

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

*"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*

MEDITATION:

"Do not pray for tasks equal to your abilities, but pray for abilities equal to your tasks. Then the performance of your tasks will be no miracle, but you will be the miracle." -Thomas S. Monson

Christmas time is often depicted in movies and literature as magical, wondrous and full of miracles. Much of that magic and miraculous nature comes from the spirit of every day people, taking special care in this season to celebrate with kindness the miracles of Jesus and God's fulfilled promise to humanity.

PRAYER:

Dear Lord, this Christmas I pray that I will see the miracles throughout the month of December. Please help me show your miracle to others throughout the world so their lives can be changed like mine has been changed. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Reflect on those in your life who are miraculous to you. Work to be a miracle in the life of someone this season, be it big or small.

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

"I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid." John 14:27

MEDITATION:

Peace on Earth becomes a popular phrase in the advent season - but it is not an easy task. Peace is difficult to achieve, especially when we are struggling with in a broken world. But God reminds us that we can always find peace with him, and that he gives it to us freely and always.

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to receive the peace that you give me and to share it with others. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Sing "Let There be Peace on Earth" out loud today.

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

*"For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
Jeremiah 29:11*

MEDITATION:

It's very easy to fall into a self pitying mindset, especially during the emotionally charged holiday season. IT is difficult, but rewarding to think instead that struggles we face will help us to become the best versions of ourselves.

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray that in times of hardship and sorrow that I can find comfort in your ultimate plan. I pray that I will be able to find hope in knowing that you are with me always and faith that it will all turn out for the better.

ACTIVITY:

Think about the hardest moments of your life. Then think about what you learned through those experiences. How did they strengthen you? Did they give you tools to have deeper fellowship with others?

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

*"The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father. And the Word was full of grace and truth."
John 1:14*

MEDITATION:

The Bible is a living book, full of wisdom and guidance. Christmas celebrates Christ, the embodiment of that wisdom, and the sacrifice made for us all. He came into the world as an infant and grew just as all children do, and died as we all must. His humanity is not to be overlooked, as it ties him to us.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank you for loving humanity so much to make Jesus human. By his example help me to know what it is to be a perfect human in your world, and to remember his mortal self this Christmas season.

ACTIVITY:

Find a piece of yarn or string, and tie it around your wrist today. Each time you feel or look at it, remember the love that God had when he bound Christ into a human body.

Scripture Message:

"NOW MY EYES WILL BE OPEN AND MY EARS ATTENTIVE TO THE PRAYER THAT IS MADE IN THIS PLACE." 2 CHRONICLES 7:15

Meditation:

Being prayerful is often thought of as something we do in our mind. But what if it is also a special space? What if, instead of speaking silently in our mind, we sat in a designated chair, or kneeled, or spoke aloud? We have the power to create a sacred space, and to be intentional about our being with God this season.

Prayer:

Lord, inspire me to be intentional with my time, and create space to be with you this season. Amen.

Activity:

Create a special family prayer space today. Build a pillow fort, or hang a cross in a corner. Encourage everyone to visit the space and be alone in His Presence.

Scripture Message:

"ABOVE ALL, CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH LOVE, WHICH BINDS EVERYTHING TOGETHER IN PERFECT HARMONY." COLOSSIANS 3:14

Meditation:

As we put on our Sunday best, pick out frilly Christmas dresses, and bright red ties, let us not forget the most beautiful of clothing; love. This advent season and all year round, imagine wearing your love, kindness and grace around you like a puffy sweater. Make it visible to all, and let it warm you and lift your spirits.

Prayer:

Father in Heaven, thank you for your unyielding love and forgiveness. Help us as we strive to forgive and to love others, as you have forgiven and loved us. Amen.

Activity:

Select gently used winter clothing, or purchase new and donate it to a church drive or mission center in your area.

Scripture Message:

"BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GENEROSITY, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND SELF-CONTROL." GALATIANS 5:22-23

Meditation:

Even in the face of things that surely angered or frightened others, Jesus remained calm. He reacted only in doing what was needed, never more. Even when he was captured, and Peter attacked one of the soldiers with a sword, Jesus responded by telling Peter to put down the weapon. Jesus is the pinnacle example of Self Control.

