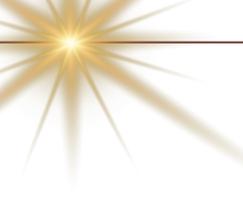
Prayer

God of hope, thank You for sending Jesus into our broken world. When life feels heavy and the season feels dim, help us to remember that You are with us, Emmanuel. Fill our hearts with Your peace and joy and let Your hope overflow in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Khajriyyah Adkins, Hospitality Ministry, TBC member for 38 years

Khajriyyah lives by the scripture Proverbs 3:5-6. It anchors her heart in trust and divine guidance. ~ Essence of Strength. Legacy of Love.



DECEMBER 5

Great Expectations

*"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him."
Psalm 62:5 (NIV)*

I cannot recall feeling more excitement as a child than on Christmas morning. Beyond the yearning for gifts and prepared food, it was going out of town to visit family that was the highlight of my holiday. Throughout the morning, I would run back and forth to the front door, looking and listening. I knew I'd hear the diesel engine of Grandpa's big camper a few streets over before I ever saw it turning the corner toward our house. Yet, catching the first sight of that lumbering vehicle sent out a shout of excitement from 8-year-old me. My expected and long-awaited hope finally realized. This is what I equate, on a smaller scale of course, to the great hope we as believers have in Jesus.

My definition of hope is confident, empowered anticipation of an expected result. The hope of a Savior longed for through Old Testament generations finally arrived in the Advent of our Lord that first Christmas. Likewise, our daily sanctification moving us toward heaven relies on hope in God's work. Hope is not wishful thinking, as that suggests uncertainty. Our hope is a firm truth not based on circumstances, and it is unyielding. Just as God promised to send Jesus and did, we can trust that our God will do what He promised in our lives. And though trials work to steal our hope and diminish it with doubt, God calls us to child-like trust in our Heavenly Father's promises. Psalm 62:5 states, 'Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him.' The King James Version says 'my expectation' comes from Him. During this Advent season, with all of its excitement and even its challenges, Jesus calls us to make Him our fulfilling, sustaining and joyous hope. It is through Him we experience the intent of the season, Christ in Christmas.

Reflection Questions

1. What is your definition of hope?
2. How will you pray for God to give you His hope as you expectantly await fulfillment of His promises?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for salvation, and thank You for daily providing all that we need. Thank You for empowering us with the hope of our certain future with You. Please continue to make us more like You, Father, and help us to continue to share Your love with others, especially during this time of Advent. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Maya Nunley, TBC member for 15 years

Only Child; Dentist; and Child of God who enjoys food and spending time with friends and family. May God continue to use her to glorify Him and edify others!

DECEMBER 6

Choosing Optimism, Living in Joy

“And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”

Romans 5:5 (NLT)

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 15:13 (NLT)

Life in 2025 has caused many twists and turns and taught me valuable lessons of “expecting the unexpected.” Sitting patiently while waiting for things to happen has often made me feel like it is quite the daunting task. With life’s ebbs and flows, I find myself trying to move hastily, sometimes on my own accord, and with my own ideas of what will bring temporary happiness. Now in the last quarter of the year, I have taken a pause to ask myself, “What if during this season, I try a new approach of waiting in hopeful anticipation for what God is preparing me for and the ultimate joy that He wants to give me?”

Being optimistic for what lies ahead does not make you a wishful thinker, but it can provide that needed push to allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through you. Optimism can bring us a sense of peace and teach us patience. This allows us to sit in expectancy and prepare for the blessings ahead. However, that does not mean that we try to jumpstart and control the outcome. We should use this type of anticipation as a foundation that equips us to be ready for life-giving joy in Christ.

This season I encourage you to:

1. Check your heart posture
2. Reframe your thoughts
3. Choose to see His goodness
4. Lean into your trust in God no matter the outcome.

Reflection Questions

1. What are you optimistically expecting God to do for you in this season?
2. Reflect on the things that have brought you the most joy this year. In what ways did God show up during those periods?

Prayer

Thank you Holy Spirit for the optimism You have brought into my life. I pray that during this season I can patiently wait on You and count it all joy that my story is already written. In Jesus’s name, Amen!

Devotional Contributed By:

Veronica Kim Maples – TBC Member for almost 25 years

Freedom Kidz Liberator and Outreach Team, Freedom Church Bedford, TX

Veronica K. Maples is a Data Analyst for Cook Children’s Health Care System. She is passionate about serving 8-counties in the DFW area and assisting families and staff with improving their overall health and well-being. Veronica is a daughter of TBC and although she does not live in the area, she is an active supporter of TBC.

WEEK 2

Peace

ISAIAH 11:1-10



DECEMBER 7

How Does it Feel?

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

Have you ever watched the NBA on Christmas day? No matter what era of hoops you subscribe to or who you think the greatest player to touch a basketball is, Christmas day television brings the best games. If you're like me, you may fall asleep after your second plate of Christmas dinner, but you'll wake up to see the player of the game be interviewed. Oftentimes the first question is the same, "How does it feel?"

