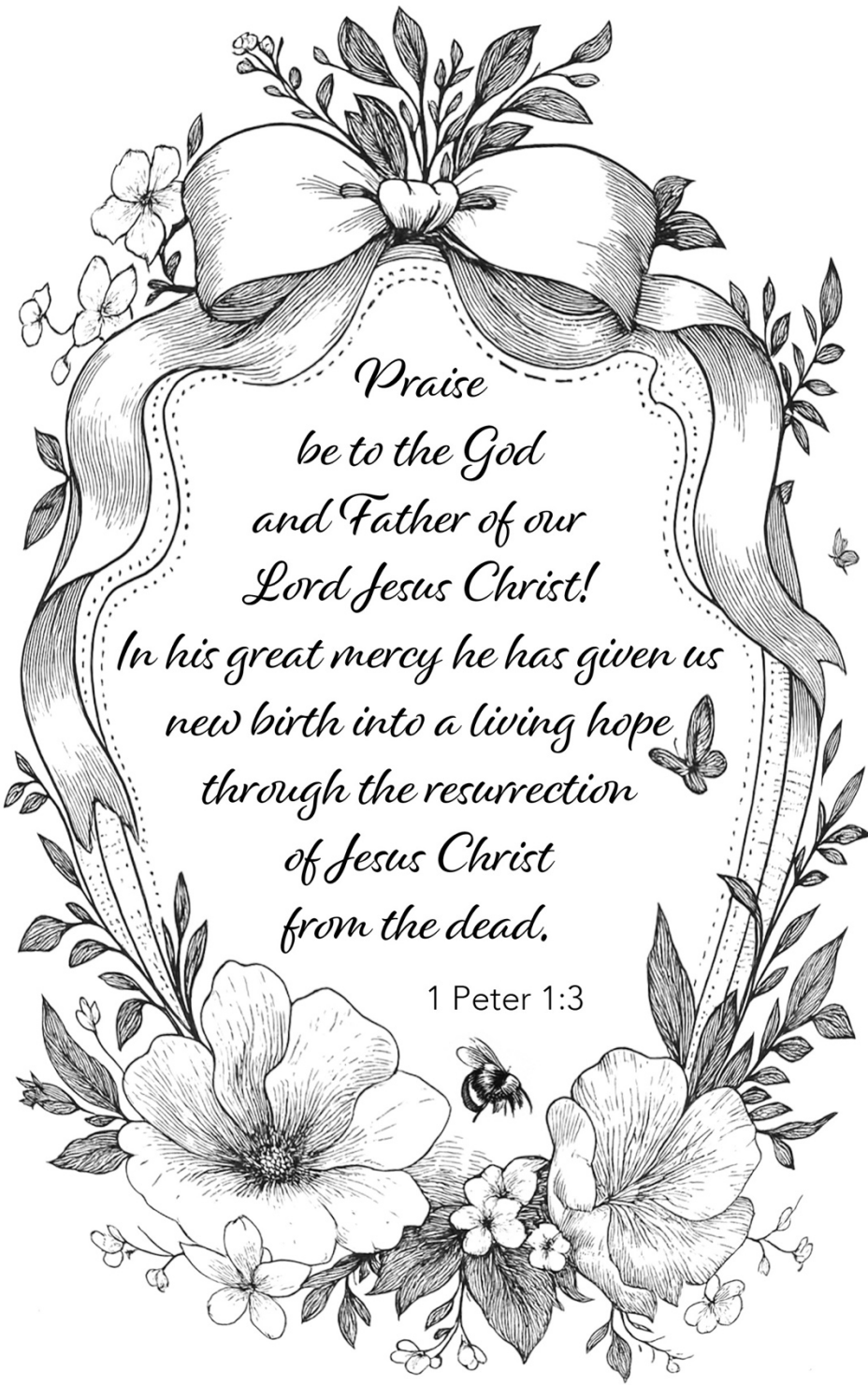


Unwrapping
the
Transforming Love
of God





*Praise
be to the God
and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ!*

*In his great mercy he has given us
new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection
of Jesus Christ
from the dead.*

1 Peter 1:3

Love That Gives New Birth



Suggested Reading: John 3:1-8

As you read Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus, notice how He describes being "born again" as a spiritual transformation, not a physical one. It's a new beginning that only God can bring about through His Spirit. Reflect on what this means in your own life—that salvation isn't about self-improvement, but about receiving new life through Christ.

Optional Reading: Titus 3:4-7

Paul reminds us that it's by God's mercy—not by our righteous acts—that we are saved. Through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, we are made new. As you meditate on these verses, let them remind you that the same mercy that saved you is still renewing you every day.



Every spring, like clockwork, my mom would launch into what she called “a deep clean.” And I mean deep. No corner was safe. Every cupboard got emptied and wiped down. Every curtain was washed, and every window was cleaned inside and out. She’d even send my dad out to tackle the garage. I used to groan at the thought of it—especially when it meant handing over a Saturday to vacuum behind furniture that hadn’t budged in months.

Back then, I didn’t get it. I thought she was just being particular. But now? I see it differently. She was making space for newness. Clearing out the mess that winter left behind so that the house could breathe again. It wasn’t just about clean—it was about fresh. Renewal.

And isn’t that exactly what God does in us? Peter reminds us that in God’s great mercy, He has given us “new birth into a living hope.” Not just a once-a-year refresh, not a gentle tidying up of our rough spots—but a whole new beginning. New birth. That’s big.

That speaks to the sinner who thinks she’s too far gone. To the one who looks at her past and wonders if God could really forgive what she’s done. To the one convinced her story is too broken, too stained, or too complicated for God to redeem.

Here’s the truth: no one is too far from the reach of God’s mercy.

After all, isn’t that why God sent His Son? He didn’t just come to preach and inspire. He came to bring life—real life, new life, a living hope. Not a



wishful kind of hope, but the kind that breathes, walks, and overcomes everything that once held us back—shame, sin, fear, and despair.

We try hard, don't we? Especially around Christmas. We want to be more patient, more generous, more grateful. We make resolutions, we promise ourselves we'll do better. But the truth is, we don't need a better version of ourselves—we need a brand-new heart. And that's exactly what God offers through Jesus.

This is where the transforming love of God meets our everyday lives. It's not about doing more or trying harder—it's about yielding to His will and receiving the gift that's already been given.

Perhaps that's why Peter calls it a living hope. It's not stuck in the past or buried under guilt. It's alive. It moves. It changes things. It shapes how we live today, how we face tomorrow, and how we walk through hard seasons.

Don't get me wrong—this isn't a license to coast through life or ignore the call to grow in godliness. Grace doesn't excuse sin—it empowers us to walk in freedom from it. We're called to repentance. And, as we're walking in freedom, we're walking away from the sin that once held us in bondage not back toward it.



