

## Selected Advent Devotionals 2018

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (Free download, online, or daily email)

<https://www.pts.edu/UserFiles/File/resources/Publications/Advent%20Devotional%202018/Advent%20Devotional%202018%20-%20Print.pdf>

### Selected New Devotionals and Amazon Descriptions

1. [Celebrating Advent: Family Devotions and Activities for the Christmas Season](#), by Ann Hibbard

In our consumer culture, it can be difficult to help our kids understand the true meaning of the Christmas season. In *Celebrating Advent*, author Ann Hibbard has created a way for parents to set aside a daily time during Advent to talk with their kids about the spiritual meaning the season holds. She shares practical steps that you can take to make Christmas a more meaningful, happy experience for your family. Inspiring and creative family devotions provide a moment of peace and reflection for each evening of Advent, while fun and inexpensive project ideas help parents focus their kids' attention on what really matters at Christmas: Christ.

2. [Come, Let Us Adore Him: A Daily Advent Devotional](#), by Paul David Tripp

The wonder and awe of the Christmas season can easily get overshadowed by lights, tinsel, bows, and paper—not to mention last-minute trips to the mall and visits to the in-laws. In all the hustle and bustle, we often lose sight of what's most important. This book of daily readings for the month of December by best-selling author Paul David Tripp will help you slow down, prepare your heart, and focus on what matters most: adoring our Savior, Jesus

3. [Unwrapping the Names of Jesus: An Advent Devotional](#), by Asheritah Ciuciu

Most Christians agree that Christmas is all about Jesus, yet most of us spend little time preparing our hearts to celebrate Him. Why is this? Partly because we don't know how.

In *Unwrapping the Names of Jesus*, Asheritah Ciuciu leads readers through the four weeks of Advent (Hope, Preparation, Joy, and Love). Each week:

- Begins with an interactive family devotional that equips readers to celebrate Advent together
- Offers five daily reflections that focus on that week's name of Jesus
- Includes suggestions for fun-filled family activities or service projects

This devotional can be used by readers in their own personal worship times or as a tool to engage in family worship during the busy holiday season. Either way, participants will gain a greater sense of awe and wonder at who Jesus is.

By focusing on the person and character of Jesus throughout the Advent season, readers will prepare their hearts so that when they admire the live nativity, sit in the candlelight service, or wake up on Christian morning, they can join the faithful who sing from the bottom of their hearts, "O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"

4. [The Wonder of Advent Devotional: Experiencing the Love and Glory of the Christmas Season](#), by Chris Tiegreen

As the year comes to a close and the stress and busyness of the consumer Christmas holiday grows, it can be easy to lose sight of what the season really calls us to: worship. In today's world, is it even possible to slow down, to ponder, to wonder in the coming birth of Christ?

This Advent, recapture the mystery and beauty of the season with *The Wonder of Advent Devotional*. In this insightful and thought-provoking book, beloved devotional author Chris Tiegreen brings you into a deeper experience of this integral time in the church calendar. After completing a week of short readings to prepare your heart for the Advent season, you'll journey through December with daily Scripture readings, prompts for reflection, and guided prayer to help you savor this remarkable divine story. With

each day, *The Wonder of Advent Devotional* will reconnect you with what happened in Bethlehem long ago—and experience it anew in your life right now.

# Devotional Table Images





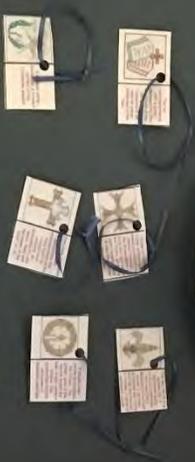
Special Advent Devotions, with a Prayer of Repentance, from the Christmas Season, by the Rev. J. C. ...

