

CHRIST AT HOME in our HEARTS

A Christmas Advent Devotional

This Christmas, we want to consider how Christ, the Son of the Highest, came to earth in order to make His home in our hearts.

HIS HOME IN YOUR HEART

December 1 • Ephesians 3:17–20

¹⁷ That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.

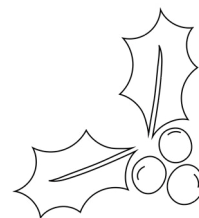
1. Have you ever considered that your heart is Christ's home? The word *dwell* in Ephesians 3:17 can be translated: to reside in, to house permanently, to inhabit. With this in mind, comment on the following phrases from this verse:
 - a. In your hearts

 - b. Through faith

 - c. Rooted and grounded in love

2. Use Ephesians 3:18–20 to comment on the expectation of Christ dwelling in our hearts.

3. What excites you most about Christ making His home in your heart?



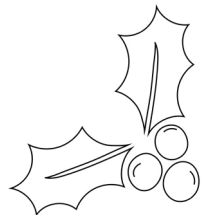
CONTEMPLATION OF THE HEART

December 2 • Psalm 45:1–7

¹My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. ²You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever. ³Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, with Your glory and Your majesty. ⁴And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. ⁵Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under You. ⁶Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. ⁷You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

1. This psalm is the heart's contemplation of the great King. Use the following verses to describe this King:
 - a. Verse 2
 - b. Verse 3
 - c. Verse 4
 - d. Verse 5
 - e. Verse 6
 - f. Verse 7

2. What thrills you most as you contemplate this King in your heart today?

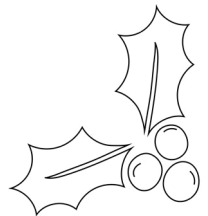


A HEART TO KNOW HIM

December 3 • Jeremiah 24:7

⁷ Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.

1. What does God promise to *give*?
2. For what purpose does God give this?
3. What does God say will happen when this gift is received?
4. Why do you desire this gift from God?



A NEW COVENANT IN OUR HEARTS

December 4 • Jeremiah 31:31–34

³¹Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—³²not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

1. Use the following phrases from Jeremiah 31:31–34 to comment on the covenant Jesus has made:
 - a. I will make
 - b. A new covenant
 - c. After those days
 - d. I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts
 - e. For they all shall know Me
 - f. For I will forgive their iniquity
 - g. Their sin I will remember no more

2. Considering that Jesus came to live in our hearts and establish this new covenant in our hearts, what aspect of this new covenant ministers to you the most today?



THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW COVENANT

December 5 • Luke 1:26–27

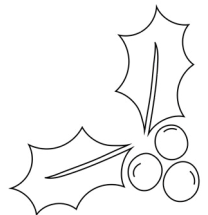
²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

1. Christmas is the celebration of how God initiated this new covenant that He would establish in our hearts through Christ. To consider this initiation, use Luke 1:26–27 to answer the following questions:
 - a. Who was sent?

 - b. Where was he sent?

 - c. To whom was he sent?

2. What do you find most amazing about the way God initiated His new covenant?



HIGHLY FAVORED ONE

December 6 • Luke 1:28

²⁸ And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”

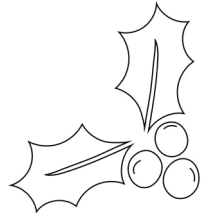
1. What was the angel's first greeting to Mary?
 - a. What does this word convey about his message?

2. According to the angel, how did God regard Mary?

3. As you personalize this scene, answer the following questions:
 - a. What reaction do you desire to have concerning the news of Jesus's coming?

 - b. How does God regard you because of Jesus?

 - c. What comparisons can you draw between God sending this good news to Mary and His news to you concerning Jesus?

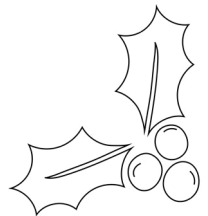


FAVOR WITH GOD

December 7 • Luke 1:29–31

²⁹ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.

1. What was Mary's initial reaction to encountering an angel?
2. What word of comfort did the angel give to Mary?
3. What would happen to Mary because of God's favor toward her?
4. Take a moment to consider the ramifications of the angel's message. The angel promised Mary that because of God's favor toward her, Jesus would be conceived in her. Comment on what God has done in your life because of His favor toward you.



HE WILL BE GREAT!