Those who say, “I’m not good enough to make it to Heaven.” Or, “I’m so good, that I’ll be up in heaven.” Are missing the heart of the gospel. The gift of salvation. The depth of God’s grace. The mission of Christ—who died for the sinners like you and me.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through
faith—and this is not from yourselves,
it is the gift of God—not by works, so that
no one can boast.

-Ephesians 2:8-9

And because of his mercy and grace we’re made new.

So maybe this Christmas, instead of asking how we can do more or be better, we ask a different question: Am I living in the newness He already gave me?

Because the house may still be a little messy, the gifts might not be perfect, the kids a little too loud, and the turkey a little too dry—but none of that changes the truth: You are His. You are new. And you are held in a living hope that nothing—not even death—can take away.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.



❓ As you read Titus 3:4-7, write down two ways you see God's mercy and the Holy Spirit's renewing work still active in your life today.

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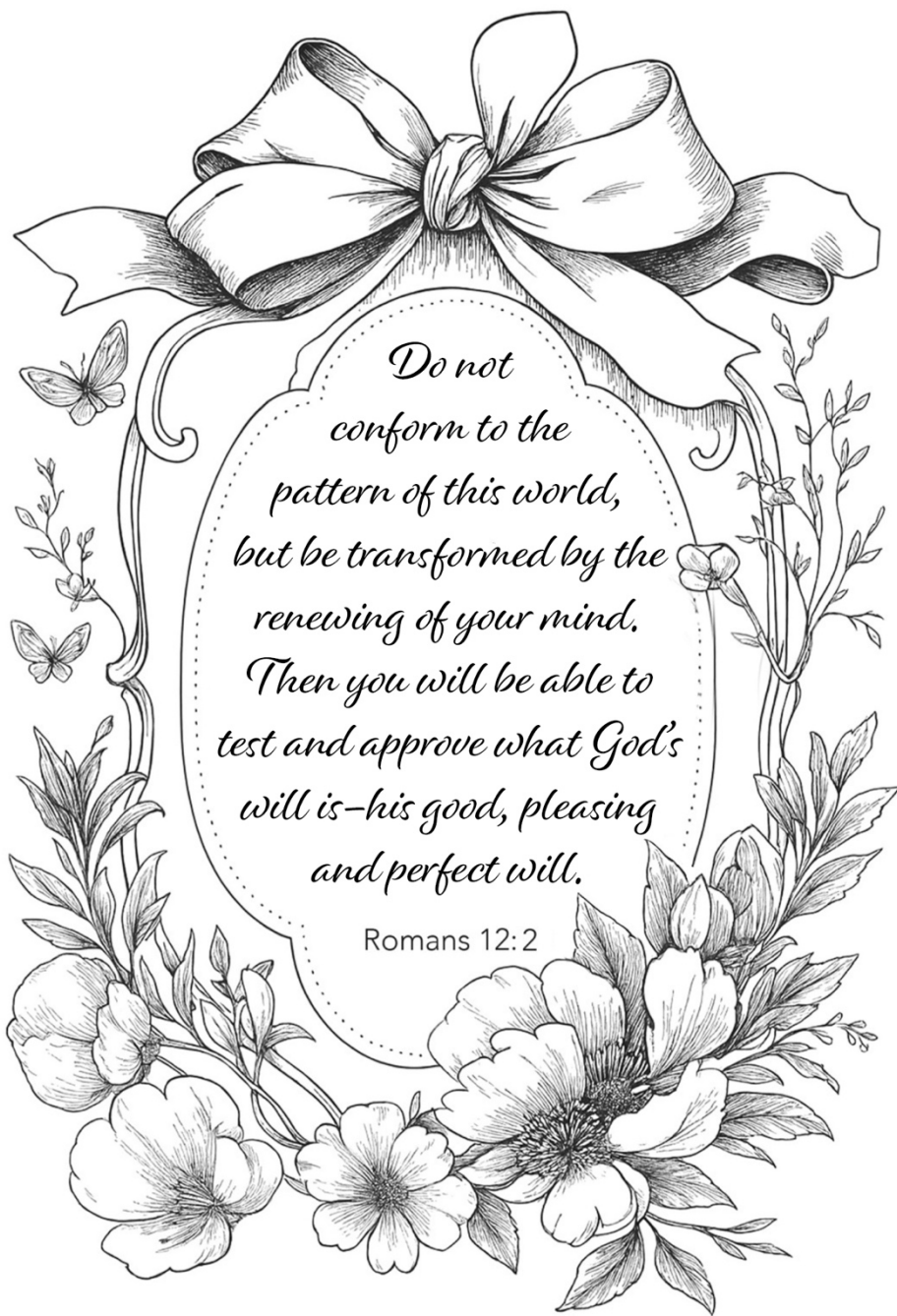
Wise Men Still Gossip Him

God's mercy is so great that you may sooner drain the sea of its water, or deprive the sun of its light, than diminish the great mercy of God.

—Charles Spurgeon

Unwrapping the Gift

This week, choose one small area of your life to “clear out” in gratitude for what God has made new—perhaps an attitude, a bad habit, or a lingering worry—and invite Him to fill that space with living hope.



*Do not
conform to the
pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the
renewing of your mind.
Then you will be able to
test and approve what God's
will is—his good, pleasing
and perfect will.*

Romans 12:2

Love That Renews Our Minds



Suggested Reading: Romans 12:1–8

As you read this passage, notice that transformation doesn't begin with us trying harder, it begins with surrender. God reshapes our thoughts, attitudes, and priorities through His Word and Spirit, teaching us what is good and pleasing to Him. Just as we clear out what no longer fits in our homes, we're called to let go of thoughts and patterns that no longer reflect who we are in Christ—making room for His truth to take root and renew us from within.

Optional Reading: Philippians 4:4-9

Paul reminds us to “think about such things”—whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and praiseworthy. These verses invite us to redirect our thoughts from anxiety to gratitude, from distraction to peace. As you read, reflect on how choosing to dwell on what honors God can steady your heart and quiet your mind amid life's noise. The Holy Spirit doesn't just remove clutter—He fills our hearts with truth that brings joy and calm.



Every December, I open the same storage bins—garlands that have seen better days, lights that may or may not work, and ornaments wrapped in tissue from decades gone by. Some still make me smile. Others? They make me wonder why I've held on to them, year after year.

That's when I start sorting—what stays, what goes, what no longer fits. Renewing our minds isn't all that different.

In this world of constant noise and technology, we're surrounded by clutter—media that feeds us ideas that don't line up with God's truth. Messages that stir comparison, fuel insecurity, and distract us from what truly matters. And, if we're not careful, our thoughts start to drift. Without realizing it, we begin to conform to what we've been consuming rather than to what God calls us to believe.

Think about it this way: if you pour water over a rock, it doesn't change—at least not at first. But if that water keeps flowing—day after day, year after year—it begins to wear the stone down, reshaping it little by little. The same thing happens with our minds. The things we watch, read, and listen to may seem harmless, but over time they can shape our attitudes, dull our convictions, and pull us away from the truth of Scripture.

