

TWELVE DAYS OF

Christmas Prayer



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Day One

A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE - PRAYING WITH GRUNT



THOUGHT

Christmas is coming and each year we are reminded this is a great time for evangelism. Though year after year it can sometimes feel like an endless effort with no visible results. Thank you for taking on this prayer challenge. Today is a reminder that as we talk about Jesus now at Christmas and throughout the year, we cannot lift the veil and make someone believe; only God can make this happen. Just as the song '12 days of Christmas' keeps coming back to the Partridge in a Pear tree, so do we as Christians keep coming back to prayer as the foundation to all we do including evangelism. As we step into this prayer journey for Christmas, let's remember the one who made it possible to pray is the very one whose birth we are celebrating.



LUKE 18:1-8

"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"



QUESTION

**For which people do you need to show the sort of tenacity of the widow.
Who needs your persistent prayer?**



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you that because of Jesus' obedience, I can speak to you now. Please help me to remember to pray for those in my life who do not know you yet. Please lift the veil from (insert colleague) eyes and help them to see you this Christmas. Amen.

Day Two

TWO TURTLE DOVES - WHERE IS THE PEACE?



THOUGHT

Christmas festivities and decorations bring with it words like Joy, Noel, Peace. Thinking about the day ahead, can you see the peace? The time of year when we celebrated the announcement that peace was coming to earth, it can be difficult to find the peace amongst the festive frenzy.



LUKE 2:10-14

"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."



QUESTION

What do you think it means to have peace? Is peace between you and God the peace you desire? How can you share that peace with others this Christmas?



PRAYER

God, thank you for the peace that comes to those in your favour. Thank you that because of Jesus and that he paid my debt, I can be in your favour. Please help me to live in this peace even when it seems there is none to be seen. Show me how I can share that peace with the people around me over the coming days. Amen.

Day Three

THREE FRENCH HENS - GIFTS OF THE MAGI



THOUGHT

Are you frantically busy buying or planning to buy gifts for family and friends? Maybe you have a Kris Kringle to find? Think of the gifts you've received. What gifts were you excited to receive, and why? The greatest gift of all has been Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.



LUKE 2:10,11

'I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today ...a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.'



MATTHEW 2:11

'When they (Magi) saw the child (Jesus) with his mother Mary, ... they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.'



QUESTION

What do you hope to achieve by giving gifts? How can you best show God's love at this hectic time of the year? Think of the gift recipient and your love and connection with them and how you can show the love of Jesus at Christmas. God loved us so much that He sent Jesus.



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the gift of Jesus and may I never lose sight of this. Please may my gifts show love and respect. Help me to focus on the relationship with those I give to, rather than the gift itself. Amen.

Day Four

FOUR CALLING BIRDS - MARY'S SONG



THOUGHT

People sang songs in the bible for all sorts of reasons. Mary sings to God after being visited by an angel telling her that she will conceive by the Holy Spirit. The reason why she prays is that God has been promising a Messiah and now He is remembering his promises. As we come to the end of the year, stop and remember what God has done. Maybe even write your own 'song'.



LUKE 1:54-55

"And Mary said: My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.... He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."



QUESTION

How has God been faithful to his promises to you? What things can you be thankful to God for today?



PRAYER

Lord, you are faithful and kind, always keeping your promises and sustaining me with your joy. Thank you for the many gifts you have given me this year, and for the way you are working in my life. Thank you for the ways you have moved in my work, and in the lives of those at work. Even though I may not see or understand what you are doing, I trust you as Lord. Amen.

Day Five

FIVE GOLDEN RINGS - UNEXPECTED GIFTS



THOUGHT

According to google “5 golden rings” probably doesn’t refer to hand jewellery! It seems “five golden rings” is actually a reference to the yellowish rings around a pheasant’s neck or to “goldspinks,” an old name for a pretty little bird called the Goldfinch. Imagine you thought you were getting five 18ct rings, and you got a pheasant instead!



