



CHRISTMAS

DEVOTIONAL

week one

Stonebriar Community Church

BELONG

You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household . . .

—Ephesians 2:19 (NASB)

Christmas seems to naturally invite reflection. We tend to think about years gone by, family and friends we once celebrated with, and the highs and lows of the year that will be soon coming to a close. But for a few moments today, think about what your life was before Christ.

Our stories are all beautifully different—some of us trusted in Christ as a young child while others of us turned to Him in adulthood. Regardless, believers in Jesus are no longer estranged from our holy God. We have been reconciled to God through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are now members of the Lord's household and will be for the rest of eternity.

Since we, as believers, are united by the redemptive blood of Jesus, we should all be intentional about getting to know our family in Christ this side of Heaven. Belonging to a Bible study, small group, or a service project are great ways to begin deep and meaningful relationships with others in the household of God now.



Dear Father, I am so thankful that because of Christ, I am reconciled to You. Remind me that belonging in Your household is a gift that I get to partake in now, not just in eternity future. Help me to cultivate relationships with others so that we can all be blessed with the sense of belonging that You intend for all those who are Yours. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

GROW

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.

—2 Peter 3:18 (NASB)

We are instructed to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. That is not a suggestion, and it is not optional. It is a command. If you looked at your life and the way you spend your days, would you be able to say that you are indeed growing in the Lord? Our growth in the Lord should be an ongoing response to His abundant grace.

Christmas reminds us to reflect and consider the birth of our Savior. It is at this point in history that grace came down from Heaven in the form of a man. Our Lord came to earth, knowing His plan was to take the punishment we deserve, to conquer sin and death forever.

It is so important to establish habits with your time so that you can pursue holiness and grow closer to the Lord. There is no substitute for time spent in the Word and in prayer. Guard how you use your time, so that your heart and mind will be fed with His truth alone.



Lord, I want to grow in You. Help me to crave time in Your Word and in prayer. I surrender my heart and my time to You and ask that You will help me to glorify You in all that I do. In Christ I pray, Amen.

SERVE

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,
and to give His life as a ransom for many.

—Mark 10:45 (NASB)

Christmas leads us to contemplate what Christ did for us by leaving the glory of Heaven to be here on earth. The King of Kings was born not to be waited upon, but to serve. From His birth to His death, Jesus modeled a selfless love. Jesus not only fed the hungry, washed the feet of the disciples, and performed miracles, but He ultimately laid down His life to save us.

As followers of Christ, we are to embrace His heart for service to others for the glory of God alone. Instead of having a consumer mindset like the unbelieving world, look for new ways to serve others, not just during this festive season, but every day of the year.

Ask the Lord to open your eyes to others whom you can serve. It can be as simple as offering a listening ear, praying for others, or giving someone the gift of your time. Whatever you choose to do, glorify God and boldly declare the saving grace of Jesus Christ.



Lord, help me to serve others well. I do not want to miss opportunities to tell others of Christ and bring You glory. I am humbled at the example of Christ serving others, and want to do my best to serve others too. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.

PROCLAIM

And so the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

—Luke 2:10–11 (NASB)

These words that the angel spoke to the shepherds changed the course of human history. On this night in Bethlehem, God’s promise—a long-awaited prophecy—took on flesh. The Savior had finally arrived—not as a conquering King as many Jews were expecting—but as a newborn babe. It was not the elite or educated of society that were the first to hear this long-awaited news. The angel shared this message instead with lowly shepherds.

The message of the angel should resonate with all believers still to this day. The Good News is not just that Jesus was born, but that He still lives and is the only way to God. Only Christ’s offer of forgiveness of sins will bring reconciliation to God the Father and eternal life.

Jesus, our Savior, brings peace to troubled hearts and the promise of lasting joy that no earthly circumstance can remove. The true delight of the Christmas season is in the presence and relationship of the One who came to redeem us.



Lord, I am moved by the angel’s message to the shepherds. Forgive me if I have become complacent about this good news. Help me to be bold in proclaiming the gospel message of Christ to others. It is in His name I pray, Amen.

BELONG

Not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging *one another*.

—Hebrews 10:25 (NASB)

Christmas is unique in that many people who do not regularly attend church often will attend a service in December. Whether out of guilt, curiosity, or a sense of longing, it is at this time of year that some people find themselves sitting in a service, often in the back row, contemplating what the significance of church really means.

God's Word clearly encourages believers in Christ to gather with one another. The purpose in our meeting together is not so that we can check off something on our heavenly to-do list. Christians see this as a time where we get to be together. We get to hear God's Word taught and proclaimed, we get to pray with and for one another, and we get to encourage each other that the trials of this life won't last forever because Heaven is waiting for us.

Because so many people are willing to go to church at Christmastime, pray about who you can invite to join you. And if the people you need to invite to church are not yet a believer in Christ, give them the greatest gift you could ever give them—the gift of the gospel message.



*Lord, sometimes I take going to church for granted and for that I am so sorry. Give me new eyes to see what a blessing it is to be surrounded by other believers in Jesus. Help me to readily pray for and encourage others so that Your name will be glorified.
In the name of Christ I pray, Amen.*

GROW

Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

—Colossians 2:6–7 (NASB)

Like roots of a tree that hold it steady and keep it strong, our faith must be firmly grounded in Christ. When this is the case, we cannot be swayed by the things in the culture and in the world around us.

The more you grow in your faith, the more humbled you are by what Christ has done for you. The Creator of all things has provided a way for you to know Him. He is a personal God who knows everything about your past, present, and future and wants to be in a close relationship with you.

We are abundantly showered by blessings, but we sometimes can forget to notice all He has given us. Spend some time thinking about the sacrifice of Christ, and how He has provided and protected your faith in Him. Doing this will inevitably cause you to overflow with gratitude. Our sovereign God cares so deeply about every detail of your life, and He is your faithful provider, holy redeemer, and loving helper.



Lord, forgive me for sometimes taking your many blessings for granted. I do not deserve how good You are to me, but I am so thankful. Root my heart in Christ and help me to live my life in gratitude to You. Amen.

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