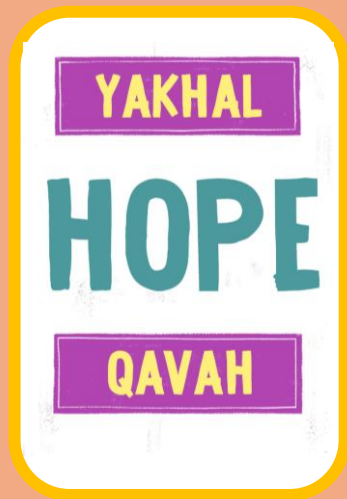


TERM 4 2025

ADVENT WORD STUDY



4 WEEKS OF SMALL GROUP STUDIES

A Small Group study series based on the Bible Project's *Advent Word Study* video series and guide. A time of prayer should accompany the session.

To access past sermons and Small Group studies, or for more information about our church, please head to the church website www.devonportcoc.com.au or our YouTube channel.

ADVENT WORD STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Advent means "arrival" and signifies the start of an event or the arrival of a person. In Christian communities, Advent refers to a four-week season of remembering and celebrating the arrival of Jesus on Earth as the long-awaited Messiah. It's a time to reflect on the unexpected nature of Jesus' humble birth and join in the anticipation of when he will come again to reunite Heaven and Earth once and for all.

From the first story to the last, the Bible is full of narratives, poetry, prophecy, biographies, and personal letters that inform our understanding of Advent. We read about God's people waiting for the promised King who would bring peace, and how they chose hope and joy despite their circumstances. As we study the Biblical meanings of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, we see Jesus as the embodiment of these words and the fulfillment of God's promises.

This in turn encourages us to wait on God's promise of Jesus' return.

This study is based on the Bible Project's Advent Word Study video series and guide. For related Advent resources from the Bible Project go to

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/advent/>

Biblical hope is based not in circumstances, but in the unchanging character of God.

Icebreaker Question

What is something you are hoping for this Christmas season?

Video Watch the Bible Project video ***Yakhal/ HOPE***

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/yakhal-hope/>

In the Scriptures

Read Psalm 130 in 2 different translations.

1. What elements of God's character bring the Psalmist comfort?
2. What does he *yakhal* (wait in hope) to receive from God?

Read Luke 2:22-33

3. Why did Mary, Joseph, Jesus and Simeon go to the temple that day?
4. Note the start of verse 22, "When the time came...". Mary and Joseph were waiting for the right time according to the law to present baby Jesus at the temple, but God's timing had a deeper purpose. What has Simeon been waiting on God for?

Read Luke 3:15-16 and Luke 4:14-21

5. How does John the Baptist fuel the people's hope by admitting he is not the Messiah?

6. In Luke 4, Jesus declares that he is the fulfillment of what God's people have been waiting and hoping for. How is Holy Spirit connected to hope in the Luke readings?

Life Application Questions

"Biblical hope is based on a person, which makes it different from optimism. Optimism is about choosing to see... how circumstances could work out for the best. But biblical hope isn't focused on circumstances... It's God's past faithfulness that motivates hope for the future. You look forward by looking backward, trusting in nothing other than God's character."- the Bible Project Yakhal/ Hope video

1. In what areas of your life does God's past faithfulness (as opposed to your circumstances) compel you to keep hoping in him?

Read 1 Peter 1:3-5

2. As we wait for Jesus' return, why do we need a "living" hope?
3. How could praise (v3) help you wait in hope?

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.

Romans 15:13

In the Bible, peace refers not only to the absence of conflict, but also to the presence of something better.

Icebreaker Question

How would you define the word “peace”?

Video Watch the Bible Project video ***Shalom/ PEACE***

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/shalom-peace/>

In the Scriptures

Read Isaiah 9:5-7

1. What words or phrases stand out to you as you read this prophetic passage?
2. According to Isaiah, how does the Prince of Peace govern his Kingdom?

The prophet Isaiah looked forward to the arrival of a future king whose reign would lead to a complete and eternal *shalom*. Isaiah’s words were fulfilled with the arrival of Jesus.

Read Luke 2:8-15.

3. Why do you think God announced the arrival of the King to no-name shepherds?
4. What does this tell you about the nature of God and his Kingdom?