1. **Remembered Adversity, from the Christmas Season, by the Rev. J. C. ...**

2. **Remembered the Merciful of Jesus, by the Rev. J. C. ...**

3. **Learn All the Adversity, a Holy Advent Sermon, by the Rev. J. C. ...**

4. **The Merciful of Jesus, from the Christmas Season, by the Rev. J. C. ...**

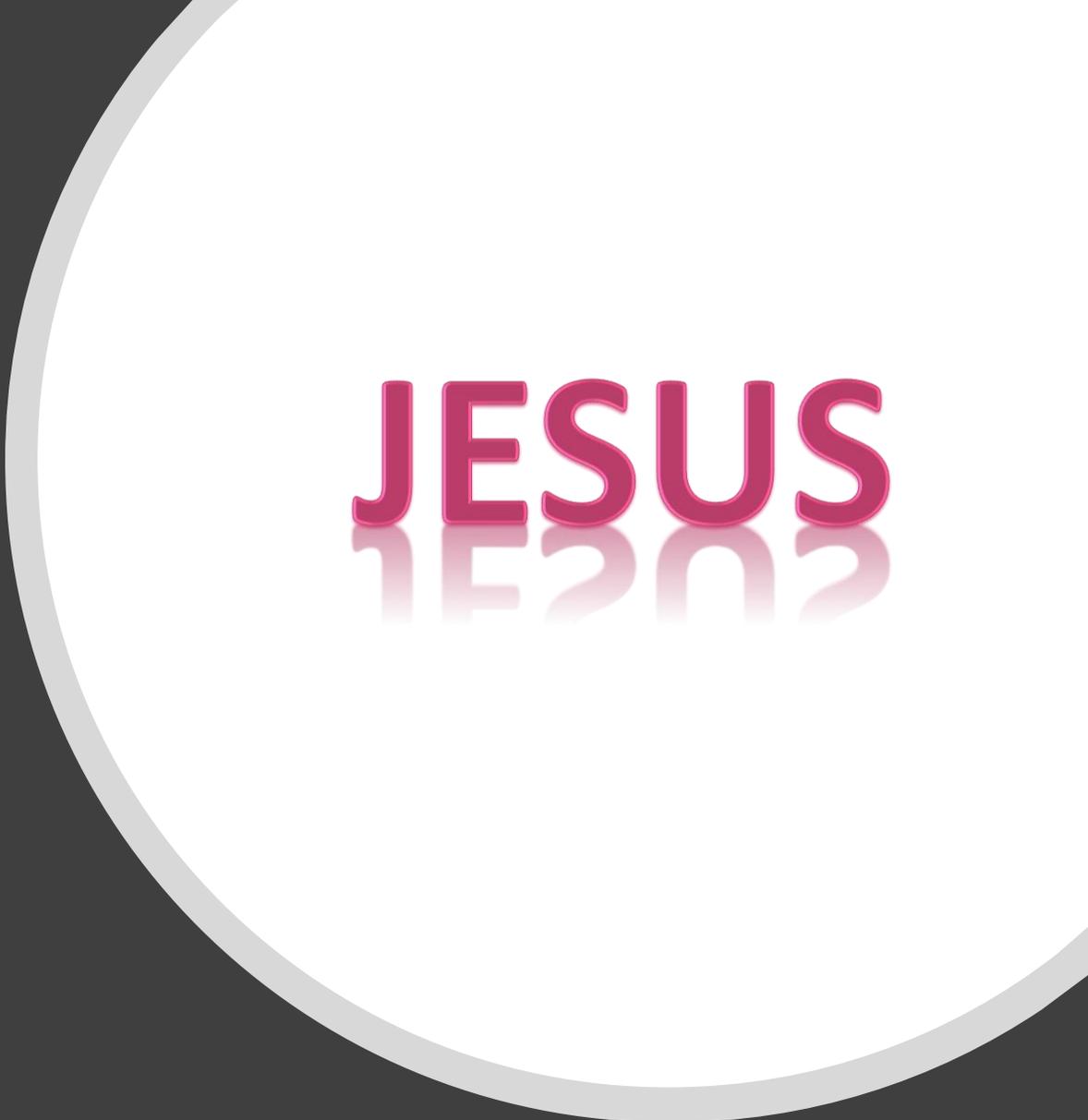




Advent

# Advent...

- The word Advent comes from the Latin 'adventus' which means 'arrival' or 'coming'
- Advent traditions vary, but common ways of observing Advent include spiritual practices, use of Advent calendars, wreaths, and candles
- Advent is a time of waiting and pausing to anticipate the coming



