

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Best Christmas Ever / Week 1

<p><i>“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”</i></p> <p>Jeremiah 29:11 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 1</p> <p>Have you ever hoped for something to go one way, but then it didn't? Perhaps it was that time you didn't make the team or didn't get that certain role in the school play. Whenever life doesn't go as planned, we are faced with a choice: We can put our hope in <i>our</i> plans, or we can trust <i>God's</i> plans for our lives. That's one great thing we can remember and celebrate at Christmas. God showed us thousands of years ago that He has a plan for us, and that is still true today! It's something we can always trust in. Pray today that God will show you that you can trust and hope in His plan for your life.</p>
<p><i>“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”</i></p> <p>Romans 15:13 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 2</p> <p>Christmas is a season that can be jam-packed with stuff. From big dinners and class parties to church services and over-packed schedules, it's often the busiest season of the year! And while all of those things are good and fun, when we fill our time with too many of them, we miss the chance to focus on what makes Christmas the best thing ever. We miss the chance to focus on Jesus! During this Christmas season, make an effort to make room for Jesus. Look at your schedule every week and find the time to spend with Him. Maybe journaling, praying, listening to music, or reading His Word. Whatever it is for you, give yourself time to remember what Christmas is all about this year.</p>
<p><i>“The Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.”</i></p> <p>Psalms 147:11 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 3</p> <p>One of the reasons that Christmas can be so special is that it shows us just how much God loves us. As this verse reminds us, He delights in us. His love is unfailing. And to show us that love, He sent His Son, Jesus, to Earth to rescue us. His life is the ultimate example of God's unfailing love for us, and it's certainly something we can remember and celebrate at Christmas. To remind yourself of how much God loves you and to remember what Christmas is all about, read a little more about the very first Christmas in the Bible this week. Check it out in Luke 2:1-20. You can even ask friend, Small Group Leader, or your whole Small Group to read it with you!</p>

<p><i>“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”</i></p> <p>Hebrews 11:1 NIV</p>	<p>DAY 4</p> <p>There may be moments when it is hard to put your faith in a God you can't actually see. And that's a very real feeling! But the good news is, God gives us so many ways we can see Him in our lives. Christmas is a great reminder of just that! In the lyrics of the songs we sing, in the love we feel from the people around us, in the generous gifts we receive, in the time we celebrate together at church, and in the Son that God sent to save us—all these things and more show us God at work around us. This Christmas, make a list of ways you see God in your life.</p>
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<p><i>“Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you.”</i></p> <p>Psalms 25:5 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 5</p> <p>Think about the best teacher or coach you've ever had. What qualities did he or she display? Was he smart? Was she kind? Maybe he was patient when you had questions. Or maybe she was a really great listener. Just as you have learned from a great teacher or coach, God wants to be your guide—the one you run to when you need advice or assurance. Is there a place in your life you need that help this season? Ask God for it! If not, maybe there is someone in your life who needs that hope or encouragement. Send them a text and let them know that they can turn to God. Remind them of the hope you have this Christmas season and throughout the year in Jesus.</p>
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<p><i>“The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!”</i></p> <p>Luke 2:11 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 6</p> <p>Have you known someone who just had a baby? Maybe it's your mom, or your step-mom, or an aunt, or someone in your friend's family. If you have, then you know just how exciting that time can be for a family. Now, think about what that excitement must've been like at Christmas when Jesus was born. Just imagine what it was like for Mary and Joseph. They brought into the world the baby who would save the world. And that is something worth celebrating. As you move through the Christmas season, think about ways you can really celebrate what the birth of Jesus means for you! Talk to a friend, family member, or Small Group Leader about how you plan to celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas.</p>
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<p><i>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”</i></p> <p>Luke 2:14 NLT</p>	<p>DAY 7</p> <p>One of the best ways to remember what Christmas is all about is to memorize passages of Scripture like this one. This verse can remind you of the good news of the birth of Jesus! So, try memorizing it by incorporating it into something you love: snacks! (Because who doesn't love snacks?) To help you memorize this verse, write it on a sticky note and attach it to the refrigerator or pantry door. Every time you go to grab a snack, repeat it to yourself to help you commit it to memory.</p>
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