All I Want for Christmas Is...

LOVE



RECEIVING HIS LOVE. MAKING IT VISIBLE.

AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL & GUIDED JOURNAL

December 20 - 24, 2026 • Or begin any day

PHONE EDITION / OVERCOME CHURCH

An invitation to begin

LOVE BEGINS WITH A GIFT.

At the heart of Christmas is the gift of God coming near in Jesus. We may arrive at these final days before Christmas eager for connection, tired from preparation, or aware of relationships that are painful or missing. Beneath many of our wishes is a simple longing: to be loved, to belong, and to know that our life is seen.

These five days begin with the love God has already shown in His Son. We will explore the belonging He gives, the dignity of being seen, and the practical shape of care that moves beyond words. Receiving comes before responding. You do not have to make yourself impressive before approaching God, and you do not have to create a perfect holiday to offer meaningful love.

Advent means “coming.” We remember Jesus’ first coming and look forward to His

return, when His restoring work will be complete. This journey ends on Christmas Eve with the promise of Immanuel: God with us. Let that nearness shape the way you pray, welcome others, notice quiet needs, and carry love into the ordinary moments that follow Christmas.

The love we offer begins with the love we receive in Jesus.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Where do you most long to receive love in this season? Name a person or situation you want to bring to God.

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO

A daily rhythm of love

RECEIVE HIS LOVE. LET IT BECOME CARE.

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.

01 TO BE LOVED
December 20

02 TO BELONG
December 21

03 TO BE SEEN
December 22

04 LOVE THAT SHOWS UP
December 23

05 GOD CLOSE BY
December 24

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 TO BE LOVED

Receiving the love that came first

December 20



AS YOU READ

Mark the actions God takes in these verses. What do they reveal about where love begins?

Read & understand

1 JOHN 4:9-10 (WEB)

9 By this God's love was revealed in us, that God has sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

First John calls believers to love one another and anchors that call in the character and action of God. These verses explain how His love was revealed: He sent His only Son so that we might live through Him. The passage then names Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. God's love takes sin seriously and acts to restore us; it is more than affectionate feeling.

LOOK AGAIN

The gift is ready to be received. What makes it difficult for you to receive love without immediately trying to repay it?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

God's love begins with His gracious action toward us, not with our ability to earn it.

The direction of love matters: God loved us and sent His Son. Our response follows His initiative. The birth of Jesus belongs to this larger saving work, inviting us to receive life through Him rather than trying to make ourselves lovable enough for God.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 NOTICE THE BARGAIN YOU MAY BE MAKING

We sometimes approach God as though love were a reward for managing life well. We promise to try harder, hide our failure, or wait until we feel more acceptable before praying. John points us toward God's initiative. His love was revealed in sending Jesus. The starting place is what God has done, not the impression we can create.

02 RECEIVE A LOVE THAT TELLS THE TRUTH

The reference to an atoning sacrifice acknowledges that sin is real. God does not love us by pretending nothing needs healing or forgiveness. He acts through Jesus to deal with what separates us from Him. You can therefore bring the truth about your life into prayer. Confession need not be an attempt to talk God into caring; it can be a response to the care He has already shown.

03 LET RECEIVING CHANGE THE WAY YOU LIVE

Imagine admitting a mistake without first listing all the reasons you are usually a good person. You can ask for forgiveness and take responsibility because your worth is not sustained by appearing flawless. Receiving God's love can make us more honest and more generous. This Christmas, begin with the gift before asking how well you have performed.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. Where have I been treating God's love as something I must earn?

2. How could receiving His love help me become more honest or generous?

Live & pray

BEGIN WITH THE GIFT.

Let the passage challenge the conditions you have attached to being loved.

01 THE CONDITION I KEEP ADDING

Complete the thought: “I will be worthy of love when…”

02 WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY DONE

Write what these verses say about His action in Jesus.

03 MY RESPONSE TO HIS LOVE

Name an honest prayer, confession, or step of gratitude you can offer.



Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Spend a few quiet minutes receiving the words of this passage. Take one honest step toward God without trying to make yourself impressive first.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Loving Father, thank You for sending Your Son so that I might live through Him. Help me receive Your grace honestly. Free me from trying to earn Your care, and let Your love shape the way I live. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

Where did receiving God's love change my response to myself or another person?

You are invited to receive the love that God has already shown in Jesus.

Read & understand

02 TO BELONG

Welcomed into the family of God

December 21



AS YOU READ

Notice the contrast between rejection and reception. Underline what God gives to those who receive Jesus.

Read & understand

JOHN 1:10-13 (WEB)

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't recognize him.