The answer is likely to be long-winded, but they showcase a sense of peace knowing that their team walked away victorious. Despite a grueling and intense 48 minutes of play, they find themselves elated and at peace. No matter what the opposition did to stop their progress, they still came out on top.

The good news? We have access to this same peace. It comes in knowing that you have victory in Jesus Christ. We don't have to dribble, shoot, or win a game, but we wake up with it each day, knowing every concern we could ever have is handled. While we are celebrating the very beginning of His story, you can find peace wherever you are in yours. It can be constant through any season or situation even when the odds are stacked against you. While life throws situations more serious than a game, you can still find peace in God that is worth sharing no matter the situation. So, I will ask you, how does it feel?

Reflection Questions

1. When was a time you felt at peace? Recall the moment out loud to yourself or share with someone else.
2. What are 3 things you are worrying about that are keeping you from being at peace? Write them down and pray to release them to God.

Prayer

Dear God,

I ask that you allow us to stay rooted in Your presence so that we can experience true peace. While the world around us continues to move and change at a rapid pace, I ask that You allow us to find stillness in You. No matter the situation, may we remember that we have real peace in You. Allow us to be rooted in the gift of Your Son that we are celebrating this season, so that when the storms of life do come, we are able to withstand it all.

Help us to remember that when it seems like everything is slipping from our grasp, we can find solace knowing You have already handled any worry that could cross our mind.

Forgive us for the times we find peace in what is here on earth and not in You. Amen

Devotional Contributed By:

Braxton Jones – TBC member for 30 years

Braxton considers himself a connector and storyteller by trade and is thrilled to be able to lend his talents to this advent devotional. This has always been his favorite time of the year because he's able to spend it with family. Now, he's able to contribute to something that will help families grow in their faith together.

DECEMBER 8

Ornaments & Arguments

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”
Philippians 4:11 (NIV)

Christmas of 2022 I had one of the worst arguments with my daddy that I had ever had. Picture it, my daddy trying to reclaim all the memories with his family that cancer could have taken away, and me just trying to keep my head above the waves for my holiday birthday. As a family we had been in a constant state of tragedy since losing my Aunt Angie in February of 2019. We should have been happy now after my daddy’s healing. Instead, we were arguing over something small. Both of us crying out in pain from not having time to grieve properly.

Memories of the best and worst days replay in my mind like movies. The emotions always come rushing back to how I had to watch my superhero daddy battle with cancer up close. I was taught the painful lesson of God’s sovereignty.

There have been several times, pre and post then, that I have had the feeling of not knowing what God was doing. Every time more difficult than the last, but, “I have learned that whatsoever state I am in to be content”. The peace Paul describes in this letter, while in jail, echoes the sentiments of my own heart this Christmas. Paul, explaining that no matter what comes his way he trusts God to be exactly who He has always been- sovereign, and me, keeping my eyes on Jesus to stay afloat. Resting in God’s sovereignty creates room for the fulfillment of the promise of peace that passes all understanding.

Reflection Questions

1. Why does God’s plan always include our pain?
2. What are the areas in your life that you need to allow God to exchange pain for peace?

Prayer

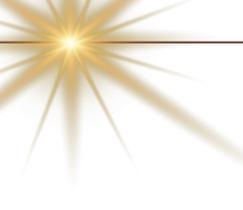
Lord, I want to be content with wherever you take me in this life. In my surrender, I ask that you trade my pain for peace in every situation. Help me to remember that both pain and peace are a part of the promise. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Jasmine Bradley

TBC Pew Baby, TBC member for 30 years

Jasmine is in the lineage of the Bradley Family Ministries. She is the product of fashion runways, organ chords, and chain basketball goal nets. She is Jazz - like the music.



DECEMBER 9

Peace at the Door

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”
Luke 11:9 (NIV)

It’s Christmas again — twinkling lights, familiar songs, the warmth of family gatherings. But maybe, in the middle of all that sparkle, your heart feels a little dim. Maybe peace seems far away this year.

You’ve been asking God for something — healing, direction, restoration, maybe just a moment of rest. You’ve been seeking answers in the quiet of long nights. You’ve been knocking on heaven’s door, hoping someone would open it and let peace rush in.

And maybe, just maybe, you’re wondering if God still hears you.

Christmas tells a story that answers that question with a resounding yes. Because one silent night, long ago, God didn’t just hear — He came. He stepped down into our darkness, wrapped in swaddling clothes, to become our peace.

Jesus is the proof that God opens the door. He is the answer to the prayers we don’t know how to pray. When we knock, it is Christ Himself who welcomes us in — arms open, heart steady, whispering, “Peace, be still. I’m here now.”

So if this Christmas feels lonely, or if your prayers feel unanswered, remember: Peace isn’t something you find under the tree — it’s Someone who came and stayed.

The same God who entered the world through a humble door in Bethlehem stands at your door today. And when you open your heart, you’ll find that peace has been waiting for you all along.

