



With Us

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

PEACE:
With Us
IN DARKNESS

| WEEK TWO |

Scripture

Open your Bible and read today's verse with your family.

John 1:6-13

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

1 John 3:1-3

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Content

Read today's devotion aloud with your family, Small Group, or simply during your personal time with the Lord.

The reason we celebrate Christmas is because Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, has come to be with us. Even though this should be a time of peace, Christmas can also be a chaotic and challenging season. Many times, it doesn't feel like the Savior of the world has come. The world can often feel like everything is dark, confusing, and broken.

Right before this passage starts, John's letter warns us about darkness. We face darkness every day—at work, in school, in our minds, and even our own families—and we should be comforted that the Bible addresses this darkness and gives us peace in the midst of it. We will experience darkness, but John tells us that there is someone who reigns over that darkness. He is the Light of the World. His name is Jesus.

The next couple verses in this passage give us a summary of Jesus's experience on earth. He was "in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him." When He came into the world, even though He was the Creator of it, the very people He created did not recognize him. In fact, they rejected him. Throughout Jesus's ministry on earth, He faced constant rejection by everyone around Him.

We like to think that we aren't a part of that crowd; that we would see Jesus and welcome Him with open arms, never to be accused of rejecting Jesus. The reality is that we reject Him all the time. We reject His presence in our schedules; we reject His direction in our relationships; and we reject His lordship in our futures. All of this rejection, for John's audience and for us, creates a lack of peace with God.

The good news in this passage, and the good news for us, is that Jesus came to restore our peace with God. Even though we lived in darkness, even though we lived in active rejection of God, the Light of the World came to give us peace—and not just peace with God, but a deep, constant relationship with Him. He says that through His sacrifice, we have been “given the right to be called children of God” (John 1:12).

Though circumstances in our lives may feel dark and tempt our hearts and minds to be anxious, we must remember that the God of peace came to be with us. As the Christmas season unfolds, step out of the dark and chaos and choose to remain in the light and peace that God so graciously gives through Christ!

Conversation Starters

Use these questions to start conversation with your family, small group, or simply to further your own understanding and application of today's scripture and devotion.

Think about a time in your life when things felt dark, confusing, or broken. Is that something you want to share? If it is, what kinds of things did you feel during those moments?

Is there any part of your life where the presence of God feels absent?

What does this passage tell us about God's desire to bring light into our darkness?

What active steps can you take to embrace the peace that God's presence brings? How do you need to surrender your time and your schedule to the Lord? How do you need to surrender your anxious areas of your thought life to the Lord?

Connections

Use the following activities and ideas throughout the coming week to further connect the lessons from today's scripture and devotion as well as deepen connections with family, friends, and community.

1. Sit in a room lit only by the light of your Christmas tree. Turn off the tree for a few seconds, then turn it back on. Talk about how the presence of light on the tree changes everything. Relate this to how the light of God's presence, made possible through Jesus, changes everything for us! Encourage your family or friends to remember this each time you look at Christmas lights this season!
2. Many people struggle to have hope and peace, even during the Christmas season. Be intentional to tell at least one person this week the reason for the hope and peace you have in your life.
3. When anxious thoughts come, focus on loving others in small and meaningful ways. Choose a small gift (think item from the dollar store such as a candy bar, toy, hair accessory, chapstick, etc. or even something that you made) to surprise a friend or family member. Attach a scripture verse that is special to you and reminds you of the peace of Jesus.

Memory Verse

Use the memory verse to lock in the biblical truth of today's lesson throughout the week.

"He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." – John 1:11-12

*Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found
favor with God.*

LUKE 1:30





CHURCH AT THE MILL