



# Advent

## WEEKLY CANDLE LIGHTING DEVOTIONAL

What are you most looking forward to this Advent season? Is it a specific gift you're hoping for? A special gathering of friends and family you look forward to? This time of year I often look forward to the twinkling lights, the Christmas trees, baking, celebrating with friends, giving and receiving gifts, and the family traditions we have developed over the years. All these things fill the season with joy.

Or at least we expect them to.

Often we can get so excited about an upcoming event or gathering and put a lot of pressure on that thing to bring us joy. But what happens when it doesn't go as planned? The kids get sick and you miss the party. Family is spread out too far to gather the way you hoped for. Or a tradition just isn't the same when a special family member is no longer with us.

We can find ourselves putting a lot of pressure on our experiences to be the source of our joy. Joy in an experience is only momentary. Seeking joy in our circumstances is shaky ground because our circumstances change, things don't always work out the way we expect them to. And even when they do, experiences end and we are left looking for the next thing. The difference between our expectations and our experiences leaves much room for disappointment.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul talks about his experiences. He was experiencing great hardship and persecution, yet he continued to put his hope in Jesus. He continued to declare that there is JOY because true Joy isn't based on anything other than Jesus.

2 Corinthians 6:10 NLT. - Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

If we set our hope on things and experiences to be our joy this season, we may find ourselves disappointed. But if our hope is in Jesus, and our hearts seek Him, we will find an everlasting joy.



[The Joy of Jesus \(feat. Matt Maher, Mac Powell & Ellie Holcomb\) - Single](#)

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## *Light the first two purple candles, and the third, the pink candle*

As we light the third candle, we remember God's promise of joy for all people. In Jesus we can experience the fullness of joy.

### *Scripture Reading*

- Luke 2:8–11 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.
- John 15:11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
- Psalm 16:11 You make known to me that path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand there are pleasures forever more.

### *Prayer*

Lord, we confess that we are often tempted to find joy in our circumstances or temporary fixes, rather than in you. Would you show us today the joy we have in you. Fill our hearts with Joy in your presence and a desire to seek you above all else. In Jesus name, Amen.

### *Discussion*

- What is joy?
- How have you experienced joy this Advent season?
- How does God give us joy?