Reflection Questions

1. This Christmas, what door in your life do you need to open to Jesus?
2. Where do you long for His peace to enter and stay?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, this Christmas I bring You my weary heart. I’ve asked, I’ve sought, I’ve knocked — and now I simply open the door. Come in with Your peace that passes understanding. Fill every empty space with Your presence. Let me rest in the truth that You are Emmanuel - God with me. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:
Ashlee Norris, TBC Member for 32 years

Worship Arts Ministry

Ashlee Norris is a devoted mother and woman of faith who cherishes her children and puts God at the center of her life. She made history by opening Lavish Affinity, the first Black-owned full-service hair salon in Downtown Wichita, Kansas, blending her entrepreneurial spirit with a passion for community, family, and a touch of luxury.

DECEMBER 10

God Will Work it Out for You

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

John 14:27 (NIV)

For over 26 years, Christmas has ushered peace in our family. With all the hustle and bustle of our lives throughout the year, we look forward to the joyful holiday to celebrate the birth of Jesus. So many times, we do not have control over external factors that impact our daily routine. Whether it be the weather, a loss of a loved one, losing a job, an injury, we as humans tend to allow these situations to get the best of us.

Over this past year, our lives were tested. You know the saying, “When it rains, it pours?” We experienced 5 close family losses. Three of which were the loss of a primary job of 4 years, the loss of our heater during the coldest month of winter, and the loss of our air conditioner during the hottest week of summer.

But we remained calm and reassured ourselves that we knew God had a plan. HE provided the means to fix our heater. HE provided the means to fix our air conditioner. And after a month of not working and praying to God to help find a different path in life, HE provided the opportunity to work with both the elderly and children. When we were concerned about our finances, because of all the household appliances and being dependent on one source of income for a period, God let us know that everything was going to be ok.

Reflection Questions

1. How has God helped you to find peace in situations where you felt like you had no control over?
2. What three words of encouragement can you give yourself to not allow your heart to feel troubled or for you to feel afraid?

Prayer

Lord, we thank You for knowing how to make us feel calm when we are feeling anxious or worried over situations that are beyond our control. Teach us to be patient and to trust that in time Your plans for us will deliver. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Tre & Iris Wilson, TBC member for 3 years

The Wilsons are a married couple raising 4 beautiful children.

DECEMBER 11

Enjoy the Movie

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock”

Isaiah 26:3-4 (ESV)

While rinsing a purplish-pink wash rag in the bathroom sink, something within me shifted. The way the water soaked through the cloth, the sound, the lighting, it all felt like a scene from a film. In that quiet moment, I realized how often I live like a movie director instead of an audience member, trying to control every scene and missing what is unfolding right in front of me.

That moment reminded me that life is already written. Like a finished movie, its plot is complete even if I have yet to see the ending. No amount of worry or control changes the script. My role is simply to show up, observe, and participate, to trust the Lord's direction.

That realization brought me peace unlike anything I could manufacture. I do not need to fix every scene or anticipate every plot twist. I just need to be present, to watch the beauty and tension coexist like Isaiah's vision of the wolf and the lamb, opposites resting together in harmony.

True peace is not the absence of conflict. It is trust in the One who authored the story. Trust the Director, God, and enjoy the movie.

Reflection Questions

1. When was the last time you realized you were trying to control something that wasn't yours to control?
2. How do you make space in your day to protect or return to peace?

Prayer

Lord, fill my heart with the kind of peace that comes from trusting You completely. When I'm tempted to control what I don't understand, remind me that You are directing every scene. Help me to rest in Your presence, stay grounded in Your peace, and simply enjoy the life You've written. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Malcolm Lynch, TBC Member for 27 years

Youngest of five sons, blessed to be raised by Billy and Deborah Lynch. Malcolm has sang in the choir for as long as he can remember and currently serves as a Business Intelligence Analyst for a non-profit organization.

DECEMBER 12

Peace in the Midst of Chaos

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4: 6-7 (NIV)

The days often blur together—early mornings, endless to-do lists, and the steady rhythm of life with two active children. After years of marriage, we’ve learned that this season looks different than the ones before it. Our focus so often rests on the kids—their needs, their schedules, their laughter—that we sometimes forget to slow down and simply see each other. Quiet moments between us can feel rare and precious.

As the holidays approach, the pace only intensifies. One of us takes on extra work while the other keeps the household moving. The calendar fills with gatherings, shopping lists, and reminders of loved ones we miss. And beyond our own walls, the weight of the nation presses in—divisions deepen, headlines grow heavier, and uncertainty seems to color every conversation. It’s easy to feel that peace is slipping further from reach.

But every so often, God breaks through the chaos. Sometimes it’s in our children’s laughter, sometimes in a quiet evening shared between us, or in moments spent surrounded by family during the holidays. In those times, we feel His peace settle over us—not because everything is calm, but because He is near.

Even when life and the world feels stretched thin, His steady hand holds us together. His peace is not fragile—it’s strong and sure, anchoring us in the midst of constant motion.

So, we pause. We breathe. And together, we thank Him—for the laughter, the fullness, and the reminder that His peace is near.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do you find God’s peace during the holiday season?
2. How can you intentionally pause during this season to experience God’s presence, even in the middle of busyness?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for giving us the will and persistence to meet the endless needs of the world during this season. Help us create moments to embrace and celebrate the peace and serenity You grant through Your love and mercy. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Marquis and Nadia Smith -Tabernacle Bible Church members- 2 years

For 11 years, The Smiths have walked the journey of marriage, blessed with two amazing children. They are learning and growing in the Lord, discovering His guidance and nurturing faith in their family.

