All I Want for Christmas Is...

JOY



RECEIVING GOOD NEWS. LIVING WITH GRATITUDE.

AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL & GUIDED JOURNAL

December 13 - 19, 2026 • Or begin any day

PHONE EDITION / OVERCOME CHURCH

An invitation to begin

ROOM FOR HONESTY. ROOM FOR JOY.

Christmas often arrives with an expectation that we should feel happy. Yet our actual lives may hold excitement and sorrow, gratitude and disappointment, sometimes within the same hour. This journey makes room for that honesty. Biblical joy begins with the good news of Jesus and grows as we receive His love, notice God's mercy, and respond in ordinary life.

Through the shepherds' story, a psalm of lament, Mary's song, and the teaching of Jesus, we will explore a joy that welcomes truth. We will practice gratitude, release comparison, celebrate meaningfully, and give with care. You do not need to manufacture a mood. Bring your real heart, and let these pages help you listen for the gifts God is inviting you to receive.

Advent means “coming.” We remember Jesus’ first coming and look forward to His return, when His restoring work will be complete. Between those promises, we learn to remain in His love. Joy can accompany us into ordinary responsibilities, unfinished stories, and acts of kindness. Let this week become a place to receive good news and carry it into the way you live.

Joy has room for honesty because it is rooted in Jesus.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What do you hope this season will hold? Name one joy you are receiving and one difficulty you are carrying.

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO

A daily rhythm of joy

NOTICE THE GIFTS. RECEIVE HIS JOY.

Allow 15-20 minutes a day. Take longer if a question needs room. Each day has three movements; you can complete them together or return to the prayer and evening reflection later.

READ & UNDERSTAND

Pause, read the full Scripture, and explore its setting. Mark words that invite your attention.

GO DEEPER

Connect the passage to daily life. Work through the questions with honesty and curiosity.

LIVE & PRAY

Choose a practical response. Pray in your own words, then return for an evening reflection.

Your daily journey

Tap a day to begin. Use the CONTENTS link at the bottom of each page to return. Record your responses in a notes app, journal, or PDF annotation app.

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Use the daily list as a gentle record, not a scorecard. If you miss a day, return

without trying to make up for it. Readings are also suitable for a conversation with a friend or small group.

Read & understand

01 GOOD NEWS

Joy begins with what God has done

December 13



AS YOU READ

Circle the titles given to Jesus. Underline who receives the announcement. What makes this news a reason for joy?

Read & understand

LUKE 2:8-11 (WEB)

8 There were shepherds in the same country staying in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock.

9 Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

10 The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be to all the people.

11 For there is born to you today, in David’s city, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Luke moves from Jesus' birth in Bethlehem to shepherds watching their flocks at night. An angel appears, and the glory of the Lord surrounds them. Their first response is fear. The announcement turns their attention toward good news: a Savior, Christ the Lord, has been born. Joy begins with God's action and the identity of this child, not with an improvement in the shepherds' working conditions.

LOOK AGAIN

A welcome can interrupt an ordinary day. How might you make room to receive Christ's good news today?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

The good news of Jesus gives us a reason for joy before every circumstance changes.

The angel announces joy for all the people and addresses the shepherds personally: a Savior is born to them. Christmas joy rests in the arrival of Jesus. It is good news to receive before it becomes a feeling to express.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 RECEIVE THE NEWS BEFORE MEASURING YOUR MOOD

You can know the Christmas story and still wonder why you do not feel more joyful. There may be bills, loss, or a hard conversation waiting at home. The shepherds were frightened when the announcement began. God did not wait for them to produce a festive mood. The good news came into the night they were already living.

02 LET JESUS DEFINE THE GIFT

The angel names a Savior, Christ the Lord. Christmas offers more than a temporary lift in spirits. God has come to rescue and reign through Jesus. That does not tell us how every personal difficulty will end. It tells us that the world's deepest need has not been ignored. Our joy has someone trustworthy at its center.

03 MAKE ROOM FOR ONE HONEST RESPONSE

Imagine hearing a familiar carol while walking through a difficult season. You may not feel ready to sing loudly. You can still pause over one line about Jesus and thank Him for coming. Or tell a friend, "I am having a hard week, but I am glad God has not left us alone." Joy can begin with that honest welcome.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. What have I been expecting to change before I allow myself to receive joy?