11 He came to his own, and those who were his own didn't receive him.

12 But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name:

13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

John's Gospel opens by describing the eternal Word, through whom the world was made and who brings life and light. These verses name the painful reality that the world did not recognize Him and His own did not receive Him. Yet those who receive Him and believe in His name are given the right to become God's children. This new life originates in God, not in ancestry or human achievement.

LOOK AGAIN

Pulling out a chair is a small act of welcome. What practical gesture could help someone know there is room for them?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

Through receiving Jesus, we are welcomed into a belonging that God Himself gives.

Belonging to God is a gift connected to receiving Jesus. John does not base it on a family pedigree, social status, or personal accomplishment. The passage also acknowledges rejection, so its promise speaks into a world where welcome is not always offered.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LONGING TO BELONG

Christmas can intensify the question of where we fit. A gathering may remind us of a relationship we have lost, a family pattern that hurts, or the feeling of being on the edge of the room. John does not describe a world where everyone receives Jesus warmly. Rejection is part of the story, but it does not have the final word.

02 RECEIVE THE IDENTITY GOD GIVES

The promise of becoming God's children is not something we establish through the right background or an impressive record. It is given through receiving Jesus and believing in His name. This belonging does not instantly remove every experience of loneliness. It does provide a deeper identity from which we can seek connection rather than constantly auditioning for acceptance.

03 MAKE ROOM AS SOMEONE WHO HAS RECEIVED ROOM

Imagine noticing a person standing alone after worship or someone who has no plans for a holiday meal. An invitation can make welcome tangible. Ask without pressure and respect their answer. The family of God becomes visible through people who practice attention, hospitality, and patient relationship. Having received welcome in Christ, we can offer a place for someone else to begin.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. Where do I feel the pressure to prove that I belong?

2. How could my belonging to God shape the way I welcome another person?

Live & pray

RECEIVE A PLACE. MAKE A PLACE.

Connect the gift of belonging in Christ with one practical expression of welcome.

01 WHERE I FEEL ON THE OUTSIDE

Name a setting or relationship where belonging feels uncertain.

02 THE IDENTITY THIS PASSAGE OFFERS

Write what it means to receive the right to become a child of God.

03 SOMEONE I CAN WELCOME

Choose a person and a simple, respectful way to include them.



Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Offer one genuine invitation: a conversation, a seat, a meal, or a place to join you. Make it warm and specific, with freedom to decline.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Jesus, thank You for welcoming those who receive You into God's family. Steady my identity in that gift. Help me notice people on the edge of the room and offer the kind of welcome I have received. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

Where did I receive or offer a meaningful sense of belonging today?

God's welcome gives us a place to stand and room to offer others.

Read & understand

03 TO BE SEEN

Receiving God's attention in an ordinary life

December 22



AS YOU READ

Underline what Mary says about her position and what she says about God. Where does she place the emphasis?

Read & understand

LUKE 1:46-49 (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.

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Mary is visiting Elizabeth after receiving the angel's announcement about Jesus. Elizabeth has blessed Mary and affirmed her trust in what the Lord has spoken. Mary responds by magnifying God and rejoicing in her Savior. She names her lowly position and the great things the Mighty One has done for her. Her song directs attention to God's holiness and grace rather than to her own social importance.

LOOK AGAIN

An open Bible invites us to listen to the God who sees us. Who might need the gift of your listening rather than a quick solution?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

God's attention reaches the humble and overlooked, giving dignity that does not depend on public recognition.

Mary recognizes that God has regarded her in her humble circumstances. His attention is an act of mercy, not a reward for being publicly impressive. The passage invites us to recognize the dignity of an ordinary life held within God's purposes.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 NAME THE WORK THAT GOES UNNOTICED

Some of the most important care happens without applause: preparing a meal, helping someone get through a hard day, keeping a quiet promise. At Christmas, people can work hard to make others feel loved while feeling unseen themselves. Mary's song reminds us that public visibility and God's attention are not the same thing. An ordinary life is not outside His care.

02 LET GOD'S REGARD GIVE YOU DIGNITY

Mary rejoices in what the Mighty One has done for her. Her story does not teach that every hidden act will lead to a public platform. It reveals a God whose purposes reach people the world may overlook. You can bring Him your desire to be noticed without letting that desire become the judge of your worth. His care gives you a reason to live faithfully where you are.

03 OFFER SOMEONE THE GIFT OF ATTENTION

Imagine thanking a person for something specific that others rarely notice. Or sitting with someone long enough to hear the answer after "How are you?" Being seen often begins with undivided attention. Put the phone away, ask a thoughtful question, and listen without rushing to your own story. You can honor another person's dignity through a small act of attentive love.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. Where do I feel overlooked, and how is that feeling affecting my choices?