DECEMBER 13

HE is my Peace

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.”

Ephesians 2:14 (NIV)

At the beginning of 2025, Pastor Brown encouraged the Tabernacle community to choose a word to guide our lives for the year. This activity is one that our family has done every New Year for the past several years. For 2025, my family chose the word Peace. We chose Hebrews 12:14 as our scriptural reference. “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”

The way my family picks our word is each member who is of age takes some time by themselves and searches the Bible for 3 scriptures and 3 words that speak to their hearts. We list everyone’s suggestions and then vote on which one word to choose. Peace was one of my suggestions, and quietly I prayed to the Lord that my family would vote peace as our word.

If I am transparent, peace is what I felt my home had been low on for the past couple of years. Entering full-time pastoral ministry changed our family’s life and our rhythm. We all know the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10), and boy has he tried his hardest to steal, kill, and destroy the peace in my home.

I’m sure many can relate to what I am saying and that you too have felt the attack of the enemy in your own life’s journey. But the devil is a liar, and the truth is not in him!

To me, Christmas means peace. Ephesians 2:14 declares, “For He himself is our peace...” God’s peace doesn’t mean there is no attack of the enemy, but rather that while the enemy is attacking, I can still have peace because Jesus is my peace. May we all be full of His peace this Christmas season!

Reflection Questions

1. Have you too felt the threat of the enemy against your peace? How have you stood up to his threats?
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus is your peace?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for your peace. Thank you for the victory you have given us over the enemy of our souls. May we choose each and every day to walk in the peace only you can give. We love you Lord. Amen!

Devotional Contributed By:

Tearrah Brown, Children and Youth Ministry volunteer. TBC member for over 7 years

Tearrah is blessed to be the wife of Pastor Kneeland Brown for the past 21 years and the mother to 7 beautiful children. She loves working with young people and showing the love of Christ to all she meets.

WEEK 3

Joy

MATTHEW 2:1-11

DECEMBER 14

Rejoicing Through Testimony

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Psalm 23:4 (ESV)

We, as followers of Christ, are no stranger to the question, “Why are you a believer?”. How we respond to that heavy question is crucial: it could touch the asker profoundly, possibly so much so that they become curious about Jesus. Although it is hard to talk about, when I am asked about my faith, I tell others about the three years of my life that I suffered from depression. Then, I share how when I reflect I can see Jesus’ presence with me through it all. I am all for sharing my testimony, and in that I rejoice.

Although I was unaware while in the midst of my suffering, Jesus never left my side. The only reason I made it through was because of His grace and mercy. Today I truly believe that I could relive those three years all over again and be okay because now I am equipped with the joy in knowing that no matter what treacherous times await, Jesus has hopeful and prosperous plans for me (Jeremiah 29:11).

If you are reading this and didn’t already know the extent of God’s love and protection, now you do, and that is worth rejoicing over. If you are currently going through a difficult time, rejoice in the testimony of other believers; know that He will never leave nor forsake you either. If you have a testimony like mine, let us rejoice in that He is the Light of the World even in the darkest of times.

Reflection Questions

1. Reflect on a difficult time in your life. Can you see Jesus’ love and mercy throughout those times?
2. What habits can you form to help you rejoice in the Lord through times of pain?

Prayer

Father, I thank you that you created me with joy in Your heart. I thank You that You loved me even when I could not love myself. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Alexsis Barkus, TBC member for 2 years

Alexsis Barkus has been a member of TBC for 2 years, participating in Sunday School, Tuesday’s food kitchen ministry, and speaking before the congregation when asked. She is currently a freshman in college, studying criminology at Howard University, in Washington D. C.

DECEMBER 15

Rejoice! For Unto Us Joy Was Born

“The joy of the Lord is your strength”
Nehemiah 8:10b (NIV)

Breast cancer is a valley no one chooses to walk through. It brings pain, uncertainty, and strips away comfort and even parts of your identity. As I have walked through this valley, I have encountered Jesus, not as a distant figure, but as a present Savior. He walked beside me, holding my hand every step of the way, instilling a profound joy inside of me. There were times when days blurred together in the mist of treatment rooms, test results, and silent prayers through tears. He would remind me to keep going.

I have learned that joy isn't the absence of suffering, but the presence of Christ. When I sat in the chemo chair, He sat beside me. During sleepless nights, He calmed me with peace. When I would cry, I sensed His comfort, and when I felt fearful, He held my hand. Then came Joy, the kind of joy that only comes from knowing I am held by grace and that Jesus is enough. He did not promise me ease, but that He would walk with me through it.

Today I rejoice! I have a renewed sense of what truly matters, a deeper worship has been born from it, and my pain and scars have been transformed into a testimony. Jesus is not only a Savior, but a Sustainer. Through it all, I have brought my own gifts to Christ; I saw the light of Christ more clearly. Like the wiseman, I have followed the light through pain and fear. I rejoice with a joy deeper than anything I've ever known. My suffering became my offering, and my healing became my hallelujah.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you rejoiced in the truth that you are fully loved?
2. How does the birth of Christ bring true joy to your heart, even in times of uncertainty or sorrow?