The good news is that we're not left to sort through this clutter alone. The Holy Spirit helps us discern what needs to go and what should remain. He gently reveals the lies we've accepted and reminds us of what's true in Christ. Like a steady hand guiding ours, He points to the thoughts that no



longer belong and helps us replace them with the truth of God's Word. It's not just about emptying our minds of the wrong things—it's about filling them with the right ones: truth, grace, and gratitude.

That's why Romans 12:2 is so important. God doesn't just ask us to resist the pressure of the world—He invites us into something far better. He calls us to renewal. A deep, transforming work of His Spirit. Through His Word, He reveals the lies we've believed, challenges the attitudes we've absorbed, and brings light to places we've tried to hide—making room for truth, peace, and obedience to take root.

Wise Men Still Seek Him

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

—A.W. Tozer



As you read Romans 12:1-8, write down one thought pattern or attitude that God might be inviting you to release so that His truth can renew your mind.

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This kind of transformation doesn't happen all at once. It's a daily exchange—trading old thoughts for new ones shaped by the truth of Scripture. And it often shows up in the simplest of moments.

Right there, in the middle of Christmas chaos and the holiday rush, the Spirit is quietly at work—transforming you from the inside out. When everything feels a little off and expectations fall short. It's in those quiet moments that He speaks, and truth rises above the noise.

He anchors our choices in what's right.

He shifts our focus from fear to faith.

He softens our words, teaching us to respond with gentleness instead of frustration.

He shapes the way we love, serve, and forgive—especially when it's not easy.

He strengthens us through trials and gives us courage for days that feel heavy.

And as we grow in Him, He reorders our priorities, helping us live for what truly lasts.

Our role in all this? To submit to that reshaping process with every choice that we make.

It's the response we offer when opinions clash over Christmas dinner.

It's the love we show when someone tests our patience.

It's the grace we extend when others fall short.

It's choosing Scripture over scrolling, prayer over panic, gratitude over grumbling.

It's a lifelong process, but every step matters. Each time we choose truth over lies, or faith over fear, our thinking changes a little more—and so does the way we live. That's the transforming power of God's love at work within us. So as the decorations go up and the gifts are wrapped, take a moment to pause and ask yourself: What thoughts need to go? What truth needs to stay?



Let God's renewing love settle deep within your heart this Christmas.
Because when He changes the way we think, He changes the way we
live.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.

❓ As you read Philippians 4:4-9, write down two ways you can keep
your focus on what is true, lovely, and praiseworthy during the
Christmas season.

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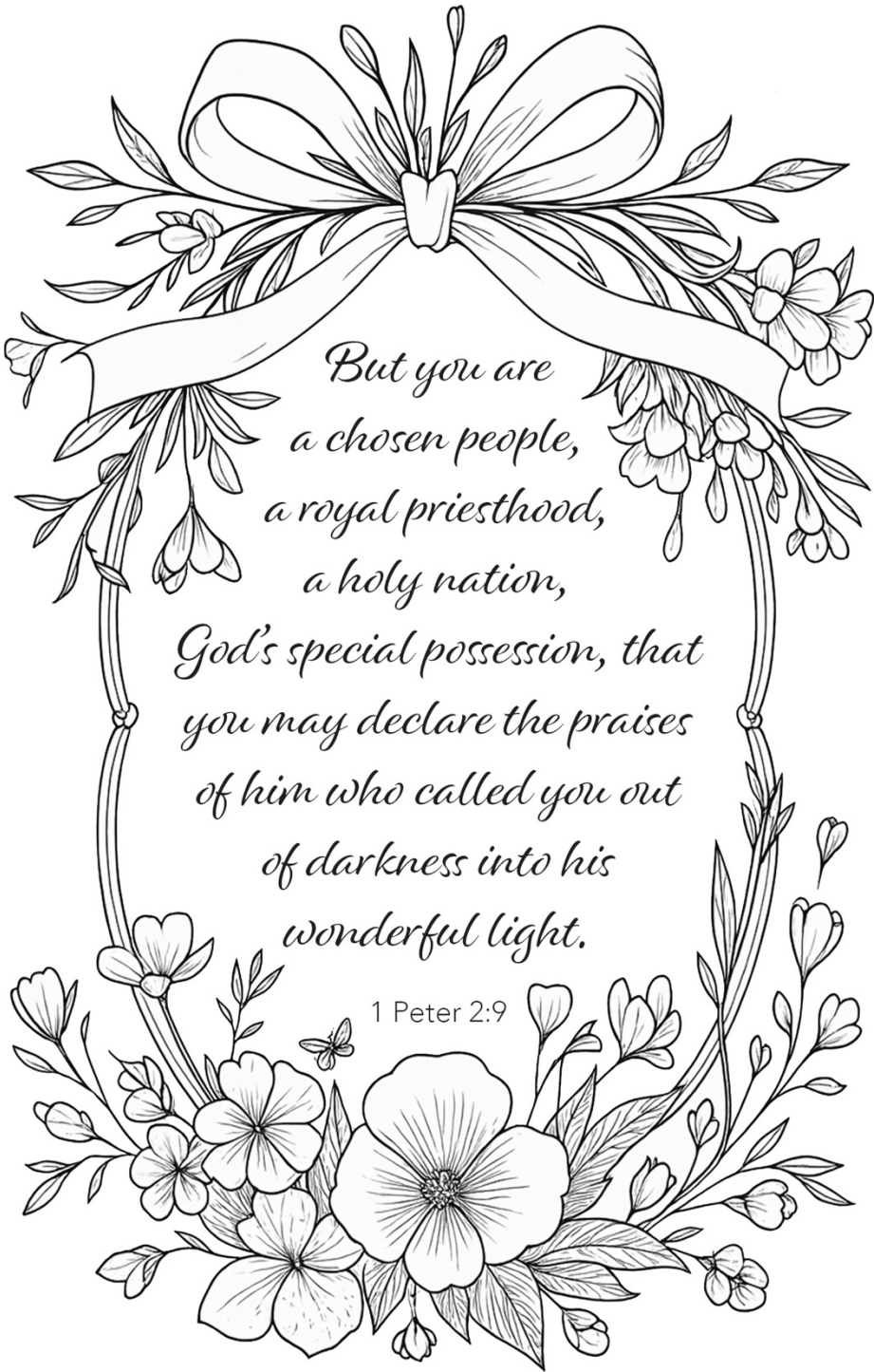
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Unwrapping the Gift

Before you scroll, shop, or start your day, pause and ask: *“What am I letting shape my thoughts today?”* Choose one truth from Scripture and keep it close—a verse on your mirror, your phone, or your heart. Each time your mind starts to wander, return to that truth. Let God’s Word do what only it can—renew, restore, and reshape you from the inside out.



