

December Devotions

The Greatest Command – Love God and Neighbor

Scripture: Matthew 22:36–40; 1 John 4:7–8; John 13:34–35

When Jesus was asked, “Which is the greatest commandment?” He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself” (**Matthew 22:36–40**). These commandments are not merely rules—they are a call to live a life defined by love.

The Bible uses several Greek words for love, giving us a deeper understanding:

Agape – Selfless, sacrificial love that seeks the good of others, reflecting God’s love for us (**1 John 4:7–8**).

Philia – Brotherly or friendship love, showing loyalty, companionship, and affection (**John 15:12–13**).

Storge – Natural, familial love, expressed in care and affection for those closest to us.

Eros – Romantic love, a gift of intimacy within marriage.

For a Christian, love is active and practical: it means forgiving those who wrong us (**Colossians 3:13**), showing kindness to strangers (**Hebrews 13:2**), and seeking the well-being of others even at personal cost. Agape love is not dependent on feelings—it is a deliberate choice to reflect God’s character in every relationship.

Loving God with all our heart fuels the love we extend to others. When we prioritize communion with Him, our patience grows, our forgiveness flows, and our interactions become reflections of His grace.

Reflection: Am I loving others as God loves me—selflessly, sacrificially, and faithfully? Where might I need to forgive or extend grace today?

Prayer:

Lord, teach me to love You with all my heart, mind, and soul. Fill me with Your agape love so that I may love my neighbors genuinely, forgive freely, and reflect Your goodness in every interaction. Let my life be a living testimony of Your love. Amen.

Walk in the Light

“For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see.” **(Psalm 36:9 NLT)**

Jesus came to proclaim the truth. He came so we could walk in the light and know the truth. Jesus came from heaven and walked in the flesh. He came with a purpose to save mankind. “But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” **(Romans 5:8 NLT)** Isn’t that amazing?

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” **(John 8:12 NIV)** On another occasion Jesus was at the synagogue. Jesus read what Isaiah had prophesied. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed.” **(Luke 4:18)** The captives are those bound by sin. Those who don’t know Jesus are walking in darkness and they are spiritually blind. When you let the light of Christ into your life, darkness must flee. Just like turning on the light in a dark room there is no more darkness. Jesus took our punishment for sin so that a relationship with God, the Father, could be restored. Are you walking in the light? If not, you can invite Jesus into your life by a simple prayer. Ask for forgiveness of sin, believe that Jesus died for you and that He was raised from the dead and receive Him as your savior. God will hear your prayer.

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us from all sin.” **(1 John 1:7)**

Prayer: Father, thank you for Jesus. I want to walk each day in the light. Amen

John 18:37, John 3:17, John 1:5, 2 Corinthians 5:18

Fix Your Thoughts

When regretful memories used to pop into my mind, it caused me to question whether or not God had really forgiven me because why else would those painful memories continually resurface. So, I dug deeper in God's Word for answers.

Reading **Romans 8:1** was very reassuring. "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus." It wasn't God who was filing my mind with these thoughts but they were still there and I needed to find out why.

Whether regretful thoughts come from our own insecurities and unresolved issues or the enemy is using our past weaknesses as a way to create doubts about God's love and forgiveness, we need to immediately apply **2 Corinthians 10:5** and "take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ."

We need to be diligent about identifying and binding these lies in Jesus' name and not allowing them to camp out in our minds. This is our opportunity to actively do something about all thoughts that are not pleasing to God before they enter our hearts and become part of us.

What should we be focusing on instead? Paul tells us in **Philippians 4:8**: "Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."

Remember, "God through Christ has forgiven you." **Ephesians 4:32**. And that's definitely something worthy of praise!

Prayer Points:

- Pray for guidance and diligence against negative thoughts and bind the lies in Jesus' name taking them captive and making them obedient to Christ.
- Ask Holy Spirit to help you focus on thoughts that are true, honorable, right, pure, love and admirable.
- Praise God for forgiving your sins through Christ and believing God's promise that there is no condemnation when you belong to Christ Jesus.

He Will Personally Come to You

John 14:19–26

Jesus makes a breathtaking promise: “Because I live, you also will live... and I will love them and reveal Myself to them” (vv.19, 21). For those who are passionately in love with Christ, His presence is not distant. He dwells within and chooses to personally manifest Himself to the one who longs for Him.

