

# Poured Out!

*Hope, Peace, Joy, & Love*

**2023 Advent Experiment**

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***Sharing God's Gift of  
Hope, Peace, Joy & Love***

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13

We received the gift of Jesus, who brings the hope, peace, joy, and love of God to us. Christmas is a grand celebration of that gift, recognizing the momentous time when that gift was given to us. One of the ways we express our celebration is by giving gifts to others. We do this because God's gift was intended to be shared, to be made known to all and because we are made in the image of God, designed to do as He does.

It sounds so simple, and we've heard it so many times that the enormity and lavishness of it gets overlooked, diminished or forgotten. God...step back and think about this.

God, who created EVERYTHING that is, and Who created us to be in a special relationship with Him ... that we broke and turned our back on...loves us and wants to be in relationship with us. That's huge!

How many things that you've created have you tossed aside because they've gotten old, useless, or boring? How many of these are you no longer interested in?

That's not our God. He adores us and wants to be with us.

In this series, we'll talk about living in a way that God intended, living with God being our source of life. This will enable us to live life to the fullest, the way God intended.

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How we live is a choice. God does not force Himself on us. We can choose to live with God or without God. And not deciding which to do is in itself a choice—a choice to live on our own, without Him.

While we can't make our hearts and minds do exactly what we want them to do, we can create the conditions for it to happen. And it's all about practice. It's all about repeating our choices and creating the conditions daily until they occur naturally with very little effort.

And if you think about it, all of life is practice. Repeating anything we do is a form of practice. Our family life, our work, our hobbies, driving, coming to church, and even how we behave (good, bad, or indifferent). We repeat them over and over again, and that's practice.

Acting on our choices is hard. Life interferes. For example, we could choose to exercise three times a week. In doing this, however, we should expect work, our family duties, and other responsibilities to get in the way. So, we need to think ahead and intentionally create an environment—the conditions—for us to succeed. For example, we schedule on our calendar that we're going to the gym after work or that we'll take a 30-minute walk after dinner. We set out our sneakers and workout gear the night before somewhere we can't overlook. We tell others that we're going to exercise and ask them to occasionally ask us how it went. We use a journal to record when we exercise. These conditions help us follow through.

While hard, acting on our choices is not impossible. The Bible plainly tells us, "with God all things are possible" Matthew 19:26. So ultimately, it's a choice. We can create the conditions for change—to live out of the continual wellspring of hope, peace, joy, and love of God, or the eventual dried out wells of our own. So, what conditions do you want to create?

# Let's try the Advent Experiment...

## Phase 1:

Live 2 (or 3) days focusing on and including God in your day:

- Right after you wake up say a simple prayer.
- For example, thank you God for the gift of today and that I have breath in my lungs.
- During the earlier part of the morning, read scripture.
- Later in the morning say out loud to yourself or write out five things for which you are grateful.  
(Pick up a gratitude journal in the Discipleship Corner.)
- Before noon, listen to a worship song.
- Before you eat your lunch give God thanks for the meal you have and tell Him that He is good and amazing. To help your mindset, think about how God's made the earth and the universe. Think about some place or thing that amazes you.
- When (and not if) chaos hits, ask God to remind you that He makes order out of chaos. Even better ask Him to do that BEFORE chaos hits. Remember God redeems every situation for His good and amazingly for our good as well.
- In the afternoon, listen to a worship song.
- Before dinner, thank God for something that occurred that day and ask for His strength and grace for the evening and tomorrow.
- Before going to sleep, tell God that you love Him. Do this even if you don't feel it at the moment. You can even tell God that you really don't feel it (God knows it anyway), and also ask Him to help you with that. God loves honesty and truth, even if it's a negative emotion against Him. God just wants us to talk to Him. Remember God loved us first.

## Phase 2:

Live 2 (or 3) days not doing any of the above and ignoring God.

## Phase 3:

Which one was a better way of living?

During which were you strengthened?

# Reflecting on Scripture

As you spend time each morning reading and reflecting on God's Word, here are some recommended scriptures to get your started!

Psalm 37:23-24

Isaiah 26:12

Isaiah 43:1-2

Luke 1:46-49

Psalm 33:20-22

Isaiah 40:3-4

Micah 5:2-5a

Romans 15:13

Isaiah 9:6-7

Luke 2:10

Matthew 22:36-40

The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)



# Worship

**Here is a Worship Playlist to get you started:**

**Wonderful • Cain, Steven Curtis Chapman**

**Away in a Manger/Worthy is Your Name  
• Maverick City Music, Chandler Moore,  
Kim Walker-Smith, Mav City Gospel Choir**

**Manger Throne • Phil Wickham**

**King of Kings • Chandler Moore, Essential Worship**

**Behold Messiah • River Valley Worship**

**Here Comes Heaven • Elevation Worship, Jenna Barrientes**

**Lord Remind Me • Joe Guerra, Praytell**

**Christmas Hymn • Praytell, Jon Guerra, Paul Zach**

**Holy • David Leonard**

**Silent Night • Lauren Daigle**

**Hope Has Come (Behold Him) • Red Rocks Worship**

Spotify Playlist



Apple Music Playlist



# What's Next?

**What did you learn from your Advent Experiment?**

**How can you carry the lessons from Advent into 2024?**

**Write it out...What are you going to do each day to live out of the continual wellspring of hope, peace, joy, and love of God in 2024?**

**Write a prayer asking God to help you apply this to the daily rhythms of your life.**

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