JESUS



# Advent: The Christian Year Begins

[What Is Advent?](#)



## A Season of Waiting and Expecting

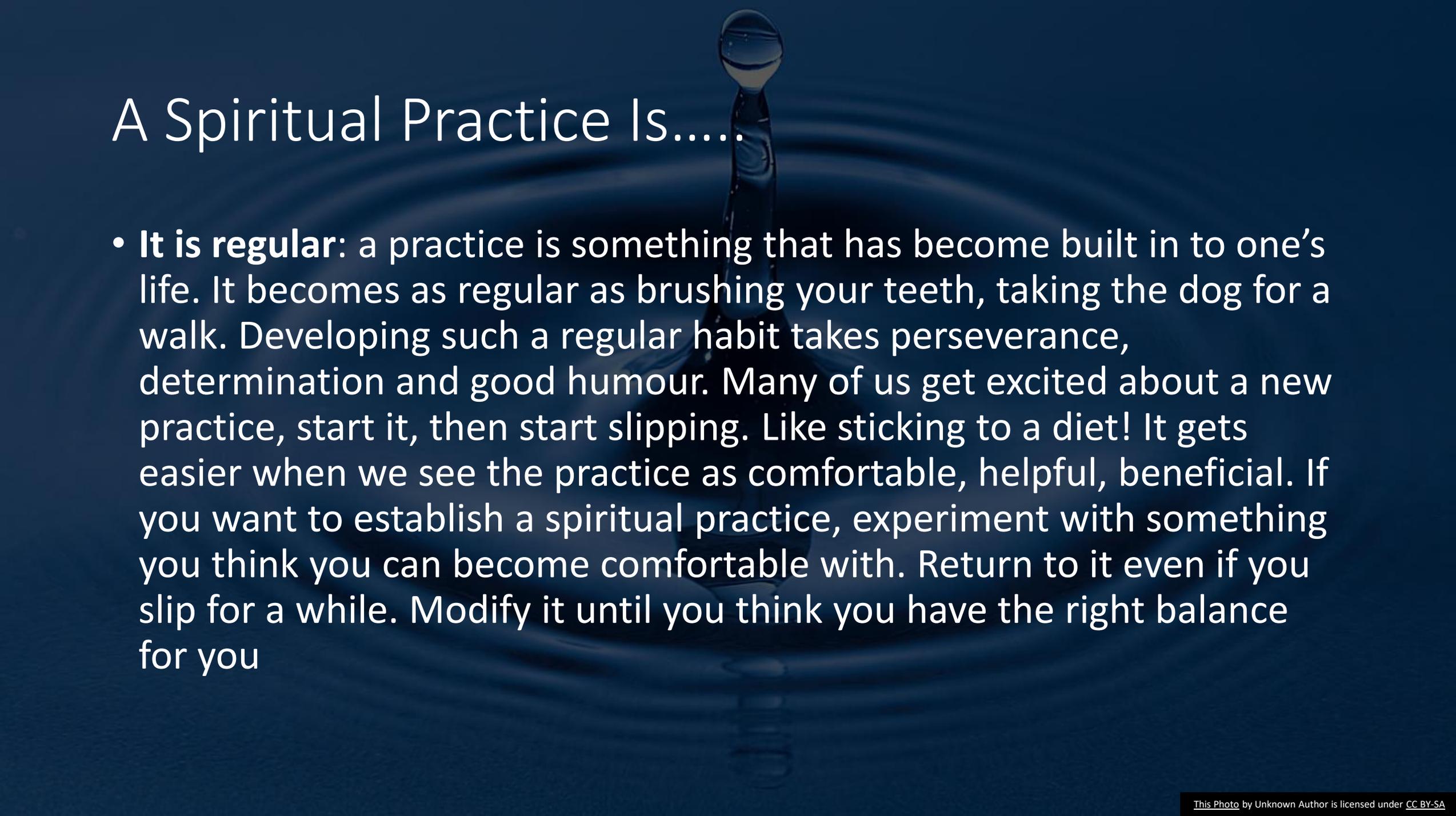
*“The season of Advent, more than any other time of the church year, invites us to embrace the **spiritual discipline of waiting**. The season of Advent will not be rushed. The Advent carols must be sung, the Advent candles must be lighted week by week, and the Advent calendar must be opened day by day. Christmas will finally come when all the **expectant** Scriptures have been read and when the baby has finally been born.”*