Prayer

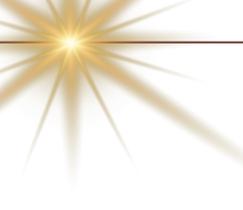
Lord, thank You for the joy that comes from knowing You. Help me remember CHRISTmas is not just a season, but a celebration of Your presence in my life. May others see Your joy in me and be drawn to the beauty of knowing You. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Brittni Williams, Usher Ministry

TBC member for 38 years

A woman of faith, encouraging strength while walking in hope, peace, joy and love.



DECEMBER 16

This Joy I Have

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.”
James 1:2 (NLT)

I've experienced many trials and tribulations throughout my life. Sometimes they come in like a flood... financial troubles, job loss, grief, health issues, relationship struggles, etc. These experiences have done nothing for me except to make me feel defeated and to promote a 'woe is me' attitude.

Now I understand and I thank the Lord who reminds me in His Word that this is how Satan attacks our minds and our attitudes. I'm grateful to know for myself that despite these trials and tribulations, and even in the midst of them, I can still have joy! Why? Because I'm a witness that the Lord will never leave me nor forsake me when I pray.

My Dad would often say, “this joy I have, the world didn't give to me and the world can't take it away.” In other words, joy does not come from the world, but joy comes to us from God through Jesus Christ, despite what is going on in our lives.

I've come to the conclusion that I will always have trials and tribulations, but I have the victory through Christ Jesus. I can use troubles as opportunities for joy. I just have to praise and stay in His Word.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever experienced a time in your life when everything seemed like it was not working out?
2. What are some things you can do to rejoice in the Lord during hard times?

Prayer

Lord, help us to keep our minds and hearts on You when go through hard times. Help us to let you take the weight off of our shoulders because we know You always make a way. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Jareau T. Montgomery – TBC member for 38 years

Jareau is the son of TBC Legacy Members: the late Pastor Lincoln E. Montgomery and Minister Annie K. Montgomery; and grandson of the late Deacon Thadies (Marguerite) Montgomery.

DECEMBER 17

The Source of Our Joy

“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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:10-11(ESV)

In these past three years as a married couple, life has presented us with a plethora of overwhelming yet intentional changes. From moving state to state four times in four years, going from one to three small children in the blink of an eye, and excelling through educational endeavors; we really had to understand from whom our joy originates.

Of course, one might think that with so many changes happening, there's plenty of room for Joy. But as life progressed, living in those moments amplified the stresses and hardships of unity, parenthood, and self-development (not to mention stewardship on top of everything)!

For us it was vital to find and choose Joy in the smaller blessings God had given us. Accepting the joy of the Lord through every situation is a choice that must be made despite the pressures of life. Choosing joy not only eased the severity of certain situations, but it also gave us something to look forward to when circumstances seemed unfavorable. For us, this looked like mutually agreeing to seek Jesus first, no matter what. We developed the desire to be grateful and thankful for all that God allowed us to go through. It was recognized then, that he was equipping us for what lies ahead.

Luke 2:10-11 reminds us exactly where our joy comes from, a Savior who is loving, kind, and true. The greatest realization is that when we surrender and let God have His way, we can discover Joy is there all along, even in the midst of our chaos. We rejoice in the fact that all we must do is trust in the Lord and receive Him with open hearts to experience His pure and delightful joy.

Reflection Questions

1. What does receiving God's joy during the time of a storm look like for you?
2. Reflect on a storm or challenge you've faced in the past. Which specific areas from yesterday's storm can you intentionally choose joy in today, knowing God's plan was perfect all along?

Prayer

God, we thank You for reminding us that You are the source of our joy. Help us to cast our cares upon You and to trust that Your will for our lives is far greater than our own understanding of the season we are in. Teach us to actively choose Joy in every season, and to live, love, and reflect the very essence of who You are. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Xayvien and Chantel Johnson TBC members for 7 months

Xayvien & Chantel Johnson are a young couple striving to honor God in marriage; learning to walk like Jesus one step at a time, while helping others along the way.



DECEMBER 18

You Bring Me Joy!

“That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!”

Luke 2:8-11 (NLT)

One time my hot water heater went out. I called my brother-in-law, called my sister, even searched online for help, but I could not get the heater back on. When calling about my warranty, the policy did not cover my gas hot water heater. While sitting in frustration and anger, I got a call from my friend. While telling him my current situation, he jokingly responded to me, “Well imagine if you didn’t have water at all.”

Although, this did not fix my problem, his response was a reminder that God is still providing for me and covering me with His love. That thought gave me Joy at the moment I truly needed it. This also taught me how to wait on a word from God. Even when it comes through a friend. After I called all those people, God Himself reached out to me with a message that brought me joy.

This passage is a reminder that in a world full of distractions, grief, and destruction, God’s glory is still here to bring us Joy. God gave His only begotten son to bring us joy. That God still sends messages that we should not fear, because joy is coming. “Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.” (Romans 12:12 NLT). “This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalms 118:24 NLT)

Reflection Questions

1. Are you acknowledging God as the root cause of your Joy?
2. When you speak, can other’s hear Joy in God’s message through you?