*But you are
a chosen people,
a royal priesthood,
a holy nation,
God's special possession, that
you may declare the praises
of him who called you out
of darkness into his
wonderful light.*

1 Peter 2:9

Love That Calls Us Out of Darkness



Suggested Reading: John 8:1-12

As you read this scripture, notice how the story shifts from shame to freedom, from hiding in the dark to walking in the light. That's what God's love does—it exposes what's broken, not to condemn, but to heal.

Optional Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

Hundreds of years before Christ was born, Isaiah prophesied that “the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” This passage points straight to the birth of Jesus—the Light of the World. As you read, let it remind you that Christmas was never about temporary brightness, but eternal light breaking through the darkness for all who believe.



Every Winter, as the days grow short and the evenings stretch out, I find myself chasing the light. Even now, I'm sitting in my bedroom by the large picture window soaking in as much sunlight as I can before it dips behind the horizon. Before long, the house will grow dark once again. That's when I start flipping switches—one in the kitchen, another in the living room, and a cozy glow by the hallway. It's not just about seeing better. It's about feeling warmer. Safer. Less alone.

There's something deeply comforting about light, isn't there? It brings peace. It brings clarity. It reminds us that the darkness doesn't win. We weren't made for the dark, and so our hearts long for something more—something steady, something true. Light speaks to that longing. It reassures us that even in the hardest seasons, God is ever-present, always near.

And that's exactly what Scripture is telling us when Peter says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

That's real-life truth.

You see, Christmas isn't just a feel-good story—it's the story of light breaking through the darkness. It's about the moment heaven reached down into a hurting world to rescue mankind. It's about a love that found us right where we were—lost, confused, stuck in patterns we couldn't shake—and called us into something brand new.



Let's go back to the shepherds. They were just doing their job—out in the cold, in the dark, watching their flocks like they had a hundred nights before. But then, out of nowhere, “the glory of the Lord shone around them” (Luke 2:9). The night lit up. Heaven interrupted their routine, and the message was clear—one that overcame the darkness, and still does today: “A Savior has been born to you” (Luke 2:11).

Darkness shows up in different ways. For some, it's guilt from choices we wish we could undo. For others, it's anxiety that just won't let go, grief that sneaks up unexpectedly, or bitterness that's settled so deep in our bones it feels like a part of us now. But here's the good news: Jesus didn't come to shame us for being in darkness. He came to rescue us from it.

And that rescue? It's not just a one-time moment of salvation. It's a daily invitation—a daily calling. He's still calling us out—out of what's heavy, out of what's hidden, out of what's hurting us—and into His marvelous, healing, transforming light.

❓ As you read John 8:1-12, write down one way you've experienced Jesus bringing freedom into your life—where His forgiveness has lifted the weight of shame.

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Wise Men Still Seek Him

The closer you walk with God, the more of His light you see—and the more of His light you reflect.

—Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

Paul put it this way: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). That means we don’t have to be defined by the darkness of our past. When His light fills us, it changes everything—from our attitudes to our choices to the way we see other people.

Maybe this year, Christmas looks different for you. Maybe it’s been filled with more tears than laughter, more silence than song. Can I remind you of something? The same light that broke through the silence in Bethlehem is still shining now. And it’s shining for you.

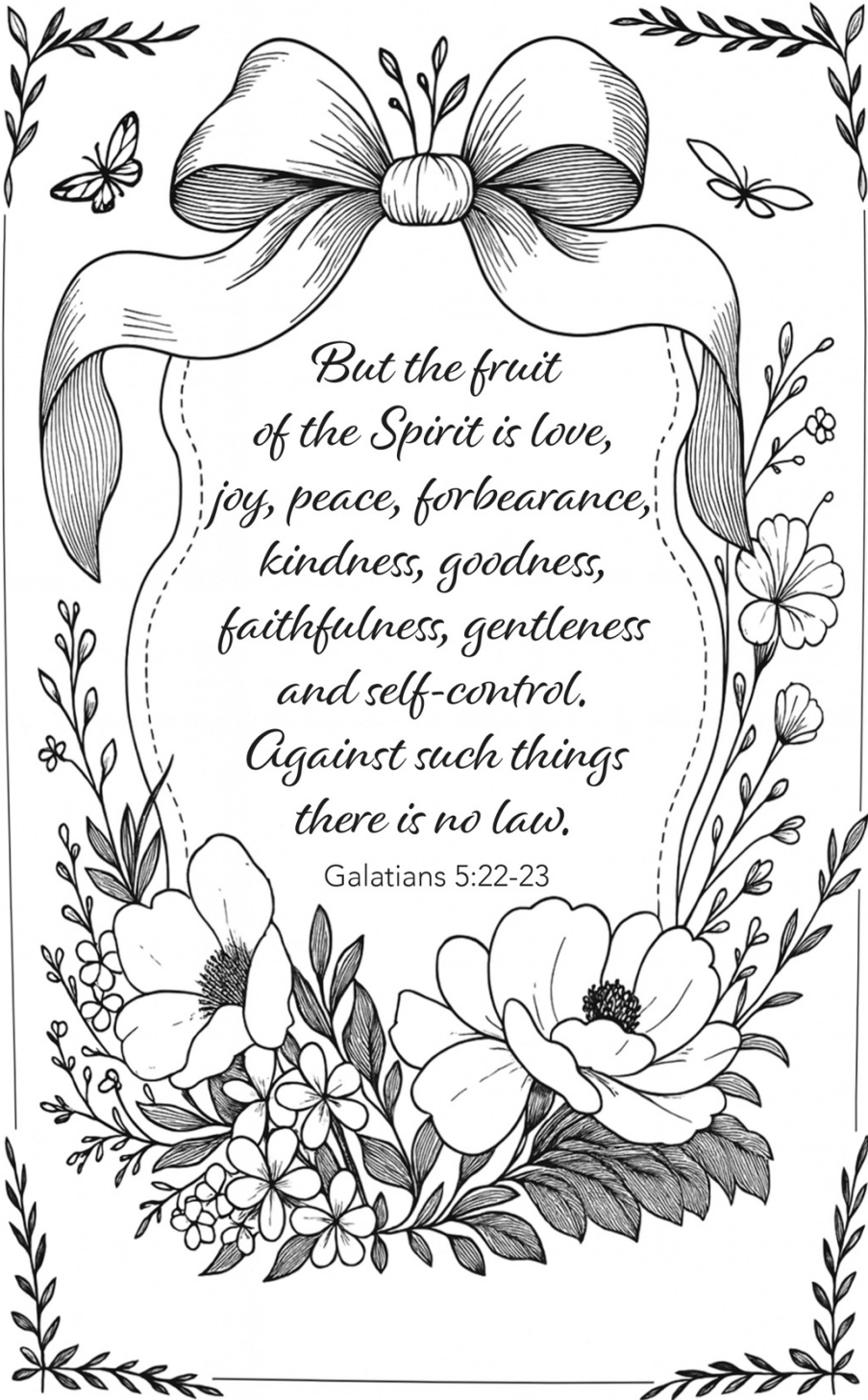
So, when you see those twinkling lights on your tree? Let them be a reminder. A reminder that Christ came to overcome darkness—both around us and within us. His love is still calling. Still transforming. Still inviting us to step out of the dark and walk in His wonderful light.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.