*Holly W. Whitcomb*

# A Spiritual Discipline Is.....

- A spiritual discipline is any regular and intentional activity that establishes, develops, and nourishes a personal relationship with the Divine in which we allow ourselves to be transformed.
- A spiritual discipline has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. The discipline/practice brings us closer to God and, as such, it leads to acts of love and compassion toward ones neighbor that brings life, health and vitality to the world.
- It includes the following components:
  - Regularity
  - Establishing a personal relationship with God
  - It lead to personal transformation

# A Spiritual Practice Is.....

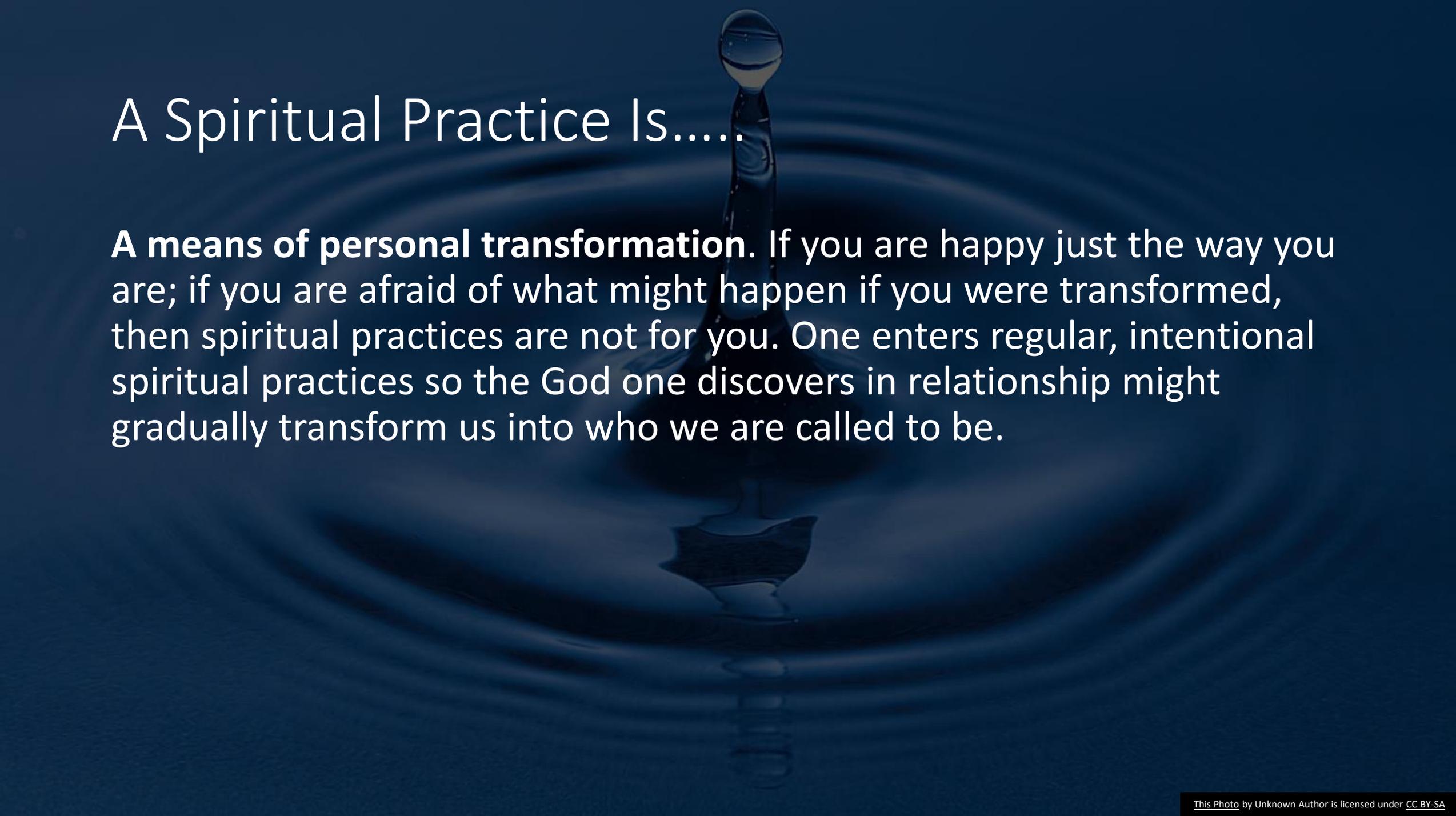
A water droplet is captured in mid-fall, suspended in the air above a pool of water. The droplet is perfectly spherical and reflects light, creating a bright highlight. Below it, the water surface is disturbed, showing concentric ripples that spread outwards. The background is a deep, dark blue, which makes the white and light blue tones of the water droplet and ripples stand out prominently.

