

# Somedays' Meditations

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**meditations on Scripture for  
middle and high schoolers**



Sunday, January 4, 2026

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How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts. My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh rejoice in the living God.

Psalm 84:1

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Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!! Merry Christmas!!!

We've been preparing for Christmas since the start of Advent. We've been preparing for Christmas since Thanksgiving. We've been preparing for Christmas since the Christmas Mart.

We've been preparing for Christmas since the beginning of time.

It's finally here! Let us rejoice! God is incarnate and lives among us all. Hallelujah! Let's share our joy and our love and our lives with the world, just as God has.

Let us live more completely, let us dive head-first into the world and see it for all that it is and shine our lights of hope, love, joy, and peace to every dark corner. And now, in addition to the Advent wreath, we light the Christ candle, which is ever-new and ever-old and stands taller than all the other candles. May it light our hearts throughout the coming year.

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## Activity

Okay, but. You've probably been pretty busy this Advent. Jesus is here to rekindle our lights so that we don't burn out. It's not up to you to keep the momentum going, the light is already lit. So, take a moment and rest. Breathe. Each day, find some alone time, some quiet, some peace. There's time enough to plan later.

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

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Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

1 John 3:18

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Our verse of Scripture today comes from one of the letters from John, who might be the same person who wrote the gospel of John. Both the gospel and the letters are about love. John remembers many of the times when Jesus spoke or told stories about love. He also remembers Jesus' new commandment, which he adds to the classic Ten Commandments, and that new commandment is this: that you should love one another. As Jesus loved us, so should we love one another.

Love isn't just saying "love you!" before you go to bed or when you leave for school in the morning. Love isn't just a word in English (or *agape*, which is the word in Greek that John uses here). Love is something you do. It's something that you live. If God is love, and we follow God, then our goal as Christians is to become love as well.

Part of living love is showing people how much you care for them. It can be something simple, like giving your mom a hug or smiling when you see your grandparents. Saying please and thank you shows love. But living love isn't just being nice to people close to you. Living love is expressing love with everything you do. And that's a bit more difficult than just doing nice things.

Luckily, we have Jesus as an example. Jesus treated other people with dignity, and always listened to what they said, even if he disagreed with them. He made other people feel important and gave them space to speak, instead of always talking over others. He sincerely wanted to know about people and wanted to see them grow to be more like God.

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## Activity

Who is someone in your life who lives love? Thank them for being such a great example and for doing so much, and ask them how you can live a life of love, too.

Saturday, January 11, 2026

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Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.”

Acts 10:34-35

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Nice and easy, right? Not for me! There's so much to think about here, in this small quote and before we move on to whatever Peter is going to say next, we have to unpack a few things. Some words represent a complicated tangle of ideas and in order to make sense of something, it can be helpful to unpack—that is, untangle—the subtle meanings. Let's take this slowly and see what we get.

“Peter began to speak to them.” We can discover who he is speaking to by looking at previous passages. It seems to be a specific person, set in a specific time. But we can, of course, hear his words and see how they may apply to our lives.

Okay, next. “I truly understand”...okay. Maybe he'll explain to us what he understands. “God shows no partiality.” Is Peter saying that God doesn't have favorites? Maybe! Let's keep going.

This next part has a lot to it. “In every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” Okay, so, according to Peter, God doesn't bless someone more just because they are born in a certain place. Anyone, anywhere can be “acceptable” to God, if they “fear” God and do what is “right”.

What does this mean, though? What does it mean to be acceptable? Or unacceptable? And acceptable for *what*? What about “fear”? Or, what's “right”?

I have a few ideas here. “Fear” doesn't always mean terrified. If you were to be formal and fancy, you might say, “I fear we have no sugar for your tea.” In this case, “fear” means something closer to “observe” or “believe”. Fearing God might mean to be scared and to humble yourself before God. It might mean to put God foremost in your heart. Or something else, or a combination of it all.

What is “right” in God's eyes? Easy, right? The 10 Commandments, anything Jesus says, maybe some stuff that other people say, too...? Do we have to reread the whole Bible and study thousands of years of tradition to understand what this means? I suppose that's one way to unpack this sentence.

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Activity: Reread the Bible and study thousands of years of tradition.

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

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In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

Mark 1:35

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Jesus prayed a lot, which is something important to think about in and of itself, but this verse from the gospel of Mark something else very important about Jesus: he spent some time alone. In our world, we don't always get time alone. There are tons of people in school, and we often spend afternoons and evenings in sports, activities, or with our family. Not many people find time to just simply be alone.

It's not just being alone, either. Jesus went to a place where there were no distractions in order to pray. Jesus didn't hang out in his room, reading a good book. If he lived today, he wouldn't have confused "being alone" with checking out and wandering online or playing a video game. Jesus went to a place where there weren't people, but there also weren't distractions. He spent time praying in places where the only thing that he could do was pay attention to God and to the things going on in his heart and in his mind.

It's important to take time to do this, too. In part, being alone in a place without distractions can help us develop an inner life. It can also help us understand the different things we feel or think and come to terms with who we are as human beings. Also, God doesn't usually talk to us in words (sometimes he does, but not usually). More often, God will send us feelings, or images, or hopes, and we need to have a quiet, inner life in order to hear and see these things and then to respond to them.

When I was young, the forest was my "deserted place." I felt very close to God in the forest, and God made me feel very happy and comfortable. Even now, when I want to talk to God, I often go to a place with trees.

How about you? Do you have a deserted place? What does it look like? And how does God talk to you there?

