# CHRISTMAS 2025

### instructions.

Advent is a season within the traditional church calendar that leads us toward Christmas Day. The word Advent means "arrival," and it's an invitation to slow down and prepare our hearts for the arrival of Jesus—the light of the world.

This year at Ransom Church, our Advent series is called "My Life Is Not a Hallmark Movie." Because while the world celebrates with picture-perfect moments, we know real life rarely looks like that. Sometimes the holidays feel lonely, heavy, or far from magical. But the story of Christmas reminds us that Jesus didn't come to a perfect world—He came into the middle of our mess. Hope showed up in the dark, peace broke through the noise, and love came close to us in the most unexpected way.

This devotional is designed to help you slow down and experience that same hope in your everyday life. Each week includes five short devotionals with Scripture, reflection, and response prompts. You can use them Monday through Friday or at your own pace. If you miss a day, don't worry—just start again and keep going.

Each day will invite you to pause and reflect:

- Read the passage of Scripture and sit with it.
- Reflect on the devotional thought and what God might be showing you.
- Respond through the questions and closing prayer prompts.
- Bring it to the family. Use the "family" question at the end of each day to spark conversation around the table, at bedtime, or in the car. Let it be a chance to share what you're learning and remind one another that God meets us in real life—together.

Our prayer is that this Advent season meets you right where you are—whether you're celebrating, struggling, or somewhere in between—and that you'll encounter the real hope of Jesus in the middle of your real life.

# week 1

# hope

# day 1

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2

Have you ever been afraid of the dark? It's disorienting. Sounds are disconnected and threatening. Menacing. Scripture reminds us that for most of the world, since it's creation, it has known only darkness. Imagine what it is to experience, feel, SEE light; for the very first time. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

The essence of Advent is this hopeful expectation that despite the world's brokenness, the light of Christ offers a renewed sense of purpose and direction. By aligning our hope with God's promises, as foretold by the prophets and fulfilled in Jesus, we can dispel the shadows that loom large in our lives.

### Reflection:

- How have your circumstances impacted your sense of hope?
- What areas of darkness can you invite Christ's light into?
- How can you choose hope despite your current challenges?
- Pray for God to illuminate the dark areas in your life with His hope.
- Ask for the ability to trust in God's promises despite your situation.

- Have you ever been in a really dark room? What did it feel like when someone turned on the light?
- How can we help share Jesus' light with others when they feel sad or scared?

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1

Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. Hope is a faithful expectation, not a fleeting desire. Our hope is rooted in faith—a confident assurance that God's promises are true, regardless of our current view.

As you reflect on this passage, reflect on how faith and hope are intertwined. Our faith enables us to trust in the unseen, empowering us to see beyond our immediate reality and place our hope firmly in God's hands.

### Reflection:

- What is your current definition of hope?
  Does it align with the Biblical understanding?
- In what ways can you reinforce the connection between your faith and hope?
- How does your faith influence where you place your hope?
- Pray for stronger faith to sustain your hope in God's promises.
- Ask God to reveal areas where you can have more confidence in Him.

### day 3

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14

In Isaiah's prophetic message, we find the promise that 'the virgin will conceive a child,' pointing to the birth of Jesus. Such a prophecy fortifies our hope as it underscores God's faithfulness across the ages. On this day, reflect on the fulfilment of this prophecy in Christ and how it influences our understanding of hope.

Our appreciation of Advent is deepened as we recognize it as a reminder of God's unyielding promises. His timing may challenge our modern impatience, yet it remains perfect. This realization encourages us to place our hope in the eternal rather than the immediate.

### Reflection:

- How does the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus enhance your view of God's faithfulness?
- In what ways can you be more patient with God's timing?
- What current promises of God can you hold onto today?
- Thank God for His faithfulness throughout history.
- Pray for patience to trust in God's perfect timing.

# bring it to the family.

- What's something you hope for this Christmans but can't have yet?
- How is hoping in God different from just wishing for something?

- Why do you think God wanted to send Jesus as a baby?
- Can you think of a time you had to wait for something special?
  How is that like waiting for Jesus to come?