2. Which part of the announcement about Jesus speaks most directly to my life today?

Live & pray

HEAR THE NEWS. RECEIVE THE GIFT.

Let the announcement become personal without forcing an emotion.

01 THE NIGHT I AM LIVING IN

Name one concern or circumstance that is shaping this season.

02 THE GOOD NEWS I NEED TO HEAR

Choose one title of Jesus and write why it matters to you.

03 MY HONEST RESPONSE

Write a short prayer of welcome or thanksgiving in your own words.

Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Read the angel's announcement aloud slowly. Carry one phrase with you, and share a simple word of encouragement with someone who needs good news.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Jesus, thank You for coming into our world. Help me receive the good news of who You are within the life I actually have. Let joy grow from Your presence and saving love, even where I still carry difficulty. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

What helped me notice the good news of Jesus today, even in a small way?

Joy begins with good news, not with a demand to feel cheerful.

Read & understand

02 FREEDOM TO BE HONEST

Bringing sorrow into God's presence

December 14



AS YOU READ

Mark the questions, requests, and expressions of trust. What does this prayer give you permission to say?

Read & understand

PSALM 13 (WEB)

1 How long, Yahweh? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart every day? How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

3 Behold, and answer me, Yahweh, my God. Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death;

4 Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him"; Lest my adversaries rejoice when I fall.

5 But I trust in your loving kindness. My heart rejoices in your salvation.

6 I will sing to Yahweh, because he has been good to me.

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Psalm 13 is a lament attributed to David. It begins with repeated questions about how long God will seem absent and the enemy will prevail. The psalmist asks God to look, answer, and restore him. The prayer then turns toward trust in God's loving kindness and a song of gratitude. The psalm does not tell us that the outward situation changed before this declaration of trust.

LOOK AGAIN

The quiet person by the window does not need to perform happiness. What would honest companionship look like for you today?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Honest sorrow and trust in God can belong in the same prayer.

Lament is speech directed toward God, not a departure from relationship with Him. The movement from complaint to trust gives us language for bringing unresolved pain into His presence. We do not need to invent a cheerful version of our story.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 STOP EDITING THE PRAYER

At Christmas, “How are you?” can feel like a question with only one acceptable answer. Yet Scripture gives us words such as “How long?” The psalmist speaks about sorrow, danger, and the feeling of being forgotten. God has made room in His Word for this honesty. You can bring Him the feeling you would rather hide.

02 KEEP SPEAKING TOWARD GOD

Lament addresses God even when His presence is hard to sense. It can sound like, “I do not understand this, and I need Your help.” Imagine facing an empty place at the table. You can remember the person, name the loss, and ask God to meet you there. Trust does not require you to describe that loss as something easy or good.

03 LET GRATITUDE SHARE THE ROOM

The psalm ends with trust and song. This gives us a direction for prayer, not a deadline for finishing grief. You might name one kindness from God while still crying about what hurts. A friend’s visit or a quiet moment of worship can be received without canceling the sorrow. There is room for both honesty and gratitude in a faithful heart.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. What feeling have I been trying to hide from God or other people?

2. How could I express trust without pretending that my pain is resolved?

Live & pray

WRITE AN HONEST PRAYER.

Follow the movement of the psalm at your own pace. You do not have to force a conclusion.

01 GOD, HOW LONG...

Name a sorrow, frustration, or unanswered question honestly.

02 GOD, PLEASE...

Ask for the help, presence, wisdom, or strength you need.

03 GOD, I REMEMBER...

Name one truth about His love or one kindness you have received.

Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Pray what you wrote. If it would help, share your honest answer with a trustworthy person and ask them to listen or pray with you.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Faithful God, You welcome the truth about my heart. Meet me in what hurts and help me keep speaking with You. Let Your loving kindness become a place to rest while I wait for answers. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

What changed when I allowed honesty and trust to be part of the same prayer?

You can tell God the truth and still turn toward His love.