- **It is regular:** a practice is something that has become built in to one's life. It becomes as regular as brushing your teeth, taking the dog for a walk. Developing such a regular habit takes perseverance, determination and good humour. Many of us get excited about a new practice, start it, then start slipping. Like sticking to a diet! It gets easier when we see the practice as comfortable, helpful, beneficial. If you want to establish a spiritual practice, experiment with something you think you can become comfortable with. Return to it even if you slip for a while. Modify it until you think you have the right balance for you

# A Spiritual Practice.....

**Establishes, develops and nourishes a personal relationship with the Divine:** for Christians, spiritual practice is not about developing greater inner peace (though, of course, this may be a side benefit) or about any of the other goals one might read about in “how to” books. Spiritual practice is what one intentionally and regularly engages in because one wishes to deepen a relationship with God, the Divine, the Transcendent, Jesus, the Christ, the Spirit, the divine spark within. The key word here is “relationship”: as with any relationship, a relationship with God grows through frequent contact. (Think of how you get to know a friend... it’s all about talking and listening on a regular basis, and reflecting on the experience.)

# A Spiritual Practice Is.....

A close-up photograph of a single water droplet falling into a pool of water. The droplet is captured mid-fall, forming a vertical column of water with a rounded top. The impact has created concentric ripples that spread outwards from the center. The background is a deep, dark blue, and the lighting highlights the transparency and texture of the water.

**A means of personal transformation.** If you are happy just the way you are; if you are afraid of what might happen if you were transformed, then spiritual practices are not for you. One enters regular, intentional spiritual practices so the God one discovers in relationship might gradually transform us into who we are called to be.