When Jesus says He “will reveal Himself,” it means He makes Himself knowable, perceivable, and experientially real. This isn’t merely intellectual knowledge—this is the Living Christ making His nearness felt, His voice recognized, and His love encountered in personal ways. He comes to the one whose heart is turned toward Him.

In verse 23, Jesus deepens this truth:

“All who love Me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and We will come and make Our home with each of them.”

Loving Him empowers obedience. True obedience doesn’t flow from obligation—it flows from affection. Love opens the door for God’s presence to rest within us. Love creates the environment for revelation.

This is the rhythm of intimacy:

Love → Obedience → Indwelling → Revelation.

Scripture affirms this promise elsewhere.

- **James 4:8:** “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” Passionate pursuit always leads to divine nearness.

- **Jeremiah 29:13:** “You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.” Wholehearted love positions us to experience God more fully.

Jesus’ promise is deeply personal—you love Him, and He comes to you. He lives within you by the Holy Spirit, teaching, guiding, comforting, and revealing the Father’s heart. This is life with Him: not distant, but indwelling; not hidden, but revealed.

Personal Prayer Points

“Lord Jesus, deepen my love for You so that obedience becomes my joyful response, not my striving. Let my affection for You draw Your presence closer in every part of my life.”

“Holy Spirit, reveal Jesus to me in greater measure. Make His voice familiar, His nearness real, and His Word alive within me. Dwell in me and shape me to love and obey You.”

God's Glory

"The son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and He sustains everything by the mighty power of His command. When He had cleansed us from our sins, He sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven." **(Hebrews 1:3)**

Jesus radiates God's glory, and we have the honor of knowing Jesus and bringing God glory by being imitators of God. John tells us that Jesus is the word and that He became flesh. "...He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only son." **(John 1:14)** So He chose us to shine His light and be His ambassadors. We are made in the image of God. We shine the light of Christ through our lives and in so doing we reflect the glory of God. God gives us His Holy Spirit to empower us to show God's love to others. And who are we, but just "fragile clay jars." **(2 Corinthians 4:7 NLT)** "We now have the light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our power is from God, not from ourselves." **(2 Corinthians 4:7 NLT)** How amazing is it that God would use us, as imperfect as we are, to shine His light and love through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Dear Father, thank you that you choose to use me to express your glory. The Holy Spirit makes it possible to express your glory through your son Jesus. Lead me in a fresh way that I would be used for your glory. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen

Ephesians 5:1, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Genesis 1:27, Matthew 5:16 Acts 1:8

“The Spirit Speaks—Personally and Uniquely”

One of the greatest gifts given to the children of God is the personal communication of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that the Spirit would not be distant or silent but an intimate guide who speaks uniquely to each believer. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (**John 10:27**). The Holy Spirit communicates in ways that are personal, loving, and tailored to the heart that seeks Him.

Jesus said, “The Holy Spirit... will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you” (**John 14:26**). His communication is not vague—it is instructive, comforting, corrective, and encouraging. **Romans 8:16** declares, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” His voice becomes the inner witness that anchors our identity and guides our steps.

Ways the Holy Spirit Communicates

- Through Scripture – He illuminates the Word, making it come alive (**Psalm 119:105**).
- The inner witness or impression – A gentle nudge, conviction, peace, or warning (**Colossians 3:15**).
- A still, small voice – Elijah heard the whisper of God instead of the wind or fire (**1 Kings 19:11–12**).
- Peace or unrest – The Spirit often leads by peace and restrains by discomfort (**Philippians 4:7**).
- Godly counsel – The Spirit speaks through trusted believers (**Proverbs 11:14**).
- Dreams, visions, and spiritual insights – As seen throughout Acts (**Acts 2:17; Acts 10**).

How to Recognize His Voice

His voice aligns with Scripture. The Spirit never contradicts the Word.

His voice produces peace and clarity, not confusion or fear.

His voice draws us closer to Jesus and deeper into holiness.

His voice is consistent—He repeats what He wants you to hear.

His voice is gentle, invitational, and full of truth.

The more you listen, obey, and stay in the Word, the more clearly you recognize His personal tone. Like learning a friend’s voice, recognition grows with relationship.

Personal Prayer Points

“Holy Spirit, open my ears and my heart to recognize Your voice. Teach me the unique ways You speak to me and help me respond quickly and joyfully.”