2. Whose quiet faithfulness or hidden burden could I notice more intentionally?

Live & pray

NOTICE THE PERSON. NAME THE GIFT.

Bring your own longing to God, then practice attention toward someone else.

01 WHERE I LONG TO BE SEEN

Write honestly about an unnoticed effort, need, or part of your life.

02 WHAT I RECEIVE FROM THIS PASSAGE

Name what Mary's words reveal about God's attention and mercy.

03 WHO I WILL NOTICE TODAY

Choose a person and write a specific question or word of appreciation.



Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Give someone your undivided attention. Name one specific quality, effort, or kindness you appreciate, without turning the moment toward yourself.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

God, thank You for regarding the humble and knowing what others may miss. Meet me where I feel unseen. Help me receive my dignity from Your care and offer attentive love to someone near me. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

What did I learn when I slowed down enough to notice another person?

A life does not need a spotlight to be held in God's care.

Read & understand

04 LOVE THAT SHOWS UP

Moving from kind intentions to practical care

December 23



AS YOU READ

Mark the movement from what Jesus did to the everyday example John gives. What makes love concrete here?

Read & understand

1 JOHN 3:16-18 (WEB)

16 By this we know love, because he laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and closes his heart of compassion against him, how does God's love remain in him?

18 My little children, let's not love in word only, or with the tongue only, but in deed and truth.

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

First John contrasts hatred with the life believers share in Christ. These verses identify Jesus' self-giving death as the pattern by which we know love. The teaching then moves from laying down our lives to a practical question: how do we respond when we have resources and see another believer in need? John calls his readers to love in deed and truth, not merely in speech.

LOOK AGAIN

Carrying a bag is ordinary work. What simple task could become an expression of love today?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

The love revealed in Jesus calls us to respond to real needs with truthful, concrete care.

Love takes visible form in action shaped by truth. John links the great self-giving of Jesus with ordinary generosity. Words matter, but they are meant to be joined by care that responds to what a person actually needs.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 LET COMPASSION BECOME SPECIFIC

“Let me know if you need anything” may be sincere, but it can leave a tired person responsible for organizing the help. John asks what happens when we see a need and have resources. Begin with attention: what is difficult for this person, and what could I realistically offer? A specific, respectful question can turn goodwill into a practical possibility.

02 OFFER WHAT IS USEFUL AND TRUTHFUL

Imagine a neighbor recovering from a demanding week. You might offer to bring a meal on a particular evening or collect groceries while you are already out. Ask what would help, and keep the promise you make. Love in truth does not exaggerate our availability or make someone accept what we prefer to give. It cares about the real person.

03 ALLOW LOVE TO INTERRUPT A LITTLE COMFORT

The example of Jesus challenges us to move beyond convenience. Some acts of care cost time, money, attention, or a change in plans. That does not mean saying yes to every demand or taking responsibility for everything. It means being willing to make a real offering where we can. Christmas love becomes credible when someone can point to the care they received.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. Where have I offered kind words while avoiding an action I could reasonably take?

2. What would useful, truthful care look like for one person near me?

Live & pray

TURN THE INTENTION INTO AN ACTION.

Choose a need you can respond to with a clear and sustainable commitment.

01 THE NEED I HAVE NOTICED

Describe what you know and what you still need to ask.

02 THE CARE I CAN OFFER

Name a practical action that fits your resources and responsibilities.

03 THE PROMISE I WILL KEEP

Write when and how you will offer it, including any helpful limits.



Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Make the specific offer and follow through if it is welcomed. If the person needs something different, listen before deciding what you can do.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Jesus, Your love has taken action for us. Help me notice real needs and respond with generosity and truth. Make me willing to give and faithful in what I promise, so that my care becomes more than words. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

What became different for someone because love moved from intention into action?

Love becomes tangible when a real need meets a faithful response.

Read & understand

05 GOD CLOSE BY

Receiving the presence at the heart of Christmas

December 24



AS YOU READ

Notice the ordinary details in Luke and the meaning of the name in Matthew. How do they illuminate one another?

Read & understand

LUKE 2:1-7; MATTHEW 1:23 (WEB)

LUKE 2:1-7

1 Now in those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled.

2 This was the first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 All went to enroll themselves, everyone to his own city.

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to David's city, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David;

5 to enroll himself with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him as wife, being pregnant.