During the Holiday season, emotions often run high in crowded rooms with immense social pressures. Be sure to practice self control in this time, and react to uncomfortable situations with grace. Remain calm and steadfast in your fruits of the Spirit.

Prayer:

Lord, please help us to practice self control. Let us not be drawn in by social arguments, let us not be offended by slights real or imagined. Let us to react only with grace and humility this season. Amen.

Activity:

Be mindful of your instincts and urges today. Are there things you say that are better left unsaid? Habits you'd rather not have? Consider how you might strengthen your Self Control in Christ.

Scripture Message:

"LOOK! THIS IS OUR GOD, FOR WHOM WE HAVE WAITED - AND HE HAS SAVED US! THIS IS THE LORD FOR WHOM WE HAVE WAITED; LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN HIS SALVATION!" ISAIAH 25:8-9

Meditation:

Waiting with anticipation is often one of the more difficult aspects of Christmas. For children, the wait for Santa or new gifts feels endless. For adults, the final push for the end of the year, the last-minute hustle and bustle makes Christmas feel like the end of a marathon race. A race we cannot wait to be finished with.

Remember today to be still in your anticipation and rejoice in the long-awaited birth of our redeemer Christ Jesus.

Prayer:

Dear God, we are thankful that the wait is over, and that Christ came, lived, died and lives again. We do not wait, for he is among us. For this we are thankful, Amen.

Activity:

Celebrate Christ in a small way today - without waiting for the 25th!

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

*"Do not be afraid for I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all people!"
Luke 2:10*

MEDITATION:

Advent season is a time of great joy. This is the time of year to celebrate the most Holy gift - Jesus Christ and his birth. Despite all of the worldly burdens of the holiday season, remember to be joyful!

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, please help us to see that the best gifts are gifts of joy you give us every day. Help our hearts to prepare, to be open fully to celebrating your gift of Jesus, our peace, love, and JOY! Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Sing "Joy to The World" out loud today.

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

*"Be still, and know that I am God."
Psalm 46:10*

MEDITATION:

December is often full of noise. From joyful bells, carols, and Christmas music, to the din of obligations, work and bustle. It can be difficult to find stillness in the cacophony.

"When the song of the angels is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and the princes are home, When the shepherds are back with their flocks, The work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, To heal the broken, To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner, To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among brothers, To make music in the heart. " – Howard Thurman

PRAYER:

Lord, help us to listen in the silence and the din, for your ever present voice. Let us allow ourselves to be still and listen. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Find a quiet room, light a candle and sit alone for at least 15 minutes today.

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

*"Rejoice always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

MEDITATION:

Prayer can sometimes feel like a chore, squashed in between making dinner and folding laundry. Or maybe as a once-a-week activity in the middle of church service. This advent season, remember to pray. Say short prayers of thanks, of wonder, of joy as often as you can. Prayer is a gift and a duty, both service and opportunity.

PRAYER:

Dear God, help us to pray more in this season. Open our hearts and minds so that we see the opportunity to pray throughout our day. Let us be mindful of your listening ears, and fill them with praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Set an alarm on your phone or watch. Pray every hour you are awake today, even if it is only a quick "thanks, God."

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

*"For nothing will be impossible with God."
Luke 1:37*

MEDITATION:

Nothing is impossible with God, and whatever you may be struggling with during this holiday season is in His hands. God is taking care of you even in your darkest moments. Christmas can be painful for many - but you are never alone with Him.

PRAYER:

Father, help me be positive even on my hardest days, help me be reminded that nothing is impossible with you. You are the savior of the world and you are always with me. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Write down something that you need to give up to God. Tuck it in an envelope, address it to "God" and then let it go.

Scripture Message:

"EACH OF YOU SHOULD USE WHATEVER GIFT YOU HAVE RECEIVED TO SERVE OTHERS, AS FAITHFUL STEWARDS OF GOD'S GRACE IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS." - 1 PETER 4:10

Meditation:

Gifts are difficult to give. You want to buy the perfect gift for your loved one, and sometimes finding the right one can be stressful. God reminds us that we all have perfect gifts to give, born of the Holy Spirit. Advent is a wonderful time to strengthen and grow those gifts, displaying them for the world to see.