Read & understand

03 A GRATEFUL HEART

Remembering the mercy of God

December 15



AS YOU READ

Underline the actions Mary attributes to God. Where does her song move from her own experience to the needs of others?

Read & understand

LUKE 1:46-55 (WEB)

46 Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord.

47 My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,

48 for he has looked at the humble state of his servant. For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed.

49 For he who is mighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name.

50 His mercy is for generations of generations on those who fear him.

51 He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He has put down princes from their thrones. And has exalted the lowly.

53 He has filled the hungry with good things. He has sent the rich away empty.

54 He has given help to Israel, his servant, that he might remember mercy,

55 As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.”

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Mary speaks this song of praise during her visit with Elizabeth, after Elizabeth blesses her and recognizes the child she carries. Often called the Magnificat, the song celebrates God's regard for Mary and His mercy toward those who fear Him. It widens to the lifting of the lowly, the feeding of the hungry, and God's faithfulness to Israel and His promise to Abraham.

LOOK AGAIN

The notebook holds ordinary gifts rather than impressive achievements. What small mercy would you like to remember?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Gratitude grows as we recognize God's mercy in our lives and His faithfulness beyond us.

Mary's gratitude is personal but not limited to private comfort. She rejoices in God her Savior and in the mercy that overturns human pride. Her song invites us to remember both the kindness we receive and the larger work of God.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 NOTICE THE GIFT YOU MIGHT OVERLOOK

Mary recognizes that God has looked upon her lowly position. She receives His attention as mercy. Our days also contain gifts we can pass without noticing: someone's patient help, food on the table, an opportunity to begin again. Gratitude takes time to name these things. It receives them as gifts rather than treating them as the minimum life owes us.

02 LET THANKSGIVING WIDEN YOUR VISION

Mary sings about the hungry and the humble as well as her own blessing. Gratitude can move us outward. If we have received welcome, we can notice someone left out. If we have enough to share, we can recognize someone's need. Joy grows deeper when thanksgiving becomes participation in God's merciful work rather than a comparison of who has more.

03 REMEMBER BEFORE THE STORY IS FINISHED

Mary sings before Jesus is born and before she knows all that following God's purpose will involve. We can also give thanks within an unfinished story. Perhaps a family conflict remains unresolved, but one person has begun listening. You can thank God for that opening without claiming everything is healed. Naming a real gift helps us stay attentive to grace.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. Which ordinary gift have I begun treating as something I am simply owed?

2. How might gratitude move me toward someone else's need this Christmas?

Live & pray

NOTICE MERCY. NAME THE GIFTS.

Move beyond a general list. Connect each gift with the care behind it.

01 A GIFT I HAVE RECEIVED

Name something specific and explain why it matters.

02 A PERSON THROUGH WHOM CARE CAME

Name someone whose time, kindness, or faithfulness has helped you.

03 A MERCY I CAN SHARE

Identify one way to pass that care on to someone else.

Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Thank one person specifically for the care they have shown. Then choose a small act of generosity that grows from what you have received.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Merciful God, open my eyes to gifts I have overlooked. Thank You for remembering the humble and caring for the hungry. Let my gratitude become praise, and let that praise become kindness toward others. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

What gift became more meaningful when I paused to name it and give thanks?

Gratitude notices mercy and makes room to share it.

Read & understand

04 FREEDOM FROM COMPARISON

Returning to your own call to follow

December 16



AS YOU READ

Notice Peter’s question and Jesus’ redirection. What is Peter being invited to attend to?

Read & understand

JOHN 21:20-22 (WEB)

20 Then Peter, turning around, saw a disciple following. This was the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who had also leaned on Jesus' breast at the supper and asked, "Lord, who is going to betray You?"

21 Peter seeing him, said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?"

22 Jesus said to him, "If I desire that he stay until I come, what is that to you? You follow me."

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

After His resurrection, Jesus restores Peter and speaks about the cost of Peter's future discipleship. Peter then sees the disciple Jesus loved and asks what will happen to him. Jesus redirects Peter's attention to his own call: follow Me. In the following verse, John corrects a misunderstanding that arose from Jesus' words. The exchange is about faithful discipleship, not permission to stop caring about others.