Prayer

Lord, cover my mind, body, and spirit with the Joy of Your love. Bless me with a heart that spreads that Joy to all, no matter my situation. For Your love is the greatest love of all. Amen!

Devotional Contributed By:

Lawrence Lexington Garcia, TBC member for 24 years

Lexington is a member of the Young Adult Ministry. He loves the fellowship, the friendships, and the family which make up the TBC congregation.

DECEMBER 19

Pure Joy

“²⁰ Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.... ²² Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”

John 16:20, 22 (NKJV)

I try to watch news programs from different countries in order to keep up with current events around the world. Some of the most disturbing stories I've seen involve using crowdfunding to reward evil. Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a cause by soliciting small amounts of money from a large amount of people. Basically, it is a lot of people pooling money to do something.

The global news stories are not the first time people have ever collected money to do evil. The Bible tells us that the chief priests and captains rejoiced when Judas agreed to betray Jesus; they may even have crowdfunded the 30 pieces of silver they paid him (Matthew 26:15).

Jesus told His disciples in John 16 that because of what would soon happen to Him, they would weep while the world rejoiced -- but then He said that He would see them again, and no one would take away their joy. They would have pure joy that would never end.

In the Christmas story, the wise men who followed the star to Bethlehem also experienced the pure joy of Jesus. They wanted to worship Him. Their hearts were pure, and they showed it by giving Jesus their treasure and their adoration. They received what no amount of money or crowdfunding could give, the experience of the presence and the pure joy of the Savior.

I'm thankful that we have the pure joy that comes from the Holy Spirit who is in us. We don't have to bargain for it. We don't have to crowdfund for it. We don't have to beg for it. The pure joy of Jesus is free, everlasting, and found in Him alone.

Reflection Questions

1. Do you have joy?
2. How do you express your joy?

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for giving us joy as a fruit of the Spirit. Please help us to not rejoice with the world, but to rejoice with Your people. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Shirrae Salisbury, TBC member for 33 years

Learning Biblical history is exciting for Shirrae. She enjoys tuning in to Wednesday night Bible study.

DECEMBER 20

The Gift of Togetherness

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Genesis 2:24 (NKJV)

When the holidays arrive, there’s a special spirit of joy that fills the air for most people—a sense of warmth that comes from gathering, traditions, and family. For our family, we often realize that no matter where we go or what we do, the true meaning of the season comes from being together.

One of life’s greatest, yet often overlooked, joys is having a family—one that shows up through trials, triumphs, celebrations, and sorrows alike. It’s an even greater blessing when you find a partner who shares those same family values. As two families begin to blend, it takes intentional effort to decide how and where to spend time, especially when both families are active and close-knit.

Balancing time between two families can be challenging. Each of us naturally feels drawn to our own traditions and loved ones. The holidays, in particular, become a lesson in compromise. Our joy comes from gathering and fellowshiping with those who make us feel most at home. To manage this, we created a plan to alternate between families during the holiday season.

Even with that plan in place, we’d be lying if we said there weren’t moments of longing—those thoughts of “I wish I were eating my mom’s dressing” or “I wonder what game my family is playing right now.” The younger generation calls it FOMO—the fear of missing out—and it’s something we all feel from time to time when we are away from our families. Bouncing around from place to place with time limits or driving up and down the highway to be around family can be taxing.

We’ve been trying for years to become homeowners—facing declined applications, financial challenges, student loans, and salary fluctuations along the way. Through it all, we held onto our faith, believing that when the time was right, God would open the right door. This year, He blessed us with our first home—a place of our own where we can bring both families together. It’s more than just a house; it’s a space for gathering, building new traditions, and creating memories rooted in love, faith, and fellowship. It is for that reason, we are deeply full of Joy.

Reflection Questions

1. How can the expanding of family and/or discovery of new friendships bring opportunities for joy, even when it takes effort?
2. In what ways can we show gratitude for the family God has given us—both the one we came from and the one we choose to build?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, Thank You for the gift of family and the joy that comes from being together. Help us to cherish the moments that bring us closer, even when it takes patience and compromise. Teach us to find joy not just in what we do, but in who we are becoming through You. Bless our home with peace, unity, and love that reflects Your presence. May our gatherings be filled with gratitude and our hearts with the true joy of this season.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Zachary Sims, TBC member for 5 years

Ashley Sims, TBC member for 35 years

Zach and Ashley are both educators for Wichita Public Schools. Zach has been a teacher for 9 years and an administrator for 1 year. Ashley is in her 9th year of teaching elementary education. They have two boys aged 10 and 8. They met at the University of Kansas on the first day of class and have been sharing life together since! Rock Chalk!



WEEK
Love 4

JOHN 3:16-19

DECEMBER 21

How Soon is Too Soon?

*“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly
Romans 5:6 (ESV)*

There is confusion in the persisting Advent season. The confusion remains for many because no one has the boldness, the courage, or the conviction to answer the hard question. So here I am, ready to take this matter head on so that you can have a more wonderful CHRISTmas.