6 While they were there, the day had come for her to give birth.

7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a feeding trough, because there was no room for them in the inn.

MATTHEW 1:23

23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall give birth to a son. They shall call his name Immanuel"; which is, being interpreted, "God with us."

Read & understand

BEHIND THE PASSAGE

Luke places Jesus' birth within the realities of imperial rule, registration, travel, and a family's practical needs. Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem, and Mary lays her firstborn son in a manger because there is no room for them in the inn. Matthew explains the significance of Jesus' coming through the name Immanuel: God with us. Together the passages point toward divine presence in a very ordinary and vulnerable human setting.

LOOK AGAIN

Light falls on a humble manger. How does the simplicity of Jesus' arrival help you recognize God's nearness in ordinary places?

Go deeper

LET THE WORD MEET YOUR LIFE.

TODAY'S MAIN POINT

In Jesus, God has come near to share our human life and accomplish His saving purpose.

Christmas announces the coming of God with us in Jesus. The manger does not make every hardship good or every circumstance easy. It shows that God's saving purpose enters real human life rather than remaining distant from its vulnerability and need.

Go deeper

PUT THE TRUTH INTO FOCUS

01 RECEIVE THE CHRISTMAS YOU ACTUALLY HAVE

Your Christmas Eve may include a full house, a quiet room, a work shift, or a difficult absence. The birth story is not arranged around ideal conditions. There is travel, a crowded place, and a manger. You do not need to produce a perfect holiday before welcoming Jesus. Bring Him the life that is actually here, including what you wish were different.

02 LET NEARNESS BECOME THE CENTER

Immanuel means God with us. This is more than a sentimental idea that everything will feel comfortable. In Jesus, God has entered our world and acted for our salvation. His presence gives us someone to trust within unfinished circumstances. Pause beneath the noise or the silence of the evening and remember whose coming you are celebrating.

03 CARRY HIS LOVE INTO THE NEXT ORDINARY MOMENT

Imagine choosing to sit with someone who is tired rather than finishing one more optional task. Or making a call to someone whose evening may feel lonely. These acts do not create the meaning of Christmas; they respond to it. God has come near in Jesus. We can therefore move toward others with attention, practical care, and the willingness to be present.

Go deeper

REFLECT & WRITE

1. What expectation do I need to release so I can receive this Christmas honestly?

2. How can I respond to God's nearness by becoming more present to someone else?

Live & pray

MAKE ROOM FOR HIS PRESENCE.

Pause before the next activity. Let the meaning of Christmas shape this evening.

01 THE CHRISTMAS I AM BRINGING

Name one joy and one difficulty in the holiday you actually have.

02 THE TRUTH I WILL REMEMBER

Write what “God with us” means for you in those circumstances.

03 THE LOVE I WILL CARRY FORWARD

Choose one person and one concrete way to offer your presence or care.



Live & pray

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Read the Christmas passages aloud, alone or with others. Take a quiet moment to welcome Jesus, then make your chosen expression of love concrete.

A PRAYER TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Immanuel, thank You for coming near. I welcome You into the Christmas I actually have. Meet me in its joy and difficulty, and help me carry Your love into the ordinary moments and relationships before me. Amen.

Live & pray

RETURN THIS EVENING

Where did I receive or express the nearness of love this Christmas Eve?

You do not need a perfect Christmas to receive the presence of Jesus.

Gather what God has shown you

WHAT LOVE WILL YOU PRACTICE?

Before Christmas Day, pause to notice what you have received. Look back at the invitations to belong, pay attention, and make care concrete. Let one truthful response become part of how you carry Christ's love forward.

A truth about God's love I want to receive...

A longing or relationship I am still bringing to Him...

A person or need I have begun to notice...

One concrete expression of love I will carry forward...

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 love

CARRY LOVE INTO CHRISTMAS.



God has come near. Make His love visible.

As Christmas arrives, receive the gift at its center: God with us in Jesus. You can welcome Him in a full house, a quiet room, or an ordinary day of work. Keep receiving His love and making room for others. The next conversation, shared task, or small act of care can become a place to respond.

A CLOSING PRAYER

Immanuel, thank You for coming near. Help me receive the love You have shown and carry it into the life before me. Teach me to welcome, notice, and serve with honesty and tenderness. May the meaning of Christmas continue in the way I love. Amen.

About this edition

Design proof for review. Scripture quotations: World English Bible (WEB), public domain. Full selected passages are printed in red italics. Biblical context and devotional applications are distinguished throughout. Images are AI-generated photographic illustrations, not documentary photographs of real people or biblical events. Original teaching and workbook design prepared for Overcome Church.

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