



MAKE

HIM

ROOM

FOR WORSHIP

advent guide 2019

# A Daily Guide for Advent

**Advent.** Despite being good news of great joy, this can be one of the busiest, most stressful, and for some, the darkest seasons of the year. What we wish was a time of joy and peace, is instead filled with the noise and busyness of Christmas activities, the stress of strained relationships, or the heaviness of loss and grief. In the midst of this, God is inviting us to let our hearts and minds be tuned to the good news of Christmas. Our hope is that this guide will help you prepare your hearts for Christmas and create space for God to form you through the glorious story of Advent..

## Using This Guide

Each week is grounded in our central theme: "Make Him Room." Each day, set aside a little time to read the Scripture passage, engage with the reflection and question, and pray. At the end of the week, we will take time to reflect on what God has been showing us. On Fridays, we will engage in a prayer of examen, a tool Christians have used for centuries to ask God to help them see their own hearts more clearly. On Saturdays, we will confess our sin to Him and hear His assurance of pardon for us. Feel free to do this by yourself or with your family.

Don't feel stressed if you miss a day. Just pick up with the next scheduled day and ask the Spirit to use it how He knows is best in your heart and life.

We hope this helps you prepare room in your heart for what God will show you this Christmas.

Merry Christmas from the elders and staff of Doxa Church!

## Advent for the Family

Included at the beginning of each week is the "Advent for the Family" section that may be helpful for families with young kids. Here, you'll find a weekly devotional, recommended readings from Scripture and storybook Bibles, songs, family discussion questions, and prayers to pray together. Parents are invited to use this section to guide your kids through the advent season. You may choose to do this all at once or to spread it out over a few days. Please feel free to use however is helpful for your family.

## **ADVENT FOR THE FAMILY / WEEK 3**

On the night Jesus was born, an angel appeared to the shepherds in the field who were taking care of their sheep. The shepherds were first afraid of the unknown reason for this angel, but the angel let them know that the Savior of the world, Jesus, had been born who would bring joy to the earth! The angel was accompanied by many other angels that sang songs of great praise to God. The shepherds moved from the fear of the unknown into great joy and they went to worship Jesus. Fear leaves no room for worship, but when we come to know Jesus as the savior of the world we prepare room to worship Him.

### **READ SCRIPTURE**

Luke 2:1-20

Younger Kids – The Light of the Whole World (pgs. 184-190) in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*  
Babies and Toddlers – Shepherds Visit (pgs. 277-281) in *The Beginner's Bible*

### **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

#### **Make Worship Banners**

Supplies Needed: straw/stick, cloth/paper, markers, stickers, anything crafty  
As a family make individual worship banners that you can dance with to different songs. Write at least one word on the banner that represents God's character: love, kind, patient, generous, etc. Tape a straw or stick to one end of the banner to be used as the wand. Use craft supplies to decorate the banners. Have each member of the family explain why they decorate the banner in the way they did and why they chose their word for the banner.

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What does it mean to worship God?
- Where and when can we worship God?
- How do we worship God both on the inside and the outside?
- How does worship of God keep out fear?

### **SONG**

Oh What a Glorious Night (by Sidewalk Prophets)

<https://youtu.be/6aGLV5CfoTU>

### **PRAYER**

Spend time in worship to God as a family. Let everyone say at least one attribute of God that they want to praise: love, forgiving, long-suffering, patient, etc.

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

## Make Room to Worship

### READ LUKE 2:8-20

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### REFLECTION

When the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, they were filled with fear. The angel's response calls them from the fear of the unknown to rejoice in the good news of great joy to all people – "unto you is born this day, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord". There is one who is almighty – who is above everything else we fear – and he is not only Lord, but Savior – He comes to save us from all our fears. When the shepherds realize who this baby really is, they're moved from the fear of the unknown to worship of the known King and Savior, Jesus Christ. All of us live in fear and most of us aren't even aware of it – we live in unknown fear – we aren't aware of what we really worship. However, when the glory of the Lord shines the light of the gospel into our hearts, his perfect light and love casts out fear and leads us into worship.

*Where is fear preventing me from worshipping Jesus?*

### PRAYER

God, please teach me to make room for the awe and wonder of Jesus. Please help me see and submit my fears to you.

# MONDAY, DECEMBER 16

## Fear and Worship

**READ ISAIAH 2:6-22** (2:8, 17, 20-22 included below)

Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.