The answer is, “At 12:00am (midnight) the day immediately following the Thanksgiving holiday.” The question is, “When is it acceptable to begin playing Christmas music.” (You can thank me later for being so bold, courageous, and full of conviction)

Once past the Thanksgiving holiday all are liberated to play Christmas music to their hearts content. Everyone should be forthright in bringing in the wonderful season, in which we celebrate the LOVE of Christ, just as much as they desire through music. Just immediately following the Thanksgiving holiday.

I give this word of instruction because some begin playing their Christmas music before Thanksgiving, and yes, that is TOO SOON. We must pray for these overly eager saints.

There are also those who do not play Christmas music until Christmas Eve and that is TOO LATE. We must pray for these who have the tiny heart of the Grinch. To be honest I can't even make it through 1/3 of my Christmas playlist in 48-hours.

Life is full of situations in which we must ask the question, “How soon is too soon?” We can often get the timing wrong, but the good news is, God never gets the timing wrong. We celebrate the coming of CHRIST with great Joy because He did not come TOO SOON or TOO LATE. As Romans 5:6 declares, “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

In this season, let's celebrate that He's an on-time God!

Reflection Questions

1. Can you identify and write down three times in your life in which God came through right on time?
2. Because God's timing is not our timing sometimes, we have to wait. What scriptures can you pull upon to help you when you are waiting on God?

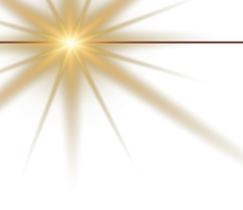
Prayer

Father, thank you for Your LOVE in Christ which came into the world and into my life right on-time. Help me to trust Your timing in all areas of my life as I walk with You by faith each and every day. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Kneeland C. Brown, TBC member for 7 years

It is Kneeland's privilege to be the husband to Tearrah and father to Savannah, Charles II, Matthew, Kneeland II, Adam, Kenneth, and Kearrah Pearl. As well as a member of the Tabernacle Bible Church family.



DECEMBER 22

Sacrificial Love

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;^{1a1} ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (ESV)

Before we were married, neither of us really knew what love meant, let alone even what it really meant to be loved. Before we started dating, we both individually spent seven years trying to understand what it meant to be loved, in hopes to eventually find love and to learn what it meant to not only love someone, but also what it meant to be loved by someone. We had to learn that love not only comes when you want it, but it even comes when you least expect it.

Love is patient, love is kind, love is Sacrifice.

Early on in our dating years, there were many times either one of us could have walked away from the relationship. Free to go find someone else to love, thinking we had each other's best interest at heart. Thinking that each other deserved someone better, but who were we kidding, we were a match made in heaven. We learned to put the best interests of the other person before our own.

The perfect example of love is when God sent His son to give the ultimate sacrificial gift of love for us.

Sacrificial love does not look the same for everyone. Sacrificial love could be getting out of your comfort zone; moving away from your family and friends; getting rid of material things you love most, or even giving away your most valuable possessions. Sacrificial love isn't defined by what you are expecting to get, but rather by what you are willing to give.

Reflection Questions

1. Is there a limit to sacrificial love?
2. How can you know when sacrificial love is sincere and selfless?

Prayer

God, thank you for being the perfect example of love. Help us to understand the way You love and to see and love others through your eyes. Amen

Devotional Contributed By:

Cesar & Joy Moran, TBC members for 1 year, 4 months

The Morans are an interracial couple who met at the age of 12 at church, reunited as young adults, and have been married for 8 years. They are originally from Los Angeles, CA, now living in Wichita, KS raising 3 beautiful little girls, caring for their mother.

CHRISTmas Means LOVE

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved by him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.”

John 3:16-19 (NIV)

Do we truly understand the gift of LOVE that Christ is to us? I know that most of us have been taught about Christ coming to earth and paying the ultimate price of death for our sins when He was completely sinless. But do we TRULY understand the depth of LOVE that was shown by God sacrificing His pure and perfect son for this sin sick world?

When God sent down his Son, Jesus Christ, it wasn't out of obligation or necessity. That gift was the greatest gift of LOVE ever given. A LOVE beyond measure. Being that I was gifted the life of a precious son, I somewhat have a better understanding of the LOVE and sacrifice given. The gift of Christ was no casual gift. That kind of LOVE is paramount!

Jesus didn't come to condemn the world, but to save it (John 3:17). Let us not dismiss the LOVE shown through Christ by following through with His excruciating assignment. Every miracle He performed, every word He spoke, every act of compassion also revealed the heart of the Father. On the cross, that love reached its fullest expression. Through Christ's sacrifice we were offered forgiveness, redemption, and a new life, all freely given to those who believe.

Reflection Questions

1. How am I responding to God's gift of Love?
2. Am I allowing that LOVE to transform the way I currently operate in the world?

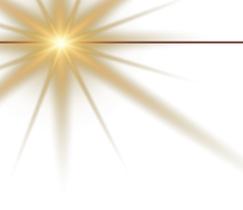
Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the priceless gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You for loving me so deeply that You gave everything to bring me back to You.

Devotional Contributed By:

Erin Garcia, TBC member for 39 yrs

Erin is just a mother raising a son, trying her best to live a life pleasing unto Christ. She desires to take full advantage of the greatest gift of all, freely given to us.