December 8 • Luke 1:32–33

³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

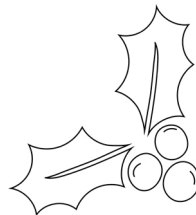
1. These verses elaborate on the greatness of Jesus, who would be conceived and live in Mary’s womb until His birth. This same Jesus dwells in our hearts by faith. Take a moment to absorb the greatness of Jesus by commenting on the following attributes declared by the angel concerning Him:
 - a. Great

 - b. Son of the Highest

 - c. Reigning on the throne of David

 - d. There will be no end to His kingdom

2. In the midst of a world of bad news, why is this wonderful news?



THE HOLY ONE IN OUR HEARTS

December 9 • Luke 1:34–35

³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”

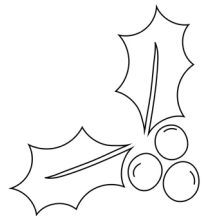
1. Use the following phrases to note how Jesus came to live in Mary:
 - a. The Holy Spirit will come upon you

 - b. The power of the Highest will overshadow you

2. Compare what God did in Mary to what Jesus has done in your heart.

3. According to Luke 1:35, who is this Holy One?

4. What does it mean to you that God has sent Jesus to live in your heart?



BEHOLD, THE MAIDSERVANT OF THE LORD!

December 10 • Luke 1:38

³⁸ Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

1. Use the following phrases to comment on Mary's cooperation:
 - a. Behold

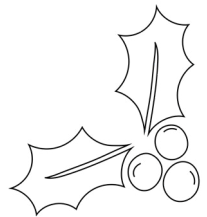
 - b. The maidservant of the Lord

 - c. Let it be according to your word

2. Now personalize these same phrases to comment on how you can cooperate with God's plans and purposes:
 - a. Behold

 - b. The maidservant of the Lord

 - c. Let it be to me according to Your word

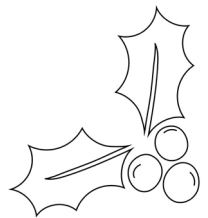


PROCLAMATION OF THE HEART

December 11 • Luke 1:39–45

³⁹ Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

1. Take a moment to consider the fellowship and interaction between Mary and Elizabeth by noting the proclamation of Elizabeth when she was *filled with the Holy Spirit*:
 - a. Verse 42
 - b. Verse 43
 - c. Verse 44
 - d. Verse 45
2. What stands out to you most about this proclamation?
3. What do you desire to proclaim about those who have Christ living in their heart?



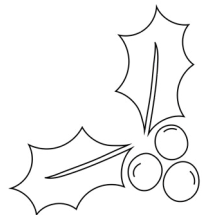
PRAISE FROM THE HEART

December 12 • Luke 1:46–48

⁴⁶ And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁸ For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.”

1. From Mary's declaration of praise, underscore the meaning of the following phrases:
 - a. My soul magnifies the Lord
 - b. My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior
 - c. He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant
 - d. Henceforth all generations will call me blessed

2. Which of these sentiments do you feel most inclined to use in order to express your awe over Christ dwelling in your heart?

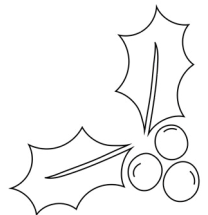


A HEART OF GRATITUDE

December 13 • Luke 1:49–50

⁴⁹For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. ⁵⁰And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

1. According to Luke 1:49, how did Mary esteem what God had done for her?
2. Comment on what Mary extolled about God:
 - a. Verse 49b
 - b. Verse 50
3. List three great things God has done for you.
4. Write a sentence extolling the Lord for what He has done for you.



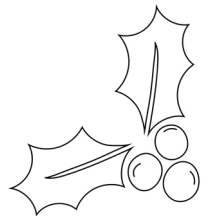
HE HAS DONE GREAT THINGS

December 14 • Luke 1:51–55

⁵¹ He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. ⁵² He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

1. Use the following verses to note what God has done:
 - a. Verse 51a
 - b. Verse 51b
 - c. Verse 52a
 - d. Verse 52b
 - e. Verse 53a
 - f. Verse 53b
 - g. Verse 54a
 - h. Verse 54b

2. Choose one of the verses above, and share what ministers to you most today concerning what God has done.



A DIVINE DREAM

December 15 • Matthew 1:18–20

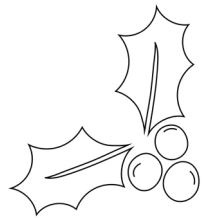
¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: after His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

1. From Matthew 1:18–19, what do you observe concerning:
 - a. Mary

 - b. Joseph

2. Use Matthew 1:20 to describe how God confirmed His word and plan to Joseph.

3. What is your greatest takeaway from these verses?



GOD WITH US

December 16 • Matthew 1:21–23

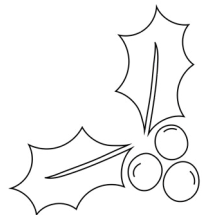
²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins. ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

