



30
PROMISES
OF GOD

A COLLECTION OF CHRISTMASTIME
DEVOTIONALS ON THE HOPE, PEACE,
JOY, AND LOVE PROMISED BY GOD



30 Promises of God: A Collection of Christmastime Devotionals on the Hope,
Peace, Joy, and Love Promised by God

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INTRODUCTION

The Advent season comprises the four Sundays preceding Christmas Day. *Advent* is Latin for “the coming” or “the arrival,” and it describes the anticipation that the people of God had while waiting for the Messiah to come and make all things right. For centuries, the Church has celebrated four themes during Advent: hope, peace, joy, and love. Each theme is typically accompanied by the lighting of a candle in the Advent wreath and the reading of a sacred prayer. These themes come from powerful promises that God gives His people throughout Scripture, and they are fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This thirty-day devotional will lead you, on your own or with your family, through the promises of God within the Scriptures that align with hope, peace, joy, and love. Each week, the daily encouragement will be focused on a different theme. Find a time each day to read the Scripture, devotional, and prayer, and then take a moment to reflect on the question that is posed at the end of each lesson. Each week will close with an Advent reading that can be shared as you light a candle in the Advent wreath. There is also a Practice the Promise section at the end

of each week, which offers a practical way to live out the Advent theme by yourself or with your family.

Something special happens during this season when we take time to intentionally connect with God. This simple devotional book can be an opportunity to embrace God's promises for yourself.



HOPE

PROMISE 1

LIGHT OUR WAY IN THE DARKNESS

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." —John 8:12

A personal tradition of mine is to make sure my family is all snuggled down to sleep on Christmas Eve and then steal away to the room where our Christmas tree sits. With all the other lights off in the house, the glow of the festive decorations is comforting. Each year, I take that time at the end of the night, by myself, to reflect on the past year. I take time to thank God for His goodness. I search my heart for the hopes and dreams for the year to come. I am always reminded in those quiet moments that what we celebrate at Christmas is the dawning of a great light into a dark world.

Jesus tells His disciples that He is the light of the world. He was born into a planet that was broken and full of sin

in order to shine the light of His grace into every shadowy corner. It is His light that gives us hope because it exposes the areas in our lives that are dead and in need of new life. All of the lights that we hang on trees, mantles, and homes at Christmas can be a reminder for us to allow the light of Christ to shine in and through us.

God, I acknowledge that there are parts of my heart that I have kept hidden from you. Search me and know me and shine the light of your grace into all areas of my life. Fill me with hope so I may shine for you in a world that is shrouded in darkness. Amen.

What is your favorite color of Christmas lights? Why?

PROMISE 2

RENEWED STRENGTH

But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. —Isaiah 40:31

Years ago, I was spending time with family at a cabin on a small lake in Wisconsin. I had walked outside early one day with my coffee to take in the beauty of the quiet morning. Suddenly, I saw something out of the corner of my eye. Out of the mist that covered the surface of the lake came a giant bald eagle. Wings unfurled and claws extended, it hit the water at full speed and then flapped its mighty wings to rise again with a fish firmly in its grip. I was in awe of the strength and command of such a beautiful bird.

It is no wonder that Old Testament authors often use the imagery of eagles to communicate the strength that God gives His people. God promises in the book of Isaiah that those who hope in the Lord will be strengthened. The Hebrew word for *hope* that is used in this passage literally

means “to wait.” Hope, in this sense, is when we make the conscious decision to trust God to come through on our behalf, rather than becoming weary by trying to do things on our own. Those who look to God for assurance and guidance will receive renewed power. When we find ourselves wondering if we can continue on for one more day, by the influence of the Holy Spirit we will be able to soar once again. When we find that life has given us more than we can bear, we will be able to keep moving forward because God will renew our souls.

God, thank you for promising to give me strength when I feel like giving up. You offer divine hope as I wait on you to meet me in my time of need. Today I want to rest in the power of your grace that helps me move forward. Amen.

What is one thing you hope for in the New Year?

PROMISE 3

HOPE AND A FUTURE

“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

I am not often allowed to go shopping on my own. I am mostly kidding; however, when there are crucial things that must be purchased, my wife sends me with a clear plan. There have been many times I was sent on a shopping spree for some kind of party, only to return with some of the items on the list missing. I have learned a very important lesson: a plan is only as effective as an individual's diligence to follow it.

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah is writing to the Jewish people to remind them that even in the middle of some of the most painful years of Israel's history—as they are in exile—God still has a plan for them. That plan is not to leave them in bondage or to abandon them forever. Instead, the promise is that God's plan is still to prosper them and to give them hope. The reason the Israelites found themselves

in this predicament in the first place was because they did not follow God's plan to begin with.

God's promises of prosperity, hope, and a future are directly tied to our willingness to follow His plan for our lives. When we live in line with God's will and His way, we experience hope that our current situation does not have to remain our eternal situation. When we stay in step with God, all things are possible, and that is reason for hope.

*God, make clear to me the plan
you have for my life. Help me
be diligent in following your
instructions that have been given
to me in your Word. Fill me with
hope as I live out the future that
you have for me. Amen.*

**How do you know if you are living
according to God's plan? What
is one way to discover what God
wants for your life?**

PROMISE 4

A FULL LIFE

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. —John 10:10

My least favorite Christmas tradition of all is called by many names, but always involves exchanging gifts with an element of theft. Each person takes turns choosing a gift from under the tree and opening it with great joy. That joy is then followed by fear as the next person can either choose a new gift from the tree or steal the one the first person opened. There have been many times that I have unwrapped the perfect gift, only to have it stolen by an unremorseful person. I know some love it, but count me out.