DECEMBER 24

Love at the Table

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

Matthew 22: 36 – 37 (ESV)

A few years ago we started a family tradition we call “The Anderson Clap.” During dinner, we take turns sharing something we noticed or appreciated about each other, like a kind or thoughtful thing someone did that day. After everyone shares, we clap.

One night, our kids thanked us for always showing up for them, and we felt a special kind of love that remained long after the clapping ended. This small tradition has become a way to connect as a family. Over time, our dinners have filled not only our tummies but also our hearts with love, even in the busiest times of life.

The Bible calls us to love God with everything we have. Yet in a world constantly tugging at our attention with screens, headlines, and never-ending to-do lists, it can be difficult to show up fully. But when we show up, God shows up too! When we make room for Him in our lives, no matter what we face, His love fills every gap and empty place. It reaches the deepest parts of our hearts.

This Christmas season, we remember that love began at a table, the one God set when He sent His Son, Jesus, into the world. Love itself took on flesh and dwelt among us. Just as our family claps for one another, we can offer God our own “love clap,” pausing to notice, celebrate, and share His unfailing love in our lives.

Reflection Questions

1. How can you make room for God’s love in your relationships and daily routines?
2. Are there any distractions or habits keeping you from loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind?

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of love. Today we turn our hearts, our souls, and our minds toward You. Remove every distraction that keeps us from drawing closer to You. Teach us to love as You love, and let Your light shine through us so others may see You in all we do. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

Nathan Anderson, Founder of a math advocacy nonprofit and Evangelist Missionary Jamillah Anderson

TBC Members for 2 years

Nathan and Jamillah have been married for 18 years and have two children, Jaleb and Nyla. Together, they are devoted to serving God and their community.

DECEMBER 25

Love Covers Us All

“And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.”

1 John 4:21 (NLT)

When I think of Christmas, I think about how we show love to others during this season. Although we should love one another all the time, the holidays are a reminder to put aside everything we have going on and to spend time with our loved ones. As a young woman, I can reflect on all the ways my parents, grandparents, siblings, and extended family have poured love into me over the years. It wasn't always about monetary gifts, but rather being surrounded by my village, cherishing their presence, and being grateful for all we have.

In the same way, when I think of Christmas, I also think of Christ's love for us. There is NO greater love in the world. Despite my faults and downfalls, I know that His love covers me every minute and every hour and He will never leave me. Because of this I am more intentional now when I show love to others. You never know what others could be going through. When you cross paths with a random stranger, you can share the love of Jesus with them, especially during this time of year when holidays are rough for some. Even as a teacher, I am reminded that every student who walks into my classroom needs love and God has chosen me to share that love with them. This holiday season I am comforted knowing that I am never alone because I have the love of Jesus. As I spend time with family and friends, I will reflect on how far God has carried us and how our love for one another will keep us going through the good and the bad.

Reflection Questions

1. What are some ways you can show love during the holiday season?
2. How would you explain the love of Jesus Christ to someone who does not know Him?

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank You so much for the love You gave to this world. Though we don't deserve it, You continue to love us every day. I pray this Christmas that someone in need will feel the love of Jesus and that You would supply their every need. Amen.

Devotional Contributed By:

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Hollee is currently a member of the young adult choir and sisterhood ministry. She also teaches Pre-K and is currently studying Elementary Education. She loves her Tabernacle family, loves to worship, and she can't wait to see what else God has in store for her life and the church.

Plan of Salvation

The birth of Jesus is like no other birth in the history of the world because He was born with a divine purpose. John 3:16 declares, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” This lets us know that God the Father sent his Son (Jesus) to be born and to live amongst us for our benefit, but what was the benefit of His coming? If you continue reading this same passage in the Gospel of John, it says, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (John 3:17)

God the Father gave His only Son because we needed to be rescued. Yes, we all need to be rescued from our own sin and brokenness. God loves us so much that He does not attempt to look past our sin and brokenness. God sees our sin, God loves us in spite of our sin, and in His unending love, God sent Jesus to save us from that sin through His death on the cross, burial, and resurrection.

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you would like to, I invite you to pray this prayer.

Jesus, I thank you that I have been able to spend time in this Advent devotional study and for the ways you have spoken to my heart. I thank you for the true story of CHRISTmas, for being born to save me from my sins.

Jesus, now in this moment, according to Hebrews 10:9, I confess with my mouth that you are my Savior! I believe in my heart that you are Lord, that you love me, and that you showed your love for me by giving your life on the cross, and then being raised victoriously by God the Father, conquering the sin and death which held me captive.

Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. I have made mistakes and many bad decisions; I have done wrong in my thoughts, words, and deeds. I ask your forgiveness, and I ask you to come now and live in my heart.

Thank you, Jesus, for coming into my heart and for making me new. Thank you for your Holy Spirit that now lives in me and thank you that you have made me a new creation in you!

In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you have just prayed this prayer for the first time, Congratulations, you are officially a member of the family of God. We would love to know that you joined the family. Please reach out to us at <https://tabernaclebiblewichita.com/forms/decision/>.



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