LOOK AGAIN

Setting the phone down makes room to notice the life in front of you. What deserves your attention here and now?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Jesus calls us to follow Him without making someone else's path the measure of our own.

Peter is not given control over or full knowledge of another disciple's future. Jesus calls him back to obedience. We can care about others while releasing the need to use their story as the standard for our worth or faithfulness.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 RECOGNIZE WHEN ADMIRATION BECOMES MEASUREMENT

A photograph of someone else's Christmas can become a verdict on your home, family, or life. Admiration quietly turns into measurement: their gathering looks happier, their children seem closer, their work appears more successful. The image may reveal very little about the whole story. Yet comparison can make the gifts in your own life harder to receive.

02 LISTEN FOR THE PERSONAL INVITATION

Jesus tells Peter to follow Him. The invitation is specific enough to act on without knowing another person's future. Your faithfulness may look like caring for someone quietly, beginning again after failure, or keeping a promise no one sees. Another person's opportunities do not cancel yours. Return to the responsibility and relationship Jesus has actually placed before you.

03 CELEBRATE WITHOUT DIMINISHING YOURSELF

Imagine a friend sharing good news about a new opportunity. You can congratulate them sincerely while bringing your own disappointment to God. Their joy does not have to become evidence that you have been forgotten. Practice both generosity and honesty: celebrate the gift they received, then ask Jesus what your next faithful step is. He is still inviting you to follow.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. Whose life have I been using as the measure of my own?

2. What invitation to faithfulness becomes clearer when I stop making that comparison?

Live & pray

RELEASE THE COMPARISON. FOLLOW JESUS.

Name a comparison honestly, then return to the life and responsibilities in front of you.

01 THE COMPARISON THAT PULLS ME AWAY

Write the situation or image that triggers the comparison.

02 THE GIFT I CAN CELEBRATE

Name something good in the other person’s life without using it against yourself.

03 THE NEXT STEP THAT IS MINE

Identify one way to follow Jesus in your actual circumstances today.

Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Pause one source of unhelpful comparison for the day. Celebrate someone else's good news and give attention to your own next faithful step.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Jesus, free me from measuring my life against someone else's. Help me rejoice in their gifts and receive the life You have entrusted to me. Bring my attention back to Your invitation: follow Me. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

Where did returning to my own call make room for gratitude or joy?

Someone else's story does not cancel Jesus' invitation to you.

Read & understand

05 SOMETHING WORTH CELEBRATING

Responding to the presence of Jesus

December 17



AS YOU READ

Mark the different responses to Jesus in this passage. Which response draws your attention today?

Read & understand

LUKE 2:15-20 (WEB)

15 When the angels went away from them into the sky, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem, now, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

16 They came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby was lying in the feeding trough.

17 When they saw it, they publicized widely the saying which was spoken to them about this child.

18 All who heard it wondered at the things which were spoken to them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, just as it was told them.

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

After the angels leave, the shepherds go to Bethlehem and find Mary, Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. They share what they have heard, and their listeners are amazed. Mary treasures these things and reflects on them. The shepherds return glorifying and praising God. Luke describes several responses to the same event: going, telling, wondering, pondering, and praising.

LOOK AGAIN

The friends are sharing an ordinary table. What makes a gathering joyful beyond the food or decorations?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Meeting Jesus gives ordinary people something worth sharing, remembering, and celebrating.

The shepherds' praise is connected to what they have heard and seen, just as it was told to them. Celebration grows from God's faithfulness. Mary's quieter response shows that receiving the good news can include thoughtful reflection as well as outward praise.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 GIVE CELEBRATION A MEANINGFUL CENTER

Christmas celebrations can fill the calendar while leaving little room to name what we are celebrating. The shepherds have a clear center: God's good news has brought them to Jesus. A gathering becomes deeper when someone takes time to remember His coming, name a kindness, or tell a story of faithfulness. Meaning does not require an elaborate event.

02 MAKE ROOM FOR DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF JOY

The shepherds speak and praise; Mary treasures and ponders. People receive important moments differently. One person wants to sing, another needs time to reflect, and another expresses gratitude through hospitality. A meaningful celebration can welcome those differences. We do not need everyone to look equally excited in order to recognize that something good is being received.