There is a thief that is introduced in Scripture as well. Like having an exciting gift taken from you, the evil one comes to steal, kill, and destroy the gift of life that God has given us. He steals our joy through temptation. He kills our faith through doubt. He destroys our trust through lies. However, Jesus promises that He has come to give us the

hope of eternal life through His work on the cross. This hope defeats the work of the evil one and offers us a fullness of life that is beyond comprehension. This hope is a gift that cannot be taken away. We open it by placing our faith, hope, and trust in Jesus Christ.

God, I refuse to allow the evil one to steal, kill, and destroy the life you have given me. I place my hope in the fact that you have promised to give me a full life. Help me to live in step with you and, in so doing, to experience all the fullness of life that you have for me. Amen.

**Do you like gift exchange games?
Are you a good sport, or do
you hate to lose? Have you ever
willingly given up a gift because
someone else wanted it?**

PROMISE 5

ETERNAL LIFE

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.” —John 11:25

The Christmas season is all about one person: Jesus Christ. It's the time of year that we gather to celebrate His birth as a baby in a manger. All throughout the Gospel accounts, we read not only about Jesus's birth but also His incredible ministry. His words captivated audiences and His miracles changed people's lives.

When Jesus speaks these words in John 11, a miracle is on the horizon. Before He speaks to a dead man named Lazarus and resurrects him, Jesus tells Lazarus's sister, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

These seven simple words should give us hope in our hearts today. Jesus was resurrected after He was crucified, and in so doing, He defeated death. Because He is the resurrection and the life, we have been given new life in Him. He says that anyone who chooses to believe in Him will live

even after they die. This means that we, as believers, don't have to fear the end of our lives. Rather, these words promise us a future in heaven and even give us present hope. Do the people around you sense that you are living for something more than just the world? Through our lives, God wants to put hope on display for a world that is lost and in need of Jesus.

God, thank you for providing me with hope. You have made a way to grant me eternal life through Jesus Christ, and for that I am grateful. Teach me to live each moment with hope for what is to come eternally, as you use me to reach a lost and hurting world.
Amen.

What does it mean to believe in Jesus?

PROMISE 6

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD

“If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything
is possible for one who believes.”

—Mark 9:23

I remember attending Sunday school each week at my church when I was a child. We were always given a coloring page that went along with the Bible lesson for the day. We got to color and experience story after story from Scripture about God providing victory, breakthrough, healing, miracles, and deliverance. All of these stories seemed to point us to this one profound truth: anything is possible for God. As a child I was filled with wonder at what God could do, but as I have gotten older, I have struggled with doubt.

This doubt is exactly what Jesus is addressing in Mark 9, because it's exactly what the evil one wants us to do. Do we actually believe that God can do what we read about Him doing from Genesis to Revelation? This is where faith and

hope come in. When we have a childlike faith in what God can do, we will pray with hope about anything that is going on in our lives. If we trust that anything is possible, there is no limit to what we will see God do.

God, I recognize that your promise is for eternal healing. But I also recognize that you are powerful enough to do amazing things in my midst right now. I pray that you would strengthen my faith to once again believe that you are a God who works miracles. Amen.

What is your favorite story in the Bible about a miracle?

PROMISE 7

GOD IS OUR FIRM ANCHOR

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain. —Hebrews 6:19

An anchor is a crucial part of any boat or ship. It is used to make sure the current doesn't deter the ship from going where it intends to go. When used, it gives the boat captain confidence that his vessel will not be moved off course.

Similarly, the writer of Hebrews says that our hope serves as an anchor for the soul. We can see evidence in the Bible of God making promises and then following through on them. This can solidify our faith and give us hope deep inside. This confidence allows us to stand firm in a world that is often shaky and changing.

Hebrews even says that our hope in God is able to lead us behind the curtain into the sanctuary of God. In the Old Testament, behind the curtain was where God's presence

dwelled. It was a holy and reverent place. The Bible tells us that Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father and speaking on our behalf. He's provided a way for us to connect with God Almighty, that we might bring our requests to Him and have hope that He will act on our behalf.

God, thank you for your promises throughout history. Give me a sense of boldness as I pray to you and seek to follow Jesus, knowing that He has provided a way for me to connect with you. Thank you for the reminder that through that connection, I can experience hope. Amen.

How is Jesus an anchor for your life?

WEEK 1

ADVENT READINGS/CANDLE LIGHTING



READER 1: Each year during this time, Christians around the world celebrate the season of Advent. This season is a time of preparation.

READER 2: It is a time of preparation in mind, body, soul, and spirit for the coming and arrival of Jesus Christ. In history, God's people anxiously waited for the birth of Jesus because they believed He was their hope for all things to be restored.

READER 3: Today we light the first candle of Advent because of the great hope we have that God will fulfill His promises and bring us a Savior [**light the first candle**].

READER 4: [Prayer] God, we recognize our deep longing for a Savior. Help us to know that Jesus

is the source of our great hope. We wait for His arrival. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

PRACTICE THE PROMISE

This week, individually or as a family, consider the ways you can bring hope into the lives of others. Ask your church for a list of shut-ins or visit a local nursing home to give hope to people who may feel hopeless. Plan to play bingo, sing carols, or just listen to them tell their stories. Be present with them and offer to pray with them before you leave. There is a tremendous amount of hope that can come from just being with someone who cares.