



INTRO



Life's lessons are often difficult to learn. We may well be aware of a need for change, but we find so many reasons why we just cannot change right now. When change does come it does so at a significant cost. It is no wonder, then, why so many of us avoid it if we can. Whether these lessons are financial, personal, academic, or other; we tend to find ways around them until it is absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, this is also how we interact with God. There may be a cloud hanging over our relationship with the Almighty, but for whatever reason, we will avoid confronting it. Is it because we realize ultimately it is our will that will have to bend to His? Is it because in giving up sin, or letting go of fear, anger, or hurt it will be hard and sometimes painful? Yes. So we avoid and continue to move away from the only hope that will deliver us from a path leading to destruction.

Then came 2020. Everything stopped. New anxieties emerged, to be sure, but we were forced to cease all semblance of normal. How much of a spiritual inventory have you done in this time of forced sabbath? As we stand now at the end of this calendar year, and as we begin to think again about returning to a more robust life, it is critical that we confront what God has asked of us in this season. This devotional is designed to help you personally begin to answer some of those questions. God has given us the space to stop, but now what? In the stopping, and the waiting, how do you navigate the process of growing? Our waiting is not passive, for starters. We may have to give up some of our routine, but that doesn't mean we quit. We must first be still in His presence, we must learn to listen for His clear voice, we must earnestly seek after Him, and then we must prepare. Prepare for His continued transformation in our lives, and for the renewing of this world by His return.

In the life of the church, Advent is the perfect season for all of these things to take place. There is a palpable tension for awaiting the fulfillment of God's promised Messiah, and for the promise of His return. Tension that requires faith, patience, and preparation. These short devotionals were written by members of our community of faith, and it is my prayer that they will help focus your heart this season. At the bottom of each devotional you will find a QR code that will direct your smart phone to a piece of music that was specifically chosen for each passage of scripture or the words written in the devotional. Simply scan the code using your camera app on your phone and it will be directed to a YouTube link. We hope that this will add another dimension of worship each day.

A final word. Don't be in a hurry. The world will certainly help with that, but for now rest in the tension that God is still working His perfect will out in your life. Live with the tension that it is Advent. He is coming, He has come, He is coming again. He is always coming.