03 CARRY THE CELEBRATION BACK INTO ORDINARY LIFE

The shepherds return to their work with praise. Their encounter does not keep them permanently beside the manger. Imagine ending a simple meal by thanking God together, then carrying that gratitude into the dishes and tomorrow's responsibilities. Joy can travel with us. The presence of Jesus is worth remembering beyond the gathering itself.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. What do I want my Christmas celebrations to help people remember?

2. Which response to Jesus feels most natural for me: sharing, pondering, or praising?

Live & pray

MAKE THE CELEBRATION MEANINGFUL.

Plan a small moment of shared joy with a clear reason behind it.

01 WHAT IS WORTH CELEBRATING

Name a truth about Jesus or a sign of God's faithfulness.

02 WHO I CAN INCLUDE

Think of someone who would welcome connection, including someone easily overlooked.

03 HOW WE WILL REMEMBER

Choose a simple meal, conversation, song, prayer, or act of gratitude.

Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Create the small moment you planned. Invite people to participate in their own way, and name the reason you are grateful.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

God, thank You for the good news of Jesus. Help me make room for meaningful celebration and include others generously. Let gratitude travel with me into the ordinary work that follows. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

What made a moment of celebration meaningful today?

A simple celebration can hold a deep reason for joy.

Read & understand

06 THE JOY OF GIVING

Sharing strength with someone in need

December 18



AS YOU READ

Notice whom Paul says to help and whose words he remembers. What kind of giving does the setting suggest?

Read & understand

ACTS 20:35 (WEB)

35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring you ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Paul is saying farewell to the elders of the church in Ephesus. He reminds them of his ministry, warns them to care for the church, and recalls working with his own hands rather than seeking their wealth. He urges them to help the weak and quotes Jesus' teaching that giving is more blessed than receiving. The setting emphasizes care, work, and integrity rather than public recognition.

LOOK AGAIN

A meal offered at a doorway is a small, concrete gift. What kind of help would be meaningful to someone near you?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Generosity joins us to the way of Jesus as we use what we have to help others.

Giving is shaped by the needs of others and the example of Jesus. Paul is not promising financial profit in return for generosity. He points toward the blessing of participating in a life that supports the vulnerable rather than using people for gain.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 START WITH THE PERSON, NOT THE PERFORMANCE

Christmas giving can become a search for the impressive present or the visible gesture. Paul directs attention toward helping the weak. Ask what would genuinely support the person in front of you. A meal, a ride, patient instruction, or help with an ordinary task may be more useful than something expensive. Love pays attention before deciding what to give.

02 GIVE FROM WHAT IS ACTUALLY ENTRUSTED TO YOU

Generosity includes money, but also time, ability, attention, and strength. You do not need to compete with someone else's gift. Imagine spending an hour helping a neighbor with a task they cannot manage alone. The gift may never be photographed or applauded. Its value lies in the care it makes tangible, not in the attention it attracts.

03 RECEIVE THE BLESSING WITHOUT DEMANDING A FEELING

Sometimes giving feels joyful immediately. Sometimes it feels like effort, and the recipient may not respond as you expected. Jesus' teaching is larger than a promise of pleasant emotion after every act. Giving shapes us toward His way of life. Offer the gift freely, without making someone responsible for your satisfaction, and let gratitude grow in its own time.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. What need might I notice if I listen before deciding what to give?

2. Which resource can I share freely without needing praise or a particular response?

Live & pray

NOTICE A NEED. OFFER A USEFUL GIFT.

Choose a generous response that is practical, respectful, and within your means.

01 THE NEED I CAN SEE

Name a specific need, or a question that would help you understand it.

02 WHAT I CAN OFFER

Identify time, attention, ability, money, or another resource you can share.

03 HOW I WILL OFFER IT FREELY

Plan a respectful offer that gives the person room to accept or decline.

Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Make the offer you planned. Follow through on what you promise, and let the person receive the gift without owing you a certain reaction.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Generous Jesus, thank You for all I have received. Help me notice real needs and share wisely. Free me from seeking recognition, and form in me the quiet joy of participating in Your care for others. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

What did giving teach me about the person I served or the way of Jesus?