Scripture: Revelation 21:4

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. Advent finds its hope in both remembrance and anticipation. This day, we focus on the promise that God will restore all things and remove every source of sorrow from our lives, culminating in ultimate hope.

Reflect on this future hope and how it empowers us to endure present hardships. Assurance in God's final victory motivates us to live with a hopeful perspective, knowing the current sufferings are temporary and that God's peace will prevail.

### Reflection:

- In what ways does the promise of eternal restoration provide hope for you today?
- How can you maintain a hopeful outlook in the face of present trials?
- How can the truth of future restoration change the way you live now?
- Pray for the courage to live with hopeful assurance.
- Thank God for His promise of ultimate restoration and peace.

### day 5

Scripture: Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Today we look at the peace that comes from hope in Jesus, a peace that surpasses understanding. How is it that peace is accessible through faith?

Faith grants us access to grace and establishes a hopeful path forward. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, assures us of God's presence and love, offering us a chance to rest in this divine tranquility. Advent, with its focus on Christ's coming, reorients our lives toward His peace, despite life's chaos.

### Reflection:

- How does understanding peace as a product of hope impact you?
- What areas of your life are longing for the peace of Christ?
- How can you better position your life to accept and embody God's peace?
- Seek God's peace to fill your life completely.
- Pray for an increased awareness of God's presence and love.

# bring it to the family.

- What are some things that make people cry or feel sad?
- The Bible says one day there will be no more sadness or pain. How does that make you feel?

- What do you think "peace" means? What does it feel like when you have peace?
- How can you help bring peace to others this week maybe at home or at school?

# Peace

# day 1

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6-7

In this passage, we read about the prophecy of Jesus's birth and His eternal reign as the Prince of Peace. The world is often filled with conflict, but Jesus brings a peace unlike any other. His peace is one of completeness and wholeness, bridging the gap between us and God. When we accept this peace, we find ourselves restored and able to extend that wholeness to others.

Reflect on how areas of your life that may be chaotic or uncertain can be transformed by embracing Jesus's peace. Our personal conflicts and challenges are opportunities to experience His wholeness.

### Reflection:

- What are areas in your life that lack peace or feel incomplete?
- How can you invite Jesus's peace into these areas?
- Who in your life needs to hear about the peace offered through Jesus right now?
- Pray for an understanding of Jesus's peace in your own life.
- Ask for guidance on extending this peace to others.

- Can you think of a time when things felt really busy or loud?
  How could Jesus bring peace in that moment?
- How can we help bring peace to others like Jesus does?

Scripture: John 14:25-27

As Jesus prepared His disciples for His departure, He promised to leave them with the Holy Spirit. With the Spirit comes the gift of peace, a peace the world cannot give. This peace surpasses understanding because it resits and opposes life's challenges and chaos. It is a peace that assures us of God's presence in every situation, no matter how difficult.

Understanding Jesus's peace means recognizing that it doesn't merely remove conflict but transforms it. As His followers, we are called to live out this peace, allowing it to calm our hearts and guide our actions in a world that so often misses the mark.

### Reflection:

- How does the promise of the Holy Spirit give you peace?
- In what ways can you cultivate this peace daily?
- Where do you see God's peace working in your life currently?
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill your life with peace.
- Seek wisdom in acting as a peacemaker where you are placed.

### day 3

**Scripture:** Philippians 4:6-7

The Apostle Paul reminds us not to be anxious but to present our requests to God through prayer and thanksgiving. In doing so, we receive God's peace that transcends all understanding. This divine peace acts as a guard over our hearts and minds, focusing us on Christ and His eternal promises.

God's peace is not passive; it actively works within us. It rejuvenates, restores, and provides a foundation that remains unshaken even during life's turmoil. By embracing His peace, we align ourselves with His perfect plan and reflect His love to others around us.

### Reflection:

- In what ways do you find yourself worrying instead of praying?
- How does gratitude influence your peace?
- What practical steps can you take to rely more on God's peace?
- Pray that God would alleviate worries and replace them with peace.
- Ask to be mindful of all God has done in your life as a cause for praise.

# bring it to the family.

- What helps you feel peaceful when you're scared or worried?
- How can you remind yourself that God is always with you?