Unwrapping the Gift

Spend a few quiet minutes in prayer today asking God to reveal any area of your life that's still hidden in darkness—an attitude, a fear, or a wound that needs His light. Then take one step toward obedience or healing. Remember, walking in the light isn't about perfection—it's about presence. His presence with you, and your willingness to walk with Him.



*But the fruit
of the Spirit is love,
joy, peace, forbearance,
kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness
and self-control.
Against such things
there is no law.*

Galatians 5:22-23

Love That Cultivates The Heart



Suggested Reading: Psalm 1:1-6

As you read this Psalm, notice the contrast between a life rooted in the Word and one swept up by the world. Growth in the Spirit often looks like this—steady, unseen, yet nourished by His presence. When we release control and let God shape us through every season, our roots sink deeper, and His fruit becomes evident in our lives.

Optional Reading: John 15:1-8

Jesus calls Himself the true vine and the Father the gardener. He prunes every branch that bears fruit so it will be even more fruitful. This is what the Spirit does within us—trimming away pride, fear, and selfishness so His life can grow in us. As you read, reflect on what God may be pruning in your heart this season.



Every year, around mid-November, I notice a shift—not just in the weather, but also in me. The sun fades a little earlier, the trees let go of their leaves... There’s this quiet pause in the air, like everything is holding its breath before Christmas begins.

Most people get excited about peppermint mochas and Hallmark movies. I love those too, but if I’m being honest, the transition stirs something deeper in me. I miss the color of spring, the light of long summer evenings. There’s a part of me that quietly grieves the loss of warmth and growth. And yet—every time I look out at those bare branches against the cool winter sky, I sense the Lord inviting me to something quiet and good. Something deeper.

Trees don’t fight the changing seasons. Like an open hand releasing its grip, they let go of their leaves and let God have His way. And in doing so, they make room for what’s coming next.

Ecclesiastes 3:6 says there’s “a time to keep and a time to cast away.”

Trees seem to understand that. They don’t hold onto Summer or rush into winter. They simply yield to His plan. And in their surrender, something beautiful happens—the colors grow more vibrant, the hues are intense. It’s in that letting go that their beauty unfolds. That’s what life in the Spirit looks like—a faithful, steady, life giving renewal. And isn’t that how Christmas began?



A young virgin, knowing the journey ahead would be a difficult one, said “yes” to God. She loosened her grip on this world—and followed His lead. And in the quiet surrender of a life bending low, something beautiful happened.

Humility carried God’s glory. Surrender gave birth to His Son.

And the same Spirit who overshadowed Mary—the One who brought life into the quiet womb of a virgin—is the very Spirit who lives in you now.

Let that sink in for a moment.

He’s not distant. He’s not here one moment and gone the next. He’s ever present—guiding your steps and refining your faith. Right there in the midst of everyday moments, the Spirit’s at work cultivating the soil within. Pruners in hand, He quietly trims away pride, arrogance, selfishness, fear... shaping you into the likeness of Christ.

And that transformation? It happens when you open your hands to let God take the lead.

And He does.

Teaching us patience when plans fall apart.
Kindness when the conversation turns sharp.
Faithfulness when no one sees the quiet way you keep serving.
Gentleness when the kids are bouncing off the walls and you just burned
the sweet potatoes—again.

❓ What three things does Psalm 1:1-6 reveal about a person who
surrenders to God's ways?

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But here's the truth: growth doesn't come without surrender. Like the trees
shedding their leaves, we're invited to release the things we hold onto—
control, fear, pride, resentment. That's when the real change begins. The
fruit might take time to grow, but it's budding.

So as you hang the lights and wrap the gifts, pause for a moment. Ask yourself what God is refining in you. What is He molding? What is He reshaping?

Because while the candles and wreaths are lovely, they'll never compare to hearts transformed by the Spirit of God.

A transformation that began long ago.

That night in Bethlehem, God moved in a way no one expected. The King of Kings entered the world in humility—wrapped in cloth, resting in a manger. And though His arrival was quiet on earth, heaven rejoiced. Angels filled the night sky with praise, declaring, “Glory to God in the highest.” The same Creator who spoke galaxies into being chose to come through the surrender of a young virgin and the obedience of a faithful heart. That’s where the miracle began—not in strength, but in stillness, not in striving, but in surrender.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.





How does the humility and surrender in Mary's "yes" to God shape the way you approach Christmas and your walk with Him today?

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Wise Men Still Seek Him

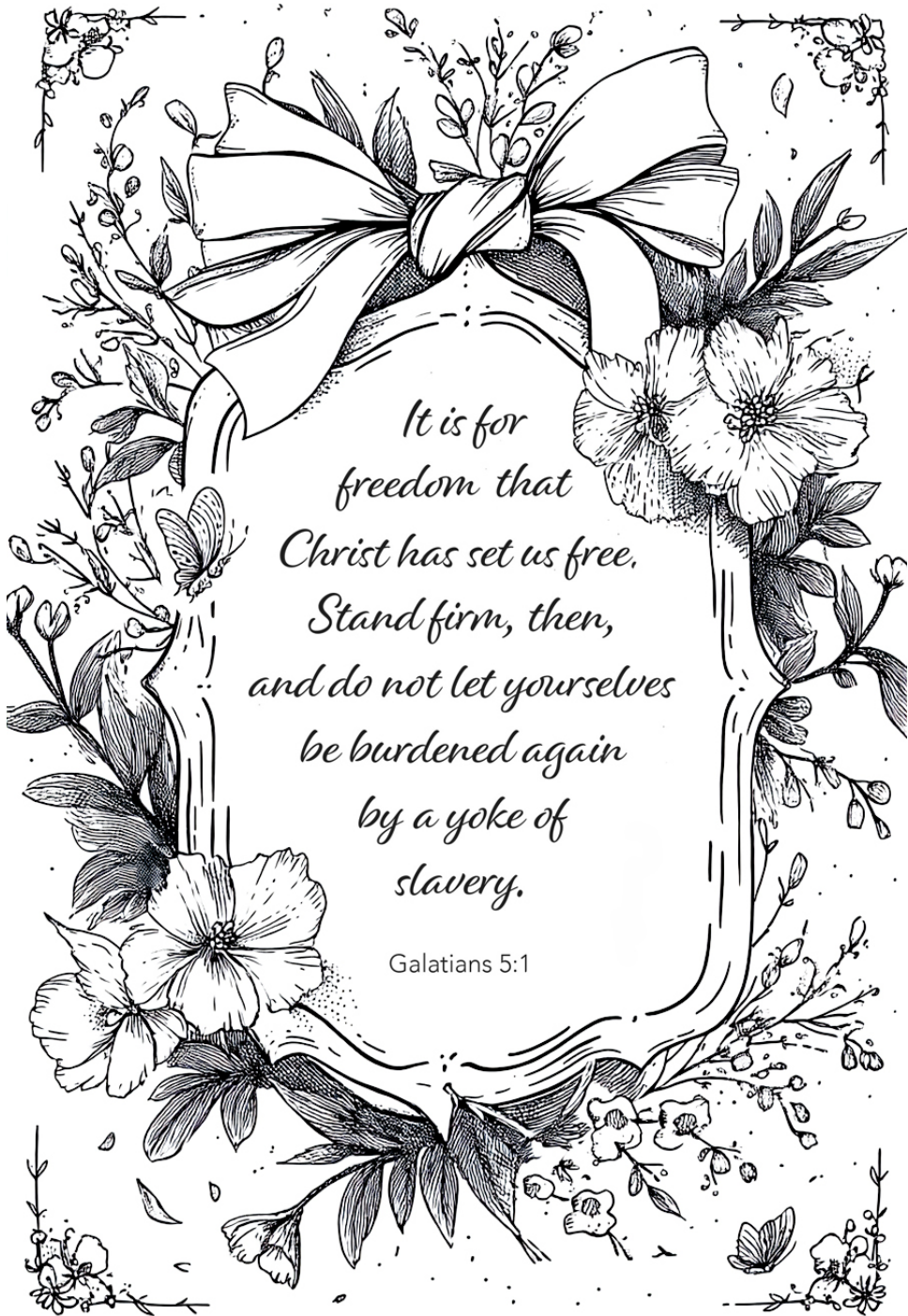
The Spirit of God first works within us before He works through us.
A surrendered heart is the seedbed of lasting fruit.