1. What did the angel speak to Joseph concerning:
 - a. Mary

 - b. The Son

2. According to Matthew 1:22, why was *all this done*?
 - a. What does this convey to you about God's word?

3. What is your greatest takeaway from these verses?

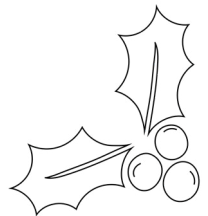


GOD'S UNEXPECTED WAYS

December 17 • Luke 2:1–5

¹And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. ⁴Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

1. From Luke 2:1–5, note the unexpected way in which God fulfilled His word (Micah 5:2). How does this minister to you about the unexpected way God works in your life to accomplish His will and purposes?
2. Take a moment to list some of the unexpected and maybe difficult circumstances in your life presently.
3. Commit each of the items on your list to God to use for His purposes and for your good (Romans 8:28).

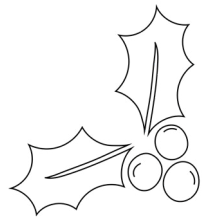


HIS HUMBLE HEART

December 18 • Luke 2:6–7

⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

1. What impresses you most about the humble entrance of Jesus into this world?
2. Take a moment to recall and share concerning the humble way in which Jesus entered into your heart and life.



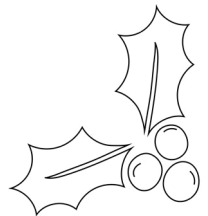
GOODWILL TOWARD MEN!

December 19 • Luke 2:8–14

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

1. Observe the testimony of the first visitors to see the newborn Christ by noting the following:
 - a. What they were doing (verse 8)
 - b. What they saw (verses 9, 13)
 - c. What they were told (verses 11, 12)
 - d. What they heard (verse 14)

2. What impresses you most about this event?



THE FIRST VISITORS OF THE MESSIAH

December 20 • Luke 2:15–20

¹⁵ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

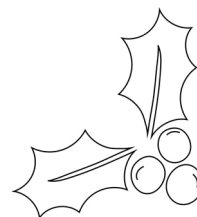
1. Use the following verses to note and comment on how the shepherds responded to this news:
 - a. Verse 15

 - b. Verse 16

 - c. Verse 17

 - d. Verse 20
2. According to Luke 2:19, what was Mary's reaction to the shepherds' testimony and visitation?
3. How are the following an example to you this Christmas season:
 - a. The shepherds

 - b. Mary



VISITORS FROM THE EAST

December 21 • Matthew 2:1–6

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ⁶‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

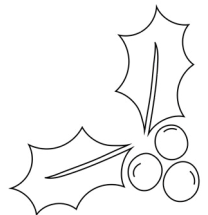
1. Use Matthew 2:1–6 to remark on the journey of the visitors from the East:
 - a. Who they were

 - b. What they were seeking

 - c. From whom they inquired

 - d. What they were told

2. What impresses you most about these men from the East?



THE WISE MEN

December 22 • Matthew 2:7–9

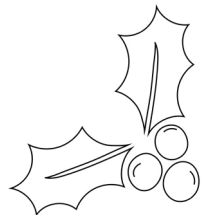
⁷ Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.” ⁹ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

1. Use Matthew 2:9 to note what happened to these men after their audience with King Herod by answering the following questions:
 - a. What did they see?

 - b. Where were they led?

 - c. How did they react?

2. How are these men an example to you this season?



RESPONSE OF THE HEART

December 23 • Matthew 2:11

¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

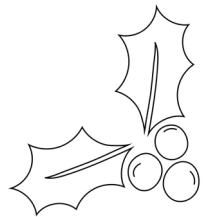
1. Comment on the reaction of these kings when:
 - a. They entered the house

 - b. They saw the young child

 - c. They opened their treasure

2. This Christmas season, what do you desire to:
 - a. Open to Jesus

 - b. Present to Jesus

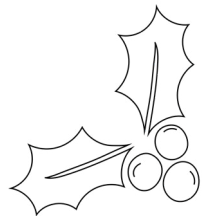


JESUS ABIDING IN OUR HEARTS

December 24 • John 15:4–5

⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.
⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

1. Note and comment on the invitation of Jesus in John 15:4–5.
2. What does it mean to you to abide in Jesus, and to have Jesus abide in you?
3. Take a moment to commit your heart to Jesus this Christmas that He might abide and make His home in your heart.



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