“Lord, increase my sensitivity to Your presence. Remove every distraction or counterfeit voice so I may walk closely with You in discernment and obedience.”

“The Greatest Gift Ever Given”

Christmas is the celebration of a King who came close—our Savior wrapped in human flesh, born into our world with a love deeper than anything earth could offer. *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given” (Isaiah 9:6)*. Jesus didn’t enter the world as royalty surrounded by splendor; He came as a humble child so every heart, high or low, could access Him. His incarnation is the clearest expression of God’s love: *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14)*. Heaven came down so humanity could be lifted up.

Christmas reminds us that the Father gave the most priceless gift—His Son. This gift wasn’t wrapped in paper but in prophecy, mercy, and eternal purpose. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son” (John 3:16)*. No act of human generosity can compare with the love that moved God to step into our brokenness and become our Redeemer.

We exchange gifts to show love, gratitude, and joy—but all our giving points to the One who first gave everything. And while gifts bring smiles, the **greatest gift we can give anyone is the gospel**—the message of hope, forgiveness, and eternal life. Every wrapped present will fade, but salvation is a gift that transforms a soul forever.

Jesus’ birth was the beginning of a mission that would lead to the cross, the resurrection, and the commissioning of His followers. Christmas not only celebrates His coming—it calls us to respond. The angels announced *“good news of great joy for all people” (Luke 2:10)*, and now we carry that same message. Sharing the gospel is our way of participating in the Father’s heart and continuing the mission Jesus began.

This Christmas, as we enjoy giving and receiving gifts, may our hearts remember the greatest gift of all—and may we share Him freely. The Great Commission isn’t just a command; it is the most loving gift we can give to the world.

“Good Tidings”

“For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)

Jesus, the son of God, born of a virgin, whose birth was foretold centuries earlier by Isaiah the prophet. Jesus, The King of Kings, born in a barn/stable filled with stinky animal smells. This was certainly not a royal entrance for Jesus. Who was the first to see Him? It wasn't who you would think would welcome the baby Jesus. It was the shepherds in the field tending sheep, ordinary men doing their job. The shepherds were in the field, and they were visited by angels who made the announcement of the birth of Christ. “Then the angel said to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” **(Luke 2:10-11)** Jesus, God's gift to mankind, His son. He was born for the purpose of saving man from their sins. We celebrate the birth of Christ. Jesus was not sent here to condemn us, as some may think, but He was sent to save us from the bondage of sin. Jesus came to show us what the Father was like. God is love and Jesus was born to show us just how much God loved us, by sending His son to die for our sins. Christmas is the story of God's gift to mankind. That is why we can join with the same proclamation of the angels at the birth of Christ. “...the heavenly host praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” **(Luke 2:14)**

Prayer: I pray that God would reveal Himself through the Christmas Spirit to believers and non-believers and that lives would be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 9:6, Luke 2:8, Luke 19:10, John 3:17, John 14:7, John 3:16

“Joy to the World—Every Day, Everywhere”

Many think “*Joy to the World*” is simply a Christmas carol, but its message is far bigger: it celebrates the joy of God’s reign being established on earth, inviting believers to experience joy daily, everywhere. The lyrics were written by Isaac Watts (1674–1748), a prolific hymn writer and theologian. Watts based his song on **Psalm 98**, which proclaims:

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the Lord with the harp... for the Lord has come to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness” (Psalm 98:4–9 NIV).

Psalm 98 isn’t about one day of celebration—it’s about rejoicing in God’s ongoing reign, faithfulness, and justice. Watts captured this by turning the psalm into a song proclaiming the coming of Christ and the joy His rule brings. It reminds us that God’s presence is not limited to a season but is meant to inspire joy every day, in every circumstance, across the whole world.

Experiencing Joy Daily

1. **Recognize God’s reign** – Joy begins with the awareness that Jesus is Lord over every part of life.
2. **Celebrate His faithfulness** – Remember His past provisions and trust His future promises.
3. **Worship actively** – Sing, pray, and rejoice, even in small moments, letting gratitude overflow.
4. **Share His joy** – True joy spreads when we bless others, encourage, and share the gospel.

Isaac Watts intended this hymn as a **call to daily rejoicing**, not just a seasonal tune. Every believer can embrace this joy knowing that God’s rule brings hope, peace, and eternal security.

