

# DAY 6

Deuteronomy 7:9 NLT

Have you ever been hurt or betrayed by someone you trusted? The pain can linger a long time impacting your relationship and sometimes your faith. It can be difficult to remember what is true and who is trustworthy.

That's what the author of Deuteronomy is doing for Israel: reminding them what's true. Even though they've experienced hardship and their situation isn't ideal, they're reminded that God is faithful and God's love doesn't change. Even more? God can be trusted. This doesn't mean things are never difficult again. But, it does mean when difficulties arise, you are reminded of God's trustworthiness and faithfulness in the middle of it all.

**When people let you down or disappoint you, remember this verse. Today, write down three ways you have seen God's trustworthiness. It can change how you respond to tough circumstances.**

# DAY 7

Luke 2:14 NIV

One of the easiest ways to memorize something is to put it to music. This is why commercials are filled with jingles. "At BK, have it..." You know those lyrics, and that song is now in your head (good luck getting it out)! And maybe that's why the angels sang these words over the shepherds.

**As you memorize this verse, try making it into a little jingle of your own. Don't feel like you're musically talented? Put it to the tune of the first two verses of "Old MacDonald." You know, before all the animal sounds come in. Not only are you one step closer to being a SoundCloud artist, but you've also just memorized a really important verse in the story of Jesus' birth.**

# DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN  
everyday faith.

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD / WEEK 2

## DAY 1

2 Corinthians 3:17 NIV

Have you ever thought of the words freedom and Jesus fitting together? For many people, following Jesus may seem like the opposite of freedom, like a lot of strict rules and regulations. But often, what feels like a lack of freedom, is ultimately the gateway to the most and best kind of freedom. The commands Jesus gives aren't to take something away from us but to give us what we were ultimately made for living into the design God has for us. Remember, what may feel like the loss of freedom here and now, may be an invitation to greater freedom later. Because that's what God has in mind for us: the long game.

All of those rules for life are just guardrails keeping us on the path to the best possible life. On the road, getting rid of guardrails doesn't make me freer, it just makes the drive more dangerous. Freedom is driving confidently in the right direction.

**What's something about following Jesus that seems like a strict rule? How could it be a guardrail for now that leads to greater freedom later? Today, write down three ways you can find true freedom by following Jesus.**

## DAY 2

Matthew 11:28 NIV

The Christmas season can be exhausting. We're running on fumes from the end of the semester, and then the comparison game creeps in because of everyone else's family, gifts, and holiday plans. We know things don't matter, but it can be so hard to keep that at the front of our minds. Keeping up can easily become a heavy burden.

Are you tired? Worn out from trying so hard to experience the kind of Christmas you want? You see others having fun, but what are you missing out on yourself? You need rest. And that's what Jesus offers. A break. A chance to breathe. A time to quiet your mind.

**Today, when the exhaustion of Christmas feels overwhelming, take a time out from life and slow down. Take a few deep breaths. Pay attention to the goodness that surrounds you. Listen and look for the joy of the season. In the coming weeks, when life feels overwhelming, think of a time or place where you can go to mentally rest and reset and make it happen.**

# DAY 3

Romans 2:7 NIV

Throughout the course of our days, we make a million small decisions. Maybe we cut corners on our paper or go out of our way to help our mom. Maybe he doesn't see it, but we roll our eyes at our dad. The point is, every day is filled with tiny decisions that don't seem like that big of a deal. But every decision is setting us on a path, one way or another, making us into a particular kind of person. This is what Paul is talking about in this verse. Doing good isn't just the "right thing to do." It's making us into a specific kind of person—a person who does good things and, in the process, is looking more and more like Jesus. There are no small or insignificant choices. Every decision takes us somewhere and shapes our life, now and later.

**Today, make a timeline of your life so far. What are the major moments—good and bad—that have defined your life? What are the small moments that have shaped you? Spend some time in prayer dreaming with God about who you want to be and how you can continue to make choices now that will positively shape your future.**

# DAY 4

1 Timothy 4:10 NLT

Christmas usually brings with it a fresh sense of hope: a break from school, that gift you have been begging your parents for, and a fresh start with the new year coming. But there's another piece of hope we celebrate every Christmas: The God of all creation wanted to be with us and did whatever it took to make it happen. What kind of hope does this give us? The reality is the God of the universe wanted to make sure we knew how loved we are. Just in case we were unsure about the closeness and goodness of God, God became man to take away any doubt. No matter how bad things may get, we are reminded that we are never alone. What is an area of your life where you need to be reminded of the Good News of hope that Jesus brings to our world?

**Today, set a timer on your phone for one minute. During that minute, write down the places in your life that feel like a struggle. Then, next to that struggle, write, "But in Jesus, I can find hope," and then why Jesus gives you hope in that area.**

# DAY 5

Luke 2:10 NLT

*Written by Abby, age 19, from Brantford, Ontario, Canada*

*When I read the story of Jesus' birth, it gives me warm fuzzy feelings. I'm filled with hope because I know how the story ends. But to Mary and Joseph, living that story was probably much more difficult and scarier. Mary found out in an instant that she was pregnant, unmarried, and would be giving birth to the son of God. Can you imagine an angel showing up and telling you that kind of news!? But she trusted God's plan. Her future husband, Joseph, was naturally full of questions, but he too trusted and obeyed God's message through the angel. Mary and Joseph had so much to figure out. There was so much unknown, change, and truly ridiculous circumstances they would eventually overcome. But, they knew this was a story bigger than just them. It wasn't*

about them; it was about Jesus bringing great joy to all people.

**We can take away a lot from the story of Mary and Joseph. This Christmas when you're faced with new people, changes in circumstances, or just inconvenient trials, I challenge you to think of the bigger picture. How can you point to great joy for all people this Christmas?**