A winter landscape with snow-covered ground and bare trees under a cloudy sky. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn. The text "Spiritual Gifts of Waiting in Advent" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

# Spiritual Gifts of Waiting in Advent

# Spiritual Practices of Waiting in Advent

- Spiritual practices of waiting:
  - Patience
  - Loss of control
  - Living in the present
  - Compassion
  - Gratitude
  - Humility

# Spiritual Gifts of Waiting

- **Patience:** It is difficult to trust the slow unfolding of God's action as God's time is different from our own. When we are waiting, we put one foot in front of the other each morning and evening; waiting teaches us to live life in increments rather than large chunks and thus we have the lived opportunity to become more patient.
- **Loss of Control:** We are unable to bring anything to bear to change the period of waiting that we enter; The birth of God's son is about God's timing solely. Loss of control offers spiritual opportunities of depending on one another, surrendering to grief and loss,

# Spiritual Gifts of Waiting

- **Living in the present:** waiting teaches us to dwell fully where we are; when we can't control our circumstances and we can't predict the future, we have the opportunity to live in the present.
- **Compassion:** waiting together in uncertainty creates compassion; as we wait for Jesus together; the anxiety of waiting breaks down our usual barriers and opens us to the compassion of others. **Gratitude:** waiting teaches us to appreciate those pieces of our lives that have gracefully fallen into place thus, waiting teaches us gratitude.
- **Humility:** waiting often provides the opportunity to recognize that we are powerless to do anything other than wait; that powerlessness can be a spiritual opening to our vulnerability, where we realize that forces and power greater than ourselves have taken over. It is during those times of waiting that we learn humility

# Waiting Through Advent as a Spiritual Practice: How to

- **Focus** on reducing your anger and frustration about waiting
- **Take time** during periods of waiting to give thanks for your blessings
- **Practice** living in the faith that all will happen in God's time
- **Grow** through periods of waiting that bring us close to darkness
- **Release** negative images and thoughts that you have about waiting and consciously replace these with positive thoughts and hope
- **Be mindful** of times and ways you seek to control things and relax into the grace of God

# Traditions of Advent

## How we WAIT and EXPECT



- Family time
- Advent wreaths
- Catching up with distant relatives and friends
- Music
- Decorations
- Gifts
- Sharing the Joy
- Reflection
- Thinking of others or doing things for others
- Food for and from family and friends
- Devotions

# Advent Wreath

- First appeared in Germany in 1839
- Lutheran minister made wreath from a cart wheel
- 20 small red candles (weekdays)
- 4 large white candles inside the ring (Sundays)

## Symbols in the Advent wreath

- **Evergreens:** Everlasting life in the midst of winter
- **The circle:** God's unending love and eternal life
- **Holly and berries:** Jesus' blood, sacrifice, death
- **Pinecones:** New life through Jesus





# Advent Candle Tradition

A new candle is lit on each of the 4 Sundays before Christmas reminding us that Jesus is the Light coming into our dark world.

## Colors of the Four Sunday Candles

- Commonly the first, second and fourth candles are purple and the third candle is rose-colored
- Sometimes all candles are the same color (red, blue, or white)

A fifth white, often larger candle, is placed in the middle and lit on Christmas Day to celebrate Jesus' birth

H·O·P·E



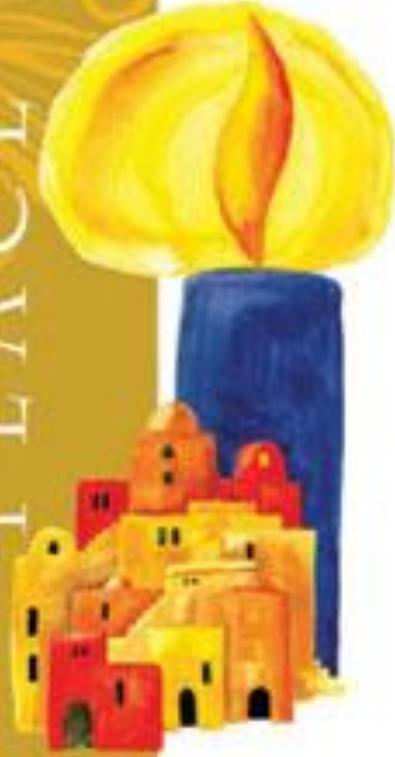
L·O·V·E



J·O·Y



P·E·A·C·E



# Advent Devotions

- **Typical formats of Advent Devotionals**
  - Scripture
  - Story or thoughts to connect scripture to daily life
  - Possibly an activity, such as music, craft, action or commitment to a future action to apply the reading to your life
  - Prayer
- **Timing and Place**
  - Alone or with others
  - Setting aside time daily in the morning, at family dinner, or evening
  - Daily or weekly
  - Perhaps making a commitment to oneself to attend church or find Christ in the activities of the Christmas season