Read Ephesians 2:12-19

5. Jesus offers his peace to us as a gift. How did Jesus make peace between two sharply divided groups (Jews and Gentiles), and why did he do it?

Life application questions

"[Jesus] restored to wholeness the broken relationship between humans and their Creator. This is why the apostle Paul can say Jesus himself is our 'eirene'. He was the whole, complete human that I am made to be but have failed to be, and now he gives me his life as a gift. And this means that Jesus' followers are now called to create peace."- the Bible Project Shalom/ Peace video

1. How can you bring Jesus' reign of peace (*shalom*) to situations in your everyday life, especially where you encounter conflict?
2. Read Matthew 5:9. What does it mean to be a "peacemaker"? How does the Biblical definition of peace help your understanding of this phrase?
3. Read John 14:26-27. How easy or hard do you find it to receive the gift of Jesus' supernatural peace? What is the role of Holy Spirit in receiving and living out this peace?

***The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26***

Joy is more than a happy mood. It's a life-giving choice to trust that God is who He says He is.

Icebreaker

What is something that brings you joy?

Video Watch the Bible Project video **Chara/ JOY**

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/chara-joy/>

In the Scriptures

1. Read Psalm 105: 1-8. According to this passage what enables, “the hearts of those who seek the Lord [to] rejoice” (v3)?
2. Which promises of God help you to be joyful today?

Throughout the Old Testament, God's people regularly turned to and away from God. As a result, they were exiled from their homeland and dominated by foreign nations, but the prophet Isaiah knew that sorrow and sadness would not have the final word. He looked forward to a day when God would redeem his people's pain and exchange it with joy.

Read Isaiah 49:13 and 51:11

3. What does Isaiah say will happen for God's redeemed people?

Read Matthew 2:3-11

4. How do the wise men express their joy at finding Jesus?

5. How could your shared joy lead others to worship?

Life application questions

“Human history isn’t just a joyfest. The biblical story shows how we live in a world that’s been corrupted by our own selfishness. It’s marked by death and loss, and this is where biblical faith offers a unique perspective on joy. It’s an attitude God’s people adopt, not because of happy circumstances but because of their hope in God’s love and promise.” – the Bible Project Chara/ Joy video

1. Share a time in your life where you made a choice for joy, despite difficult circumstances.
2. Read Matthew 5:11-12 and Hebrews 12:1-3
Why does true joy depend on faith in God?
3. How has endurance and perseverance been linked to joy in your own life?
4. Read Acts 16:25-34
The wise men’s joy overflowed in worship, but in Acts, Paul and Silas’s worship led to someone else’s joy. What does this say about making the choice to worship God based on who he is, rather than how we feel?

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Philippians 4:4

In the New Testament, “love,” or “agape,” refers to a way of treating people that was defined by Jesus himself. It means to seek the well-being of others regardless of their response.

Icebreaker:

What is something you love to do for others?

Video Watch the Bible Project video **Agape/ LOVE**

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/agape-love/>

In the Scriptures

Read Mark 12:28-31 and John 13:34

1. The Old Testament records the ancient Israelites struggling to follow the command to love God and others. How does Jesus' example show us what it looks like to follow the greatest command?

Read 1 John 4:7-11

2. What should motivate our love for others?
3. When Jesus arrived, God's love became an embodied reality in our world: Jesus showed it, lived it, and died for it. But more than that, God *IS* love. How does this go against the worldview that love is primarily a feeling?

Read 1 John 4:14-16 and 1 John 3:16-18

4. How does relying on God's love (1 John 4:16) help us to love with actions?
5. How does God's love living in you (1 John 4:15) show itself in practical ways in your life?

Life application questions

"The earliest followers of Jesus...looked to the teachings of Jesus and the story of his life to redefine their very concept of love." – the Bible Project Agape/ Love video

1. Read Luke 6:27-36. Jesus says that the ultimate standard of authentic love is how well you treat the person who offends you or treats you badly. How does this kind of love imitate God's character? Do you find this kind of love challenging?
2. Read the definition of love from 1 Corinthians 13:1-7. Why do you think Paul describes these very important spiritual gifts and actions (v1-3) as worthless compared to love?
3. Now read the full passage inserting Jesus' name instead of the word love (because God is love). Which of these attributes of God (v4-7) are you most thankful for today?
4. Which of these attributes do you sense God is challenging you to display more consistently in your life?

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 1 John 3:23