- When you feel worried, how can praying help you find peace?
- What are some things you can thank God for today?

Scripture: Colossians 3:12-15

In this letter, Paul urges believers to embody qualities such as kindness, humility, and patience. Love, he emphasizes, is what binds everything together perfectly. As administrators of Christ's peace, we are called to live peacefully with others, allowing His peace to reign in our hearts and overflow into our communities.

Commit to letting Christ's peace guide your interactions and decisions. In a world eager to foster division, we are tasked with spreading unity, motivated by love. Let this peace reflect in your forgiveness, understanding, and daily expressions of compassion.

### Reflection:

- How can you embody kindness, humility, and patience in your daily life?
- What personal conflicts can you address with love and peace?
- How does letting peace rule in your heart change your perspective?
- Pray for a deeper love for others and a commitment to peace.
- Seek opportunities to be a peace-bearer in your interactions.

### day 5

Scripture: Matthew 5:9

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." As followers of Christ, we are blessed with a unique opportunity to forge peace in a world of discord. It's not only a call but an identity, one that mirrors our Heavenly Father.

Reflect on how you can be a catalyst for peace in your community. Whether through simple acts of kindness or significant efforts to mend fractured relationships, each step we take in promoting peace draws us closer to our true identity in Christ.

### Reflection:

- What does it mean to be a peacemaker in today's world?
- How has God equipped you personally to be a bearer of peace?
- What initiatives can you support or start that foster peace?
- Pray for clarity and courage to act as a peacemaker.
- Seek discernment in approaching situations needing peace.

# bring it to the family.

- How does letting peace guide your choices change how you treat people?
- What does it look like to share Jesus' peace at home or school?

- How can you help fix an argument or make someone feel better?
- How does being a peacemaker show others that you follow Jesus?

# 501

# day 1

Scripture: John 15:5-11

Today's scripture reminds us that true joy stems from our connection with Jesus. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit without being part of the vine, we too cannot experience genuine joy without staying connected to Him. Joy is not something we can manufacture by chasing temporary happiness. Instead, it is the gift we receive from a relationship that is rooted in the love and teachings of Jesus.

Reflecting on these words, consider how your daily life can enhance your spiritual connection. Joy is not a fleeting emotion based on circumstances, but an abiding presence that comes from remaining in His love. By focusing on this eternal relationship, joy becomes evident in our actions, influencing the world around us.

### Reflection:

- How can you strengthen your connection with Jesus this week?
- Reflect on a time when you felt genuine joy despite difficult circumstances.
- What daily practices help you remain in Jesus?
- Pray for the ability to remain in Jesus amidst life's distractions.
- Ask God to reveal joy in unexpected areas of your life.

- What helps you feel close to Jesus each day?
- What are the things that bring others close to Jesus?

Scripture: Galatians 5:19-22

Galatians outlines the contrast between following sinful desires and bearing the fruits of the Spirit. When we focus on worldly pleasures and pursuits, we often end up with heartache and emptiness. True joy, as a fruit of the Spirit, emerges not from seeking transient happiness, but through a life lived in alignment with God's will and purpose.

By investing in a Christ-centered life and valuing spiritual connections, we cultivate a joy that thrives regardless of external circumstances. Joy becomes a defining characteristic when we resist the temptation of worldly desires and allow the Holy Spirit to work within us.

### Reflection:

- Identify areas in your life where worldly desires might be overshadowing spiritual growth.
- How can you allow the Holy Spirit to take more space in your life?
- When have you experienced joy as a result of spiritual obedience?
- Pray for guidance to recognize and turn away from sinful desires.
- Seek the Holy Spirit's help to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit in your life, especially joy.

### day 3

Scripture: John 15:12

Jesus commands us to love one another as He has loved us. This commandment is both simple and profound, calling us to reflect His love in our relationships. When we embody this love through selflessness and compassion, true joy becomes evident in our lives.

We are called to mirror the boundless love and forgiveness Jesus demonstrates. As we commit to this path, joy emerges, enriching our communities and strengthening our connections. This love-driven joy not only fulfills Jesus' teachings but also increases the joy we experience individually and collectively.