# Family Devotions

- Short story great for mealtime
- Relatable to children of all ages (preschool through teen)
- Bible text is included (Old and New Testament related to Jesus)
- Prayer
- Discussion questions
- Song
- Further study questions for adults
- Two Advent years of devotions
- “Ornaments” you can copy for Advent calendar

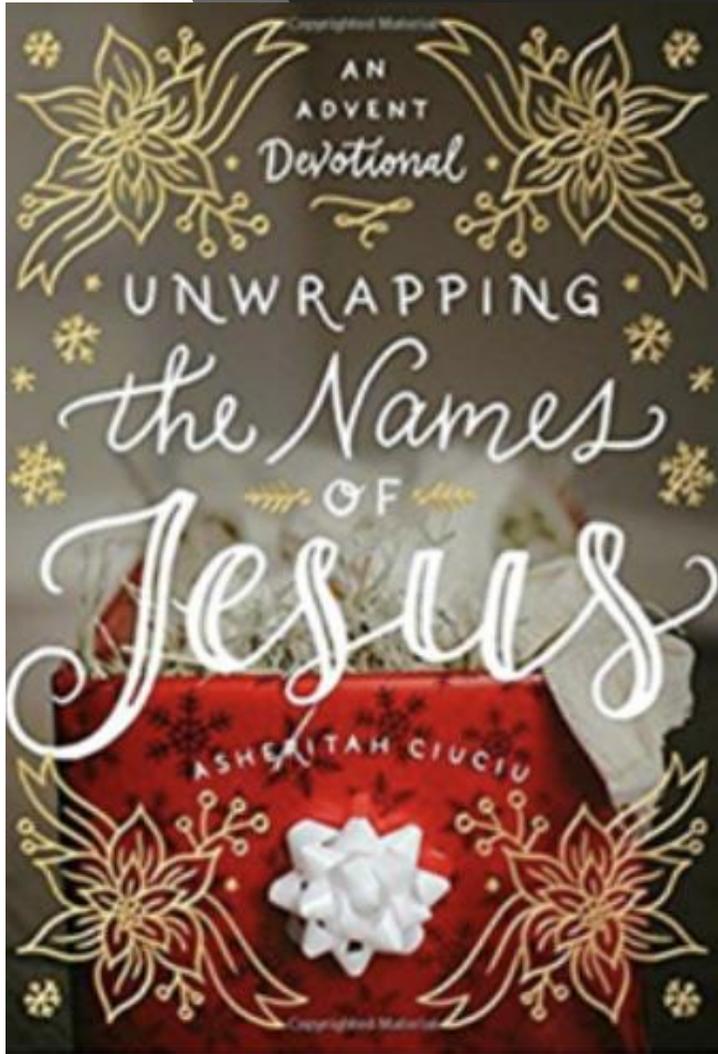


## Adults and/or Children

- Readings take about 5 minutes and can stand alone
- Bible verses are referenced for “Further Study” if you have time
- Each day has a brief “For Parents and Children” section
- Would be nice primarily for adults with occasional inclusion of children

# All Ages

- Theme discusses a name of Jesus on each weekday
- Weekly activity suggestions related to themes of candles/week (Hope, Preparation, Joy, and Love)
- Advent candle lighting on Sundays
- Additional resources at:  
[www.onethingalone.com](http://www.onethingalone.com)



## Adults and Teens

- Short daily readings relate Biblical text to its original context and its meaning for us today
- Open-ended questions to consider, alone or with a partner
- Prayer
- Bible reference
- Hymn reference
- It is fun to Google the hymns which sometimes have live video performances. There were many I had never heard before