Prayer:

My God, this season allow me to see the heavenly gifts I've been given, and how I can use them to be an instrument of your peace. Help me shine your goodness on the world. Amen.

Activity:

Contemplate what you believe are your Gifts of Ministry, and plan how you might use those gifts this season.

Scripture Message:

**"FOR A CHILD WILL BE BORN TO US, A SON WILL BE GIVEN TO US; AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL REST ON HIS SHOULDERS; AND HIS NAME WILL BE CALLED WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, MIGHTY GOD, ETERNAL FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE."
- ISAIAH 9:6**

Meditation:

What does peace mean to you? Is it quiet? Is it generous? Is it the absence of something else, like anger? Is it possible? Is it within your power, or something only the leaders of the world can innact?

The Prince of Peace is Christ our Lord Savior. Whatever your need, whatever your definition of peace, it is possible in him.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to remain with you throughout the year, not just during Christmas time. Please help me be a disciple of your peace and to follow in your ways every moment for the rest of my life. I pray that I will be able to follow the path that you lay before me. Amen,

Activity:

Next time you greet someone say, "Peace be with you."

Scripture Message:

**"THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, THE NEW CREATION HAS COME: THE OLD HAS GONE, THE NEW IS HERE!"
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**

Meditation:

As Christmas nears, so does the New Year. Usually this time is one for making promises and planning a bright future. As we celebrate Christ's birth, think also of yourself being reborn in your drive and steadfastness to the Lord.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I pray in this new year I will be everything that I aspire to be. I will remember that the old version of myself is gone and the new has come. In you, I find myself overwhelmed with joy and I am able to be the best version of myself. Amen.

Activity:

Refrain from making a New Year's resolution this year. Instead, if there is something you want to do or change - start today.

Scripture Message:

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TODAY AND FOREVER." HEBREWS 13:8

Meditation:

Life is full of ups, downs, spirals, and complete circles. Throughout all that Christ is a constant in our lives. He has, is, and always will be there for us. He is a pillar of support in our lives and as such we should build our lives around him.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for being a constant in my life. Thank you for your endless guidance, mercy, and love. I pray that I can keep my sights focused on you Lord and that I can make you the center of everything that I do. Amen.

Activity:

Look back on the hard moments in your life. Reflect on how God helped you through them. Or, if in those moments you did not lean on God, think about how focusing on God might have changed things.

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

*"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."
- Isaiah 1:18*

MEDITATION:

"Jesus was God and man in one person, that God and man might be happy together again." -George Whitefield

Throughout the Bible the people of God fail to live up to God's instructions of them. From Adam and Eve leaving Eden to Moses striking the rock. But each time there is failure and punishment, there is forgiveness and grace. We all fail, but it is the Lord's infinite love that keeps telling us to try again.

PRAYER:

My God, I am humbled at your infinite patience with humanity, and with me. Whether my zeal for you waxes and wanes, whether my efforts bear fruit or fail, you remain committed to me. Thank you God for your faith in me, and help me to renew always my faith in you.

ACTIVITY:

Drop the ball today. Choose something to fail at so that you can redirect your time to God. Maybe it is one less dish to pass at a gathering, or a hastily wrapped gift, or a skipped shower - embrace a trivial failure and bask in God's grace.

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

"He said to them: 'You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate or visit with a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.' - Acts 10:28

MEDITATION:

"Our many different cultures notwithstanding, there's something about the holidays that makes the planet communal. Even nations that do not celebrate Christmas can't help but be caught up in the collective spirit of their neighbors, as twinkling lights dot the landscape and carols fill the air. It's an inspiring time of the year." - Marlo Thomas

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to love and show grace in the spirit of Christmas, even - and especially - to those who do not celebrate. For those who see this season as any other, help me to make it special with my outward shining of your light. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Read about some of the other holidays going on this time of year; Kwanza, Hanukkah, Ōmisoka, and any other that you can find. Learn about these holidays as they are traditions that are special to many people.

Scripture Message:

"THE SAVIOR—YES, THE MESSIAH, THE LORD—HAS BEEN BORN TODAY IN BETHLEHEM, THE CITY OF DAVID!" - LUKE 2:11

Meditation:

Happy Birthday to Jesus! Today all the followers of Christ all over the world are celebrating the birth, life, death and resurrection of God made Man in Jesus. Today is a day for elation and joy, for the good news has come. There is nothing on this Earth that can separate us from the love of God. Nothing.