A useful gift can make love visible in an ordinary day.

Read & understand

07 JOY THAT LASTS

Remaining in the love of Jesus

December 19



AS YOU READ

Circle the repeated word “love.” Notice how Jesus connects love, obedience, and joy.

Read & understand

JOHN 15:9-12 (WEB)

9 Even as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Remain in my love.

10 If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and remain in his love.

11 I have spoken these things to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be made full.

12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you.

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Jesus speaks to His disciples on the night before His crucifixion. Earlier in John 15 He describes Himself as the vine and His followers as branches who depend on Him. He now calls them to remain in His love, keep His commandments, and love one another. His words about complete joy are spoken with suffering ahead, not from a life untouched by sorrow.

LOOK AGAIN

Quiet companionship can outlast a special occasion. What helps you return to the love of Jesus in ordinary life?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Lasting joy grows as we remain in Christ's love and learn to love as He loves.

Jesus connects joy with abiding in His love and living out His command to love. This is the life of relationship and discipleship. It does not promise uninterrupted happiness; it offers participation in His joy as we remain close to Him.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 LOOK BEYOND THE SEASON'S HIGH POINTS

A favorite gathering ends. The lights come down. The thing we looked forward to becomes a memory. These moments can be good gifts, but they cannot carry the whole weight of our joy. Jesus offers a relationship that continues beyond the season. Remaining in His love gives us a place to return when the excitement passes.

02 RECEIVE LOVE AND RESPOND TO IT

Jesus first speaks of the love He has given His disciples, then calls them to remain in it and obey. The command to love others is a response to His love, not a way to purchase it. We stay attentive to His words, bring our lives into prayer, and let His character shape our choices. Joy grows within that ongoing relationship.

03 CHOOSE A PRACTICE THAT CAN CONTINUE

Imagine keeping one small rhythm after Christmas: reading a passage before reaching for the phone, sharing a weekly meal, or checking on someone who is alone. The practice does not manufacture joy. It makes room to receive Christ's love and express it. His presence can become familiar in ordinary days, not only in the moments that feel special.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. What temporary experience have I been asking to sustain my joy?

2. Which practice could help me remain attentive to Christ's love beyond Christmas?

Live & pray

RECEIVE LOVE. PRACTICE LOVE. REMAIN.

Choose a simple rhythm that connects relationship with Jesus to the way you treat people.

01 WHAT I HEAR JESUS SAYING

Write one truth about His love from today's passage.

02 WHERE LOVE CAN BECOME ACTION

Name one relationship in which His command can shape your response.

03 A RHYTHM I WILL CARRY FORWARD

Choose a realistic practice and a specific time to begin.

Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Begin your chosen practice today. Include one concrete act of love toward another person as a response to the love you have received.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Jesus, thank You for loving me and inviting me to remain with You. Let Your words shape my life and Your love shape my relationships. Grow a joy in me that can continue through ordinary days. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

How did receiving or expressing Christ's love make a difference today?

The celebration ends; the invitation to remain in His love continues.

Gather what God has shown you

WHAT JOY WILL YOU CARRY?

Look back at the ways you received good news, prayed honestly, gave thanks, and practiced love. Notice the gifts you want to remember and the rhythms that can continue after the celebrations end.

A truth about Jesus that gives me reason for joy...

A sorrow or longing I can bring honestly to God...

A gift or celebration I want to remember...

One practice of gratitude or love I will continue...

A CONVERSATION TO SHARE

If you meet with a friend or group, share one insight, one unfinished question, and one way you can pray for each other. No one needs to share more than they are ready to.

Keep walking in joy

HIS JOY CAN REMAIN.



Receive the good news. Carry the gratitude.

You can return to these pages when celebration feels easy or when joy feels distant. Bring Jesus your gratitude and your honest questions. Keep noticing His mercy, receiving His love, and sharing what you have been given. His presence continues into the ordinary days ahead.

A CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for the good news of Your coming. Help me carry gratitude without hiding sorrow and celebrate without comparing my life to another's. Keep me attentive to Your love, and let Your joy shape the way I give, welcome, and live. Amen.

About this edition

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