And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away.

In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?

### REFLECTION

We all experience fear: fear of man, fear of loss, fear of rejection, fear of discomfort, and more. It causes sleepless nights, tightened stomachs, and countless anxieties. It feels like it controls us because in many ways it does. What we fear most reveals what we worship. It's what carries the most weight in our hearts and minds. Isaiah calls this kind of fear what it really is: idolatry. The problem is, fearing anything less than God, the "weightiest" one in the universe, is a downward spiral into greater slavery to our fears. But when we see the glory of God, like the shepherds who encountered the mighty angels that night in the field, His light leads to an awe that drives out fear; awe that makes room for worship.

*What idols do my fears reveal?*

### PRAYER

Lord, I am often controlled by my fear and it brings no peace. Help me see you in your glory and cast out my fear.

# TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17

## God's Glory Shines

### READ ISAIAH 6:1-7

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

### REFLECTION

"I am condemned!" Those were Isaiah's words when he came face to face with God's glory in the temple. All he encountered was the train of God's robe, but it filled the entire temple with His glory and struck Isaiah with a holy fear. Encountering the holy God reveals our wickedness and we know we're condemned. Like Isaiah, we too would say, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips." But God's glory doesn't destroy us. Instead, like with Isaiah, he provided a way for our sin to be atoned for and forgiven. Through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, we're able to encounter the glory of God and walk away transformed. And seeing God for who he really is puts all other fears in their proper place.

*Where am I making space to encounter God's glory?*

### PRAYER

God, help me to see your glory!

# WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

## God's Salvation

### READ ISAIAH 9:1-7

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

### REFLECTION

The host of angels gave the shepherds the amazing news that a "Savior" had been born that day. This Savior, born in Bethlehem, had not come to save them from their Roman oppressors, but from their greatest enemies: sin, Satan, and death. More than being slaves to the Romans, they were enslaved by the fears flowing from their misplaced worship. This Savior would free them from their fear so they could find their rest in God. Meditate on the words of this Christmas hymn, written by Charles Wesley.

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Am I able to rest in Jesus?*

### PRAYER

Thank you God, for setting me free from my sin and my fear! Please continue to free me from my enslaving fears as I worship you alone.

# THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19

## To Trust & Not Be Afraid

### READ LUKE 2:16-20; ISAIAH 12

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

You will say in that day: "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me." Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. "Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

### REFLECTION

After the shepherds visited the run-down stable to find Jesus lying in a manger, they left "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen." Their natural response to seeing salvation in the flesh was joyful worship! There's great joy in knowing we're set free from our fear and idolatry by Jesus. When we're grasped by this, our impulse will be worship and trust. God's love poured out into our hearts will displace the fears that once enslaved us and free us to trust in God alone. Isaiah writes, "You will say in that day: 'I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid.'"

*How has God both provided for me and rescued me?*

### PRAYER

Father, let me see your love in the flesh this Advent and stir my heart to worship You.

# FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

## Weekly Prayer of Examen

### READ PSALM 139:1-2, 7

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

### EXAMEN

The Father invites us to make room in our hearts to worship Him. What idols are crowding your heart right now? What do your fears reveal about your misplaced worship? Spend some time reflecting on the themes of this week paying special attention to any areas where you may have felt the Spirit's conviction or kindness, where you felt gratitude or praise, or where you had a new insight or direction. Is there a truth he's asking you to believe about yourself? Is there something he is asking you to stop doing or start doing? Is there an area where he'd like you to dig a little deeper?

Pray as you feel led.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. - Psalm 51:10-12*

# **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21**

## **Confession and Assurance of Pardon**

### **READ SCRIPTURE**

Revisit the scripture for the week, noting where the Spirit might be asking you to linger. (Luke 2:6-22; Isaiah 6:1-7; Isaiah 9:1-7; Isaiah 12)

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Glorious God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

I confess that I have had a small vision of You. I have believed You are weak and unable to satisfy me. I have feared people, seeing them as bigger than You and being controlled by their perception of me. I have lived in fear; fear of rejection, fear of loneliness, fear of discomfort, fear of obscurity. I've underestimated your love for me, diminishing how deep it really is. Rather than worshipping You, I have worshipped lesser things. Like Isaiah, I know I am condemned.

Forgive me, Amen.

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Hear the Word of God for you from Psalm 103:8-12:

"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."