

ADVENT 2023: HOPE

This year's ONWARD Advent reflections include a Bible reading practice that helps you slow down, deepen your understanding of Scripture, and listen for God's personal communication.

Follow the prompts below to engage and encounter God through his Word.

BIBLE READING PRACTICE:

One practice that helps us slow down and read the Bible slowly (and intelligently!) is to "look around the Bible" by prayerfully considering other passages on the same theme.

This simple practice will help you discover and talk with God about the hope we have in him.

Now grab your Bible and open your heart and mind to God. Enjoy him as he speaks and leads you through the Scriptures and prompts below...

LOOK AROUND the BIBLE

Take a few slow, deep breaths.

Set your mind on God and hope.

Now read Mark 5:21-24 slowly and prayerfully twice, with a long pause for silent prayer between each reading.

Then consider this...

- In which moments of the story do you recognize a confident expectation in God (hope!)?

Slowly read and prayerfully consider these two passages that include the word hope. Pause during, or after reading to talk with God about what you find there.

Psalm 39:1-7
Jeremiah 17:5-8

- How do these passages impact your hope in God this Advent?
 - In what ways do you have hope – and in what ways do you need hope – this Advent?
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FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY:

If you'd like to go further this week, check out these passages of hope, and spend some time engaging with God about what you read.

Psalm 130
*Isaiah 8:11-17**
Matthew 12:18-21
Romans 4:18-20
Ephesians 2:12-13

- What other events, passages, or doctrines from Scripture help us understand and live with hope? (Three of my favorite hope-filled passages are 1 John 1:9, Romans 8, and Revelation 21:1-7)

The BibleProject.com is a great resource for further Bible study and reflection. Their advent video series helps us understand the biblical words of Advent. Here's the link for hope: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/yakhal-hope/>

** the ancient Hebrew words for "hope" are also translated as "wait" and "trust", as in verse 17*