

# Celebrating and Proclaiming Christ at Christmastime

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by Ben Purves

Dear church family,

We look forward to Christmas for many reasons, but most of all we rejoice at the miracle of Christ's birth, and the grace of God in the Word become flesh.

One of the traditions my family looks forward to is our advent calendar. Each day of December leading up to Christmas we tuck a slip of paper with a daily Scripture reading and a Christmas tradition behind the miniature doors for each day. Our children then take turns discovering what the day will hold.

If you do not have a Bible reading plan for this season, I invite you to join us in reading through these Scriptures in the days leading up to Christmas.

This Bible reading plan begins on December 1, and will take you to Christmas morning.

## Christmas Scripture Readings

Starting with the Old Testament prophecies, this reading schedule begins with the first promise of the Messiah, and concludes with his birth and childhood. We talk with our children about the promises and faithfulness of God, our need for deliverance, and the hope we have because of Christ.

If family devotions are a challenge, Christmas time is a great place to begin anew or start for the first time. If you would like to grow in this, we invite you to come and speak with any of the elders, and we would be glad to come alongside you as you lead your family.

12/1	<a href="#">Genesis 3:15</a>
12/2	<a href="#">Genesis 49:10</a>
12/3	<a href="#">2 Samuel 7:12-17</a>
12/4	<a href="#">Isaiah 7:14</a>
12/5	<a href="#">Isaiah 9:6-7</a>
12/6	<a href="#">Isaiah 11:1-9</a>
12/7	<a href="#">Isaiah 40:1-11</a>

12/8	<a href="#">Jeremiah 23:5-6</a>
12/9	<a href="#">Micah 5:2</a>
12/10	<a href="#">Luke 1:1-17</a>
12/11	<a href="#">Luke 1:18-25</a>
12/12	<a href="#">Luke 1:26-38</a>
12/13	<a href="#">Luke 1:39-56</a>
12/14	<a href="#">Luke 1:57-66</a>
12/15	<a href="#">Luke 1:67-80</a>
12/16	<a href="#">Matthew 1:1-17</a>
12/17	<a href="#">Matthew 1:18-25</a>
12/18	<a href="#">Luke 2:1-7</a>
12/19	<a href="#">Luke 2:8-20</a>
12/20	<a href="#">Luke 2:21-40</a>
12/21	<a href="#">Matthew 2:1-12</a>
12/22	<a href="#">Matthew 2:13-23</a>
12/23	<a href="#">Luke 2:39-52</a>
12/24	<a href="#">John 1:1-13</a>
12/25	<a href="#">John 1:14-18</a>

## Christmas Traditions

With our daily Scripture readings, our advent calendar includes a Christmas tradition or activity for each day. If it's a busy day, it might be as simple as hot chocolate around the table, or enjoying a holiday dessert. When we have more time, we might go look at Christmas lights, visit one of our community's Christmas trees, stuff stockings, or watch a classic Christmas movie.

But rather than celebrating traditions for tradition's sake, consider how you might reshape your traditions to help you and your family focus on Christ. Below are a few examples:

- Consider adding a tradition like Operation Christmas Child and talk with your children about how we might be generous because of God's great generosity toward us.
- Instead of your annual Christmas card or end-of-year letter simply being another task, consider how you might write in such a way that communicates the gospel to family and friends. Share about God's goodness to your family over the year, perhaps even as he has graciously sustained you through a difficult season. Seek to magnify God in your writing, rather than giving a laundry list of family accomplishments.

- In the same way, holiday baking can be an opportunity to express the love of Christ to your neighborhood. With a little planning, delivering cookies or holiday breads to your neighbors or hosting a Christmas open house might help grow relationships and give opportunity for gospel conversations. Think of your home as a lighthouse to the homes surrounding you, and your family as a mission team to your neighborhood.

These are only a few examples, and every family will be uniquely different. But let me encourage you to think about how you might reshape traditions for the sake of the gospel, and how your traditions might be a means for you to rejoice in and treasure Christ. A helpful read (which you can download for free) is [Treasuring God in Our Traditions](#) by Noel Piper.

It's my prayer that this season will be filled with rejoicing in and treasuring Christ. May we gladly orient our hearts toward our Savior as we celebrate the Word become Flesh, Light come into darkness, and the Invisible made Visible in the Incarnation of our Lord.

Pastor Ben

Note: This blog post was first published on November 30, 2017.