Prayer:

We thank you and praise you Lord, today - the day where we remember the gift of Jesus Christ, and your unfathomable Love for us. It is a day of great joy, and for that we sing hosana to you.

Activity:

Celebrate today. In whatever way you wish, with whoever brings you joy. Today is a gift from God to all people of the world.

Scripture Message:

"JUST AS THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS RANSOM FOR MANY"
- MATTHEW 20:28

Meditation:

"To the American People: Christmas is not a time or a season but a state of mind. To cherish peace and good will, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas. If we think on these things, there will be born in us a Savior and over us will shine a star sending its gleam of hope to the world."

- Calvin Coolidge

Prayer:

Dear Lord, help me to serve you and others as I go about my day. I pray that your will flows through me and that I will be able to put others before myself. Amen.

Activity:

Think about nice things people have done for you that brighten your day, then think about how you can do something similar. Pick one and make it your mission for the day.

Scripture Message:

"HERE I AM! I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK. IF ANYONE HEARS MY VOICE AND OPENS THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN AND EAT WITH THAT PERSON, AND THEY WITH ME." REVELATIONS 3:20

Meditation:

In these days of busyness it is important to listen for Jesus knocking at our door. The opportunities to do God's work are not always shown as a burning bush. We need to be aware of what God might be trying to tell us and we need to be ready to open the door.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I pray that I will be able to see your signs, to hear you knocking, and to recognize the opportunities you give me to do your work and to be your faithful servant. Amen.

Activity:

Write an "I" on your wrist or on the back of your hand. Or, if you are more artistically inclined, draw an eye. This will serve as a reminder for you to be looking for opportunities to answer Jesus' knocking.

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." - James 1:17

MEDITATION:

Christmas is a season of lights. On trees, on houses, and in windows. The light of the world was born on Christmas day, and these lights help serve as a reminder that we have been given the best gift of all the Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER:

Dear Lord, I know that you are the light of the world. This Christmas I pray that I can be reminded that your light is not just for me, it's for everyone. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Next time you see Christmas lights, stop and say a prayer of thanks to God for sending the light of the world to save us from the darkness.

SCRIPTURE MESSAGE:

"They saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy." - Matthew 2:10

MEDITATION:

As the Magi were joyful at the message of the Christ star, we too should have the same excitement over the prospect of being near our Lord and Savior. Let him lift your heart every day of your life, and look forward to the joy you will receive when you meet Him in heaven.

PRAYER:

Lord, Thank you for your son. Thank you for the gift of baby Jesus that night. I am blessed that you have saved me and that you walk with me throughout my life. Amen.

ACTIVITY:

Sing "Oh little town of Bethlehem" out loud today.

Scripture Message:

"FINALLY, ALL OF YOU, BE LIKE-MINDED, BE SYMPATHETIC, LOVE ONE ANOTHER, BE COMPASSIONATE AND HUMBLE." - 1 PETER 3:8

Meditation:

The Holidays can come with a lot of stress due to strain on some relationships. Despite all the tension we may face, it's important to remember that this is a day of love. In fact, every day is a day of love in which we should be kind to everyone we meet.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I thank you for the time I get to spend with my family and those close to me, even if it can be difficult at times. I pray that this day will be full of love and companionship, and that the spirit of Christmas won't end with the holiday. Amen.

Activity:

Pick someone in your family, or someone you're close with, and tell them that you love them. Use this time to practice telling people how you feel about them.

Scripture Message:

"BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO HER, 'DO NOT BE AFRAID MARY; YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD.'" - LUKE 1:30

Meditation:

Beyond the typical telling of the Christ birth story lies a real, tangible woman in Mary. A woman with physical discomfort, strength in bearing a child, and the heartbreak of watching her son give his life to save ours. Yet she endured. God chose Mary for her task as he might choose any one of us for ours.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, help me remember that you have chosen me for the difficult tasks ahead of me, and that in you I will be strong enough to endure them. I pray that each day I can grow closer to you and be able to see your miracles working in my life. Amen.

Activity:

Imagine yourself as the "chosen one" in your own story or movie. The kind where even in hard times, the reader knows you will overcome.