*Day 1*

*December 23*

*Pray | For strength of conviction in the hope we place with Jesus.*

HOPE REQUIRES PERSERVERANCE. We can be led to falter in our hope if we are not daily choosing to trust God.

It is easy to be swayed and lose focus from the big picture God’s hope delivers. At times, daily challenges can seem momentous, and it’s difficult to understand why we must experience those challenges.

In the passages from Luke for today, we read that Anna had lost her husband, yet stayed focused on her relationship with God. Her faithfulness kept her moving forward with a purpose each of the remaining days of her life. She trusted God and was thankful for the hope of redemption.

*Read |* [*Luke 2:36 – 38, Jeremiah 14:22*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A36+%E2%80%93+38%2C+Jeremiah+14%3A22+&version=NIV)

*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

One of the definitions of ‘hope’ from Merriam-Webster is to expect with confidence (trust). With that definition in mind, take a moment to reflect on where your relationship with God is right now. What hope are you relying on to lead your life and why?

Anna spent many years as a widow. She continued to worship and seek God during those years despite the challenges of being a widow. Is there a challenge right now for you that is straining your relationship with God? How might you commit yourself to seeking him in spite of the challenge?

During the Christmas season many people are reminded of loved ones who have passed. Ask God for an opportunity to share his love with someone who is mourning a loss in an unexpected way today.

Resources: Merriam-Webster <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hope>

*Day 2*

*December 24*

*Pray | For a heart that sees the value in every person.*

THE HOPE OF JESUS is for everyone.

We can be prone to comparison over possessions, job titles, appearnces, kids’ accomplishments, wealth, etc. At our worst, that comparison might allow us to think certain individuals are more important than others and that affords them special treatment. To God, we are all immensely important and each person is equally valued.

The shepherds of Jesus’ day were not the most educated or highly honored members of society. Yet they were the ones God chose to be approached by the angels. God did not send Jesus for only those with high position. He sent Jesus to be a hope for every person.

*Read |* [*Luke 2:8 – 15*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A8+%E2%80%93+15&version=NIV)

*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Just as God used the shepherds to point the way to Jesus’ birth, all of God’s children are deserving of love and dignity. Think about a way you might help another remember the value God sees in them.

Think about if you have ever fallen into the trap of comparisons, and how you were able to step back from that cycle. Is there a daily/weekly practice that could help you to remember your value to God no matter your circumstances?

Spend some time today praying for those in your life who do not know God and the hope he brings. Ask that they may start to seek him.

*Day 3*

*December 25*

*Pray | Praise God for the living hope we have in Jesus.*

OUR HOPE should be overflowing.

The birth of our Savior is an amazing and generous act of kindness. God knew that we could not save ourselves and allows us to find hope through his Son. Through God’s great love for us, he saved us by sending his Son.

In a world that is fallen and bears many things that could steal our hope, we have this day each year to focus on the birth of the one who gives us hope.

*Read |* [*Luke 2:16 – 18*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A16+%E2%80%93+18+&version=NIV)

*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

The shepherds were so thrilled by the message from the angels and all that they had seen that they spread the news. Has there ever been a time that you were so excited for something that you had to see it or share it with someone else? Do you feel that same anticipation about sharing what gives you hope?

It would be easy to focus on whether you are getting presents or what types of presents on Christmas Day. What tradition do you have, or could you start, to center the day on Jesus?

Take time today to intentionally thank God for the hope he provides.

*Day 4*

*December 26*

*Pray | For a heart that rejoices in God.*

TREASURE THE MOMENTS of hope and joy.

Some days will be filled with such joy and hope that our hearts will be overflowing. Be present in those moments and rejoice. Rest in the rejoicing and let that renew your spirit.

God wants what’s best for us but does not say that things will always be easy. The moments of overwhelming joy may help foster the hope in our hearts during other moments. Rejoicing in the moments of joy will help us be better prepared to rejoice in those moments of despair.

*Read |* [*Luke 2:19 – 21*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A19+%E2%80%93+21+&version=NIV)

 *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

The verses today share that Mary treasured the experiences surrounding the birth of Jesus. Perhaps these treasured moments were support for Mary during tribulations later in Jesus’ life. Think back to a time in your life where God created joy and peace. Has that moment helped to sustain you during times that were less joyful? If not, how could you draw on that in the future? Ask God for help.

Luke 2:20 says the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen. As parts of your life flourish, do you boldly praise God as the shepherds did?

Do you know someone who is struggling to find joy right now? Think of a way you could create a moment of joy for them. It could be something such as a small gesture of kindness or a word of encouragement. In any case, please pray for him or her to turn their struggle over to God, who is the only true source of joy.

*Day 5*

*December 27*

*Pray | For trust in God’s faithfulness.*

GOD IS FAITHFUL. He fulfills promises and does not abandon us.

Throughout life we may be anticipating different things, like a car for a 16th birthday, a promotion at work, a baby, or a dream vacation. When we’re waiting for those things, it can seem like they are so distant and take too long to occur. We might become impatient when they don’t happen fast enough.

God is not on our schedule, and it can be tempting to become impatient with him. He is always faithful though. We cannot hold him to our plans or timelines. Instead we must trust in his faithfulness and hold fast to the hope we have in him.

*Read |* [*Luke 2:25 – 32*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A25+%E2%80%93+32+&version=NIV)

*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Simeon had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would live to see the Messiah. He had to be patient and wait for God’s timing for the fulfillment of that promise. How do you handle periods of waiting for a response from God?

That particular day Simeon had been moved by the Holy Spirit to go into the temple courts. Can you think of a time when you have felt God’s prompting? Did you obey? What was the outcome?

Pray today for an open heart to hear God’s promptings. It may be an urging to share your faith with someone or if you don’t yet know God, it could be on your heart to reach out to a pastor or friend, and ask them how to take the next step and start a relationship with God.

*Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® (NIV®). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. ® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*