—Henry Blackaby



Unwrapping the Gift

Ask God to show you one area where He's inviting you to loosen your grip—an attitude, a fear, or a habit you've been holding too tightly. Write it down and pray, "Lord, I yield this to You." Then trust that—just like the changing seasons—He's using this moment to grow something beautiful in you.



*It is for
freedom that
Christ has set us free.
Stand firm, then,
and do not let yourselves
be burdened again
by a yoke of
slavery.*

Galatians 5:1

Love That Breaks Chains



Suggested Reading: Acts 16:22-34

As you read the story of Paul and Silas, picture those chains hitting the ground. That's what God's love does—it breaks what binds us. It brings light into the darkest places and freedom into the most hopeless hearts.

Optional Reading: Galatians 5:1-6

Paul reminds believers that “it is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” This passage calls us to stand firm in that freedom—to resist the temptation to return to old patterns of guilt or legalism. As you read, let it remind you that freedom in Christ isn't earned—it's received.



There's a story—I'm sure you've probably heard it. It's the one about a bird, so accustomed to his cage, that even after the door was finally opened, he wouldn't leave. He'd hop over to the edge, look out at the open sky, and then pull right back again. The cage was more familiar than freedom was to him. He forgot how to fly. Some of us know that feeling too well.

Jesus opened the door. He paid the price. The way is clear. And yet, there we are—standing still, hearts hesitant, feet planted in old patterns. Not because we're not free, but because we've forgotten how to live like we are.

Maybe it's guilt that keeps us caged. Or shame from something in the past that you've already taken to the Lord—more than once. Maybe you're stuck in the cycle of trying to earn God's approval, forgetting that Christ already earned it for you. Friend, you're not trapped. You're not caged. But you may be living like you are.

Galatians 5:1 reminds us: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." That freedom isn't wishful thinking. It's not a warm, fuzzy idea to lean on in hard times. It's real. It's practical. And it's available right now—for you, right in the middle of your life.

But don't get me wrong—freedom isn't a license or an invitation to sin. It's power that's released us from the grip of sin itself. It's freedom from guilt, from striving, from the need to earn God's favor. And so, we don't have to be driven by our fear, held captive by our shame, or held hostage by the sin that once defined us.



Still, even as believers, we tend to slip the chains back on. I've been there, and I know what those chains feel like. Six miscarriages in a row. And the chains that I put on? The heaviness of guilt. It must be my fault. God is punishing me for who I was and what I did. And that's what I carried around until someone stopped me in my tracks to remind me of the cross.

Remember that old chorus, "It brings strength to me when I worship Thee, it will break the bands as I lift my hands...?" Or the Christmas hymn we know so well: "O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel?" The words are beautiful—but they're also deeply personal. They remind us

that the freedom we long for has already come. Chains break when we worship because worship re-centers our hearts on truth.

Jesus paid the price. He carried that weight. He broke the bands of sin and shame, so we don't have to carry them. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not this Christmas.



❓ As you read Acts 16:22-34, write down one truth this story reveals about God's power to bring freedom and joy even in the middle of difficult circumstances.

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When the angel told Joseph that Mary would give birth to a son, he said, “You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). He wasn’t just giving Joseph a name to call the baby—he was declaring who this Child was and what He came to do. The name itself reveals His mission. Everything about Jesus’ life—His words, His works, His death, and His resurrection—fulfills that meaning: He came to save. And in that salvation is freedom. Every step He took, every word He spoke, every nail He bore—it was all part of your rescue.

So, this Christmas, while you’re wrapping gifts or lighting that candle in the window, let it be a quiet reminder: you are not who you used to be. You are not stuck. You are not alone. You are free.

Free to live forgiven.

Free to rest in grace.

Free to walk in God’s love—without the weight of shame.

The chains are broken. We’ve been set free.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.

Wise Men Still Seek Him

Jesus came not only to break the chains of sin but to destroy the prison itself. When He sets you free, you are free indeed.

—Tony Evans



Unwrapping the Gift

Take a moment today to identify one “chain” that’s been weighing on your heart—guilt, fear, shame, or striving. Write it down, and beside it, write the words “It is finished.” Then thank Jesus for the freedom He’s already given you, and choose to walk today as someone who’s free.



As you reflect on Galatians 5:1-6, write down one or two ways these verses remind you that the freedom Christ gives isn't just from something—but for something.