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### Activity

Go to your "deserted place" like Jesus did and spend some time with God. Quiet your heart and mind and see what God has to say.

Sunday, January 18, 2026

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John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.”

John 1:32

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The John who is quoted and the John who is doing the quoting are different people. The former is John the Baptist and the latter is John the evangelist. The two have very different personalities.

John the Baptist is a rough guy. He’s known for living in the desert, scavenging for locusts and sometimes honey, wearing a rough camel-hide tunic. He’s blunt. He shouts at people. He insults them. Even while trying to baptize them!

John the evangelist is (probably) the same John who is one of Jesus’ disciples. His writing style is flowy, complicated, and mystical. It’s the kind of writing that you have to read more slowly, to really get what he’s talking about. He writes about The Word being God and the Word being with God in the beginning, before anything else was made.

So now we have John filtered through John. This harsh, wild guy is being reported by this poetic, weird guy. I wonder. Imagine John the Baptist trying to explain to people what happened when he baptized Jesus. Do you think this gruff man suddenly became poetic and talked about a gentle dove landing softly on Jesus? Do you think John the evangelist changed whatever John said to make it sound more mystical?

I’m not sure why John’s words suddenly become softer here, but in my opinion, it isn’t just due to having a poetic editor. I think it’s possible that when John the Baptist saw whatever happened when Jesus was baptized, that something changed in him. He is still himself, but he is also different.

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## Activity

Go for a walk and find something that catches your eye. When you get home, journal about it: describe it bluntly. Describe it as though it were magical. Describe it as though it were one-of-a-kind in the universe. Describe it as though people aren’t listening to you and you need them to understand that this is amazing.

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

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He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart...

Mark 3:5

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We often think of Jesus as being kind and loving, and we forget that there were times when he was angry. Or to put it another way, certain things made Jesus mad. Jesus didn't get mad at just anything, either. Jesus had a good reason to be angry, and in this case, that reason was because of people's "hardness of heart."

What just is a "hard heart?" Unfortunately, a hardness of heart is an all too common experience. It's a sensation in our chests. For me, my chest feels like it's stone or that it's gone cold (another phrase we use is coldness of heart). We think only about ourselves in these times, or we look down on others. We don't feel love or pity or closeness; we just feel thick and hard. We're not even unhappy. We're just there with nasty thoughts in our hearts and minds. Have you ever felt this way? It's not a very nice way to feel.

Jesus came for many reasons, but one of them was to rescue us from our hardness of heart. Jesus wants us to feel compassion for our fellow human beings and to look at those around us with joyful, loving hearts. It's not always nice to be joyful and loving, though, and so we have to practice it. When we feel our chests constrict and our brows furrow, we need to have the presence of mind to change. We can pray to God in our minds, or we can think about the person we're talking to in a different way. It's often good to think: this person is like my brother or sister. They're a child of God, too, just like I am. I want to be a better person. Try these things when you find your heart growing hard or cold.

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### Prayer

Please God, help me from a hardness of heart. Open my heart to those around me. Cause me to love more broadly. Give me your heart in all I do.

Sunday, January 25, 2026

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Jesus said to the fishermen, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.”

Matthew 4:19

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I love hearing about Jesus calling his disciples. In the quote above, he's talking to fishermen. Just a couple of guys on a boat with their nets. These aren't members of a giant team of fishermen, going out in some huge ship. They're not explorers, adventuring around the continents. They're not managers of some fishing company, with a hundred employees working for them. It's just some guys.

Jesus calls some pretty unlikely people. He isn't going after the rich and powerful. He calls people who he knows will listen to him. These are people who have no social safety-nets, no stored-up wealth. If they don't catch fish today, they will have nothing to eat tonight. But still. They trust Jesus, they put down their nets, they follow him.

Then they see that Jesus has decided to call other people too. They are not the only ones to have been chosen. And some of these people are very different. They are definitely *not* fishermen. What must have been going through the disciples' minds? Do you think they were puzzled but open to seeing what would happen? Do you think they were resentful and distrusting of each other? Do you think they were open to the idea of becoming buddies through Jesus? What must it have been like to travel together?

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### Relate

Have you ever had different friend groups who were at a gathering together but might not know each other? For example, you might have a birthday party and invite friends from your school, teammates from a sport, buddies from church, a few neighbors, and some cousins. How would you help everyone get to know each other? What would you do to make sure no one felt left out? As we said in the 1990's, What Would Jesus Do?

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

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For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you

1 Corinthians 11:23

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What kinds of things does your family do that are traditions, and what are not traditions? In my family, We drink egg nog around Christmas time, but it's not a tradition. I like egg nog, so do my daughters, and so we drink it during the holiday season. I don't know if my parents like egg nog, or if my grandparents drank it. It might be interesting to find out, but it wouldn't change whether or not I drink it. It's just something fun for the season.

Our Christmas tree, however, is different. In my birth family, we kept up the Christmas tree until just about now in late January. And now, as long as the tree isn't dropping too many needles, we keep it up until around now in my house. I grew up with this tradition, and I find a lot of meaning in it *because* I grew up with it. It is a tradition handed down to me, and my doing it for so many years, and my parents doing it for so many years, gives the tradition some of its meaning.

Christianity is like Christmas trees: it's something that has been handed down to us. Our parents may have practiced it, or our grandparents, and even if no one in your family was Christian, you are now part of the Church, which is like your family. The traditions of Christianity are like a blanket keeping you safe, or a teacher helping you to understand something difficult, or a friend who takes care of you when you're sad. The traditions of the Church are here for your benefit and joy.

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## Somedays' Meditations

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