### Reflection:

- Who is God calling you to show more love and compassion towards?
- How does loving others impact your sense of joy?
- What barriers do you need to overcome to love others like Jesus?
- Pray for a heart that loves without conditions.
- Ask for the courage to serve others with love and kindness.

# bring it to the family.

- What are some things that bring lasting joy instead of just quick happiness?
- How can you ask the Holy Spirit to help you grow in joy this week?

- How could showing love to others make you feel joyful inside?
- What makes it hard sometimes to love others like Jesus does?

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-2

The prophecy in Isaiah speaks to the coming of Jesus, the Savior who brings comfort and freedom. As recipients of this good news, we are gifted with joy that transcends our understanding. This joy transforms us, lifting us beyond our limitations and heartaches into a life of purpose and service.

With Jesus' arrival, we are emboldened to live joyfully, knowing that He has fulfilled His promise. In times of struggle or triumph, His joy sustains us, urging us to continue spreading this hope through actions of love and service toward others.

### Reflection:

- Where do you see Jesus' comforting presence in your life today?
- How does His fulfillment of prophecy uplift your faith?
- What ways can you share the joy of His message in your community?
- Thank God for the joy of salvation and eternal life.
- Pray for the strength to share the message of hope and joy with others.

### day 5

Scripture: John 16:33

Jesus assures us of the victory He has over the world, a triumph that promises peace amid turmoil. With this assurance, we can embrace joy that defies worldly understanding—joy that flourishes despite challenges. Living in the light of His victory, our hearts are empowered to reflect His peace and joy.

As we navigate life's complexities, let us remember that our story does not end with current hardships. His joy fills us, allowing us to face trials with confidence and grace, celebrating victories both here and in the promise of eternity.

### Reflection:

- How does Jesus' victory influence your outlook on personal challenges?
- In what ways has His peace transformed your understanding of joy?
- What steps can you take to live more fully in His victorious joy?
- Express gratitude for the peace that comes from Jesus' victory.
- Pray for the courage to live joyfully, irrespective of your circumstances.

# bring it to the family.

- When have you felt comforted by Jesus like when you were sad or worried, but felt peace again?
- Pray "Thank You, Jesus, for bringing us joy that never runs out! Help us share that joy with others wherever we go."

- Jesus said He has victory over the world.
  What do you think that means?
- When you face something hard like a test, a fight with a friend, or a scary moment — how can you remember that Jesus already won?

### week 4



### day 1

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-20

The beginning of Jesus' story is far from what we consider perfect. The scripture tells us about the complexities faced by Mary and Joseph, making us realize that their lives were filled with confusion and doubt. Despite these challenges, they were part of a deeper, divine narrative. This reminds us that our personal struggles are also woven into a greater story of redemption and grace.

God chose to bring His son into the world in the midst of a mess – a mess similar to our own lives. This was not a mistake but a divine decision to show us that no matter our circumstances, we are never far from His love. Jesus' entry into this imperfect world provides hope. It is an invitation to abandon the façade of perfection and embrace the richness of our true, unscripted stories.

### Reflection:

- How does knowing the messiness of Jesus' birth make you feel about your own life's challenges?
- In what ways can you see God working in the imperfect areas of your life?
- How can you embrace the reality of your own story as part of God's plan?
- Pray for the courage to accept the imperfections in your life.
- Ask God to reveal His presence in the areas of your life where you feel most broken.

- How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when everything seemed confusing + hard?
- What does it mean to you that God is working in your story—even when things feel messy or hard?

Scripture: Luke 2:6-7

The birth of Jesus took place in a humble setting, amidst animals and far from the comforts expected of a king. It was a situation many would see as inadequate, yet it was through this very environment that God chose to bring His salvation into the world. This illustrates a powerful truth: significant moments often arise from modest beginnings.

In our lives, we may feel that our circumstances limit God's ability to work through us. However, like the manger scene, it is in these humble and unexpected moments that God reveals His greatest glory. Our limitations are opportunities for God to demonstrate His strength. Trust that God is not hindered by our surroundings but is eager to use them for His purpose.