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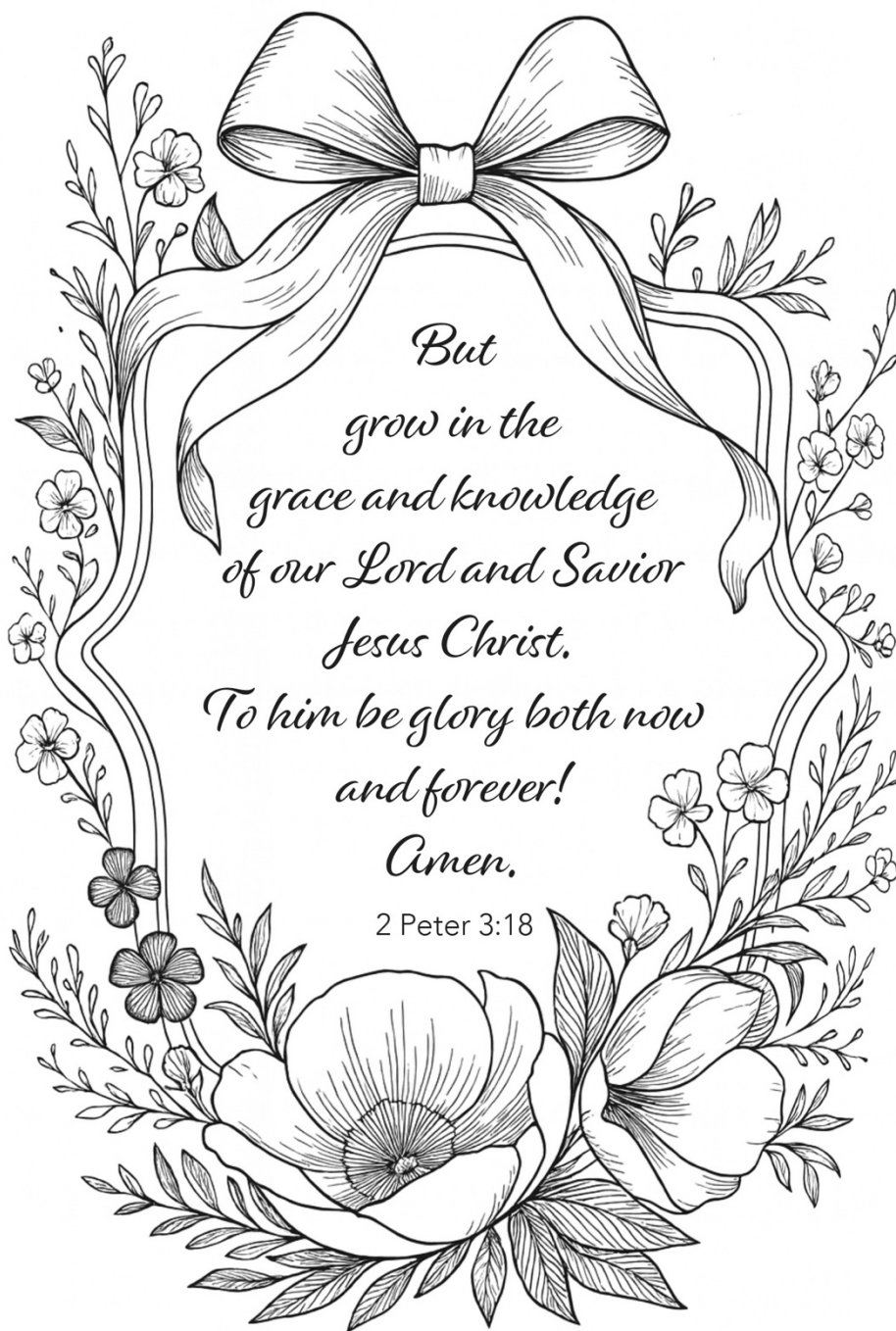
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*But
grow in the
grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ.*

*To him be glory both now
and forever!*

Amen.

2 Peter 3:18

Love That Helps Us Grow in Grace



Suggested Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

In these verses, Paul paints a picture of what a life shaped by grace looks like: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love binding them all together. It's not instant or effortless—it's cultivated day by day through the Spirit's work in us. As you read, think of these virtues like the finishing touches in the renovation of a heart being made new. Grace isn't just something we receive—it's something we live out in the way we treat others.

Optional Reading: Titus 2:11-14

Paul writes that “the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.” Grace doesn't just save us—it trains us. As you read, notice how Paul describes grace as both a gift and a teacher. It's through that daily instruction—moment by moment, choice by choice—that the Spirit shapes our hearts to reflect Christ.



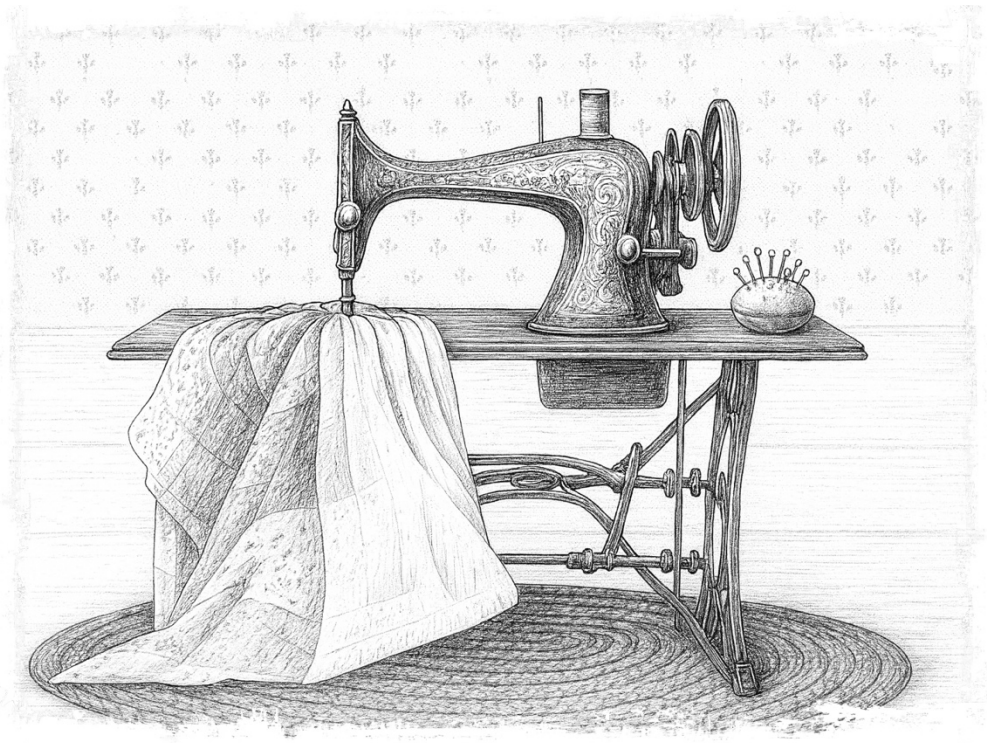
I'll always have fond memories of the first house bought—a little bungalow on the corner of the street, just big enough for a family of three. It wasn't anything special at first, but in our early twenties, we had the energy and the heart to make it feel like home.

I loved wallpaper. My husband? Not so much. He wasn't fond of corners lifting or seams peeling—especially when a curious toddler was helping the process along. It seemed like every day I was painting walls, gluing paper, or sewing curtains for the house. Hardwood floors, a retro kitchen, and a skylight in the attic were just a few of the many changes we made.

It didn't happen overnight, but day by day, little by little, that house was transformed. Every repair, every brushstroke, every small act of care made it feel more like home.