Personal Prayer Points

Lord, help me experience Your joy today, regardless of circumstances. Let Your presence fill me and overflow through my words and actions. Amen.

Father, remind me daily of Your faithfulness. Teach me to worship You in every moment and share the joy of Your salvation with others. Amen.

Adoring the Newborn King

Luke 2:1–7; Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2

The story of Jesus' birth is humble yet revolutionary. In Luke 2:1–7, we read of a young woman, Mary, and her husband, Joseph, traveling to Bethlehem. There, in a simple manger, the Savior of the world was born. Wrapped in cloths and laid in a feeding trough, the King of kings entered the world in the most unassuming way.

Centuries earlier, Isaiah had prophesied: “For unto us a child is born, unto 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” (**Isaiah 9:6**). The long-awaited Messiah had arrived. Micah had also foretold His birthplace: Bethlehem, a small town chosen to host the glory of God incarnate.

The shepherds and wise men recognized the significance of His birth. They adored Him, bringing gifts, kneeling in worship, and declaring the greatness of God. Their response reminds us that the appropriate posture before Jesus is one of adoration and exaltation. The manger may have been humble, but the King it cradled is eternal.

As we celebrate His birth, we are invited to echo the same joy and worship. We exalt Him with our hearts, voices, and lives. We celebrate not only the gift of Christmas but the redemption, hope, and peace that come through this newborn King.

Reflection: How can I, like the shepherds and wise men, adore and celebrate Jesus in my daily life? How does His coming change the way I live, serve, and worship?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I bow in awe before You. Though You came in humility, You are mighty and eternal. I adore You, exalt Your name, and celebrate the gift of Your life. May my heart, my words, and my actions honor You this season and always. Amen.

He Wants A Relationship With Us

God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything in it and on it wants a relationship with us!

He knitted us in our mother's womb. **Psalm 139:13** He made us in His image. **Genesis 1:27** He knows our heart. **Jeremiah 17:10** He loves us. **Romans 8:38** He is faithful to us. **2 Timothy 2:13** He is with us. **Matthew 28:20** He is for us. **Romans 8:31** Jesus died for us so we can spend eternity with Him. **John 3:16**

Do we make it a priority to know Him, thank Him and glorify Him? Do we spend time communicating with Him and reading His Word regularly? Do we rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances? This is God's will for us in Christ Jesus. **2 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

We are fully loved by God no matter what we do or don't do. Our relationship with God grows as we seek His presence, allow Him to speak to our hearts and transform our lives. A relationship with God comes from trust, obedience and submission, not from our works. **1 John 2:3-6**

We have the choice to pursue Him with a ready heart that says "Yes" to His will. As we seek Him and keep our eyes on Him, God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. **1 Corinthians 1:9**

He loves us, and He wants a relationship with us!

Prayer Points:

- Continuously seek His presence. Pursue Him.
- Ask Holy Spirit for His wisdom and guidance as you walk in His will.
- Say "Yes" to His will and follow it up with obedience and submission.

Practicing the Presence of God

“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” – James 4:8

Prayer is more than a routine or a checklist—it is the heartbeat of a passionate relationship with our Creator. Practicing the presence of God is not about speaking perfectly or reciting words; it is about cultivating deep intimacy with the One who knows us completely. It is in prayer that we encounter the living God, where His presence transforms us from the inside out.

True prayer is a dialogue, not a monologue. It is a conversation where we speak honestly and listen attentively, allowing the Spirit to guide our hearts. In these sacred moments, we experience the reality of God’s nearness. It is here, in His presence, that burdens are lifted, joy is renewed, and clarity is granted.

Passion for God grows out of these encounters. The more we practice His presence, the more our souls hunger for Him. Prayer becomes a sanctuary, a place where the Creator of the universe meets the redeemed of His grace. This intimate connection reminds us that we are never alone, and that our lives are woven into His divine purposes.

Make space for Him daily. Begin your morning in dialogue, pause in His presence throughout the day, and close your day in thanksgiving. Let your heart remain tuned to His voice. In every breath, every moment, practice His presence—because communion with God is the greatest adventure and the deepest joy of the soul.

Prayer:

Lord, draw me closer to You. Help me to seek Your presence above all else and to experience You not just in words, but in the deepest places of my heart. Teach me to pray with passion, to listen with intention, and to walk in intimacy with You every day. Let my life be a reflection of Your presence. Amen.