### Reflection:

- Do you struggle with feeling that your life, as it is, is enough for God to work through?
- How can the story of Jesus' birth inspire you to embrace humble beginnings?
- What small steps can you take today to invite God into your everyday moments?
- Pray for the ability to see God in the simple and ordinary parts of your life.
- Ask for faith to embrace divine opportunities that arise from the humble parts of your journey.

### day 3

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14

The prophecy of the virgin birth was a miraculous sign of God's intervention in human history. It was a promise of His presence amid human frailty—Immanuel, God with us. This narrative assured the people of God's commitment to enter their reality and work within it to bring about His divine purposes.

In our journeys, prophecies and promises from God serve as anchors of hope and faith. They are reminders of His continual presence and action in our world, even when circumstances seem overwhelming. Embrace these promises, stand firm in your belief, and recognize that God is actively involved in the details of your life, bringing about His plans for your good.

### Reflection:

- Reflect on a promise God has given you.
  How does it shape your perspective on your current situation?
- Where in your life do you need to be reminded that God is truly with you?
- What steps can you take to reaffirm your trust in His promises?
- Pray for reassurance of God's closeness in every area of your life.
- Seek clarity and encouragement from God about His promises for your journey.

# bring it to the family.

- Why do you think God chose for Jesus to be born outside in a manger instead of a palace or a castle?
- What are some small things in your life that God might use for something big?

- The name Immanuel means "God with us." What does it mean that God is with us?
- When do you feel the closest to God?

Scripture: Galatians 4:4-5

At just the right moment, God sent His Son into the world to redeem us. This was a plan set in motion long before our existence. Our adoption into God's family was intentional and deeply rooted in His love for humanity. The birth of Jesus signifies our passage from bondage to freedom, from orphaned to embraced.

This divine timing reminds us that God works beyond our understanding. Every season has its place in His grand narrative. Even when we don't see immediate results, we can trust that God is orchestrating our lives for ultimate good. Rest in knowing that you are no longer a slave to your circumstances but a cherished child of God.

### Reflection:

- How does understanding your identity as God's child impact your view on current challenges?
- In what ways have you experienced God's perfect timing in your life?
- What does it mean to you to be redeemed and adopted into God's family?
- Pray for a deeper understanding of your identity in Christ.
- Thank God for His perfect timing and plan for your life.

### day 5

Scripture: Matthew 1:21

Jesus came into the world as the ultimate promise of salvation. His mission was clear: to save His people from their sins. This simple yet profound truth is the cornerstone of our faith and the foundation of our hope. It is a reminder that no matter where we are, salvation is available through Christ.

The invitation to experience this salvation is ever present, urging us to reach out to Jesus in our brokenness and need. By embracing His love and grace, we are transformed, not just for a season, but for eternity. Allow this truth to permeate your heart and celebrate the presence of a Savior willing to enter our lives to bring us healing and wholeness.

### Reflection:

- Consider areas in your life where you need to experience the saving power of Jesus.
- How does knowing Jesus came to save you personally impact your daily life?
- What steps can you take to deepen your relationship with Him?
- Pray for an open heart to receive Jesus as your Savior.
- Ask for His guidance and strength in areas where you seek transformation.

# bring it to the family.

- What does it mean that you are a child of God?
- How can you help others to become children of God?

- Why did Jesus need to save us, and what did he save us from?
- Have you asked Jesus to be your Savior?
- What are some ways we can thank Jesus as a family for saving and loving us?

# love

### day 1

Scripture: Romans 5:8

Today's verse encapsulates the very essence of God's love for us. In the grand narrative stretching from Genesis to Revelation, God demonstrates His unconditional love through the ultimate sacrifice—His son, Jesus Christ. Despite our imperfections and sins, His love remains unwavering, inviting us into a deeper understanding of what true love means.

In a society driven by conditional love, God's love stands out as a beacon of hope. Where human love may falter and demand recompense, God's love is freely given. As we meditate on this truth, let us embrace the fact that despite our flaws and failures, God's love is steadfast. He calls us to bask in this love and let it transform our lives.

### Reflection:

- Reflect on times when you've experienced conditional love. How does God's love differ?
- What areas in your life need the assurance of God's unwavering love?
- How can embracing God's love change the way you view yourself and others?
- Pray for the ability to receive God's love without reservation.
- Ask for strength to love others with the same unconditional love you've received.