As I got to thinking about that today, I was reminded of a deeper kind of transformation—the Spirit's work within our hearts. It's the small, steady changes that shape us the most. You know—the ones we barely notice until we look back and realize just how far we've come.

There's a transformation that takes place when we come to Christ, but it doesn't stop there. The work of the Spirit continues. And while He's shaping and molding our hearts, He's teaching us patience, humility, forgiveness, and trust. These lessons don't always come easy, but oh, how they strengthen the soul!



Peter reminds us,

But grow in the grace and knowledge of
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

-2 Peter 3:18

Growth in grace is slow and steady work. It's choosing kindness when someone cuts in line on Christmas Eve and you're already running late for the party. It's exercising patience when you're sitting next to an opinionated in-law at Christmas dinner. It's extending forgiveness when you'd rather stay hurt. It's offering grace when you're the only one who wasn't invited to a party. It's learning to be content when your Christmas budget leads you to the dollar store. It's trusting God when you don't see how things could possibly work out.



As you read Colossians 3:12-17, write down one way you've seen God's grace shaping your character through small, everyday choices.

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It's in those everyday choices that His transforming love quietly takes root. Day by day, little by little, He's repairing and restoring from within.

So how do we start growing? Not by striving harder, but by staying closer.

Growth happens when we...

- Open His Word – letting Scripture renew our minds and anchor our hearts in truth.
- Spend time in prayer – talking with God honestly and listening for His direction.
- Walk in obedience – choosing His way even when it costs us something.
- Worship often – turning our focus from the temporary to the eternal.

- Stay connected to His people – encouraging one another and sharing life together.

Just as light brings color into a room, His presence brings warmth and life to the soul.

And if you ever feel like you're not growing fast enough, remember this: God is at work in the small things. Each act of surrender, every moment of faithfulness, every quiet prayer—He's using them all to shape you. You may not notice the change day by day, but over time, grace leaves its thumbprint on your heart.



And so, this Christmas, don't just look at what you have—look at where you've been. Stop and take a moment to see where God has taken you.

Maybe you've walked through a season that once felt impossible—yet here you are, stronger in faith.


Maybe a prayer that wasn't unanswered the way that you hoped led to something better than you imagined.

Maybe forgiveness has softened what once was hard, or peace has settled where worry used to live.

Each step tells a story of His faithfulness. Each change, a reminder of His unfailing, transforming grace.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.



 As you read Titus 2:11-14, write down two ways you can reflect the transforming grace of Christ in your interactions with others during this Christmas season.

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Wise Men Still Geek Him

Discipleship means personal, practical identification with Christ. It means making His outlook our outlook, His aims our aims, His values our values.

—J.I. Packer

Unwrapping the Gift

Choose one “growth habit”—reading Scripture, prayer, obedience, worship, or fellowship—and give it your intentional focus this week. Don’t rush it. Just show up with a willing heart and let God do the shaping. Remember, every moment spent with Him is a moment of growth in grace.



*And we all,
who with unveiled
faces contemplate the
Lord's glory, are being
transformed into his image
with ever-increasing glory,
which comes from
the Lord, who is
the Spirit.*

2 Corinthians 3:18

Love That Makes Us Like Him



Suggested Reading: Exodus 33:12-23; 34:29-35

As you read, this Scripture, notice that Moses didn't shine because of effort or achievement. His radiance was the result of his proximity to God. Likewise, God's presence reshapes us from the inside out when we spend time with Him.

Optional Reading: 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

Paul connects Moses' encounter on the mountain to our own life in Christ, writing that "we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory." As you reflect on these verses, remember: transformation isn't instant—it's continual. The more time we spend in His presence, the more His character shines through us.



It was one of those afternoons when you just need to get out of the house. A little adventure. I had heard about a quaint little boutique a few towns over—maybe from Facebook, maybe the grapevine—and decided it was the perfect day for a road trip. So I grabbed a friend, hopped in the car, and drove down to Lockport.

The moment I walked through the door, I was in trouble—in the best kind of way. Vintage dresses everywhere. Ruffled hems, floral fabrics, patent leather Mary Janes—they even had cotton petticoats. It was the kind of store that feels like it was made just for you.

It wasn't long before I turned to the woman next to me and said, "If only I were smaller like you—I could wear anything I wanted."

Without missing a beat, a saleswoman turned toward me, smiled, and said, "Your body is the least interesting thing about you."

I paused. What a thing to say—and yet it landed in just the right spot.

It reminded me of all the things that truly shape a woman: the warmth in her smile, the way she listens, the quiet strength in her prayers, the grace she offers when it's undeserved. It's her compassion, her resilience, her faithfulness. That's what people remember. Those are the interesting things about us.

And more than that—it's the presence of God within her. Remember Moses? When he came down from Mount Sinai after meeting with God, his face was radiant. He didn't even realize it, but the people



around him saw it clearly. That glow wasn't something Moses manufactured on his own—it was the result of being with God.

Likewise, when we spend time with God, we begin to look different. It's not that our faces radiate light—it's that our hearts do. His presence softens our words, steadies our spirit, and fills our lives with quiet evidence of His love. That's the difference people see.

That same grace has changed people since the beginning of time. Think of Jonah—running from God one moment, walking in obedience the next. Or the woman at the well, who came to draw water in shame and left proclaiming the good news of the Messiah. Even the wise men, after meeting the Christ child, went home by another way—changed in both direction and devotion. God's presence doesn't leave a person the same. It renewed, restored, and redirected every willing heart.

And it still does. We see it in the softening of our hearts, in the peace that replaces anxiety, and in the quiet joy that settles where frustration once lived. Grace changes the way we respond, the way we think, and even the

way we see others. The same love that entered the world that night in Bethlehem is still at work today, shaping us from within and reflecting Christ's beauty through ordinary lives.

? As you read Exodus 33:12-23 and 34:29-35, write down one way you've experienced God's presence renewing your heart or perspective this year.

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And if you think it's just about being better, think again. It's about being His. Transformation doesn't come through sheer effort—it comes through surrender. Through time in His Word. Through worship.

It's in those honest moments when we invite Him to shape us from the inside out. The more we behold Him, the more we become like Him.

Slow and steady. Day by day. His love is changing us. Softening what's hardened and renewing what's worn.

The same love that entered a manger has taken root in your life, changing the way you think, the way you love, the way you live.

This is the beauty of Christmas. This is the gift.



Can you think of a person from Scripture whose life shows the transforming power of God’s presence? What can their story teach us about how the message of Christmas—God with us—continues to shape and change us today?

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Wise Men Still Seek Him

Sometimes when we read the words of those who have been more than conquerors, we feel almost despondent. But they won through step by step—by little bits of will, little denials of self, little inward victories—by faithfulness in very little things.

—Amy Carmichael

Unwrapping the Gift

As you celebrate this season, look for one way to reflect God's glory to someone around you—through kindness, encouragement, or quiet service. Let His love shine through you like light on a winter night.