- What's a way that we show each other love—like a hug, a kind word, or helping someone?
- How is God's love different from the way people usually show love?
- How can we show God's kind of love to someone this week?

Scripture: Romans 5:3-5

Life, with its many challenges, often tests our perception of God's love. Yet, Paul writes that trials develop endurance, which in turn fortifies our character and hope. This hope is a testament to God's enduring love, evident through the presence of the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with divine love.

Embracing this love does not remove difficulties; instead, it assures us of God's presence amidst them. As we navigate life's uncertainties, let us hold steadfast to the hope that God is with us, working through every situation to draw us closer to His heart.

### Reflection:

- What trials are currently testing your faith? How might they be shaping your character?
- How can you maintain hope in challenging times, knowing God's love is with you?
- Reflect on a past trial where you experienced growth because of God's presence.
- Seek God's guidance in recognizing His love during difficult seasons.
- Pray for ongoing character development through life's challenges.

### day 3

Scripture: Romans 5:6

"At just the right time, Christ died for the ungodly." These words remind us that God's timing is perfect, emphasizing that Jesus came not for the righteous, but for sinners in need of grace. His entry into our flawed reality signifies God's profound knowledge of our needs and His willingness to meet us in our brokenness.

Often, we find ourselves trying to earn God's favor, underestimating His grace offered freely through Christ. This Advent, let's remind ourselves that we are loved not because our actions make us lovable, but because of who God is—a loving Father who eagerly walks with us in our imperfection.

### Reflection:

- Reflect on aspects of your life where you try to earn God's love.
  How can you release these false beliefs?
- In what ways have you experienced God's timely intervention in your life?
- Consider how God's love has impacted your understanding of mercy and grace.
- Pray for awareness of God's presence in your life's moments of helplessness.
- Ask for assurance that God's grace is sufficient in your life.

# bring it to the family.

- What's something that makes loving God hard?
- How can we remember that God still loves us when things are tough?
- What's one way we can show love to someone having a hard day?

- Do you feel like you have to earn God's love?
- Why do you think God loves us even when we make mistakes?

Scripture: John 3:16

This quintessential scripture addresses the breadth and depth of God's love yet again. It captures the sacrificial nature of Christ's coming, bridging the gap between humanity and the Divine. Through Jesus, love is personified and demonstrated openly, inviting us into an eternal relationship with God.

Christmas serves as a yearly reminder of this unparalleled gift—the love of God made flesh in Christ. It's an invitation to experience a love that is not just spoken, but actively given, pursuing us in every moment of our lived experience.

### Reflection:

- How does John 3:16 challenge your understanding of God's love?
- Think about a time when you've been asked to show sacrificial love.
  What was the outcome?
- Consider the implications of God's love being unconditional and eternal in your daily life.
- Pray for the courage to receive and reflect God's love to others.
- Ask for opportunities to demonstrate love in tangible ways this season.

### day 5

Scripture: Romans 5:7-8

As we conclude this week, reflect on the marvel that is God's love—a love that's not merely spoken, but profoundly demonstrated. Where people may hesitate to lay down their lives for the righteous, God sent Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners. This divine act defies human understanding, underscoring the nature of a love so deep and unabashed.

In our imperfections, God's love remains a constant, drawing us closer and inviting us to live in response to this great gift. Let us open our hearts to the changing power of such love, striving to embody its power and grace in our everyday interactions.

### Reflection:

- Consider how this week's reflections have deepened your understanding of God's love. What has changed?
- In what specific ways can you live out God's love in your community?
- Reflect on how you can share the message of God's love with those around you.
- Thank God for His demonstrated love through Jesus Christ.
- Pray for the strength and wisdom to love others as Christ loves you.

# bring it to the family.

- How do we know God loves us? What are some ways we can tell?
- What's one way you can show love like Jesus did—at home, at school, or in your neighborhood?

- Why is it special that God loves everyone, even people who don't always love Him back?
- What's one way you can show love to someone who's hard to love?
- How can your family show God's love together this week?