MATTHEW 1:18-21

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”



QUESTION

Have you ever got an unexpected gift, or one you misunderstood initially? Imagine Mary’s unexpected gift of a pregnancy from Joseph’s (and also Mary’s) perspective... What about Jesus’ personal gift to you—to be saved from your sin (v.21)—is that the gift you were expecting?



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I praise you for the gift of Jesus. Though I don’t always understand what and why in the things you give me, because of your goodness I thank you that I can trust you to give me what I need. May this Christmas period be a refreshment in the assurance that you are dependable because Jesus has saved me from my sin. In his name I pray, Amen.

Day Six

SIX GEESE A LAYING - PRICKLY PEOPLE



THOUGHT

I don't know about you, but it seems in media these days geese have a bad rep. There are many memes describing how aggressive and frightening geese can be, especially to small children! It reminds me that there are some people who are really difficult to work with, and who can be really prickly (like geese!). Often, we can be judgemental towards how they are acting, rather than thinking and acknowledging the hurt that may have caused them to act that way. The Grinch is a good example of someone who is a bit of a jerk around Christmas, but that was because of the hurt deep inside him.



1 PETER 3:8-9

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.



QUESTION

How could I be a blessing to those not acting nicely towards me? Is there anyone I know for whom Christmas is a difficult time? How could I be sympathetic, compassionate and loving towards that person?



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for your graciousness and love to me, that even though I rebelled against you, you loved me and sent Jesus to die so I could have a restored relationship with you. Please help me to be a beacon of love to those around me, particularly towards those who find Christmas a difficult time of year. May they see past the hurt to the great news of Jesus that brings hope and healing. In his name I pray, Amen.

Day Seven

SEVEN SWANS A SWIMMING - WHAT IS IT?



THOUGHT

It's hard to start this one, because who knows what "Seven Swans are swimming" actually means?! Some say is a reference to gifts of the Holy Spirit, some a reference to sacraments. Who knows? And also, who knows how to work out what is the truth? We can wonder what does this festive season mean, what does life itself even mean?



JOHN 14:6

The one whose birth we remember at Christmas grew up to say (John 14:6): "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."



QUESTION

Jesus makes an extraordinary claim that he is the truth and the life. What do you think that might mean? How could you go about finding out what it means? This time of year it can seem life is just about survival, in what ways does Jesus being the truth and the life, provide an antidote to the busyness of the season?



PRAYER

Gracious Father, I praise you for your Son in whom I find life. For in his work I find our eternal security, I find an experience of redeeming love, and the truth that while I have failed in thought, word and deed—I am your loved and adopted child. May I reflect and love these truths in Jesus, and so continue to find hope, joy and peace this Christmas. Amen.

Day Eight

EIGHT MAIDS A MILKING - HARD WORK



THOUGHT

Have you ever milked a cow by hand? It is not for the faint hearted: just the right amount of elbow grease combined with great compassion for the animal you are working with! What motivates you to work hard?



PROVERBS 12:24, 16:26, 14:23

12v24: Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in forced labour.

16v26: The appetite of labourers works for them, their hunger drives them on.

14v23: All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.



QUESTION

What patterns do you see in these proverbs? What message are they communicating? In general, what are the factors that bring about prosperity? Diligence and hard work at a basic level it's driven by sheer survival/hunger. We work to EAT whether fulfilling or not - 2 Thessalonians 3:10 (If a man will not work, he shall not eat). If you don't find work you'd like to do, in the end do work you are forced to do.

How are we showing our likeness to God in our work? Are we happy to work? There is nothing more humanizing and God rewards it. How could you incorporate what these proverbs tell you about work into a conversation about work to your colleagues?



PRAYER

Lord, I love and can't live without work. It is an irreplaceable part of my humanity, and yet something that now wears me down. Help me to work for you, not work for pay. Enable me to work well. Amen.

Day Nine

NINE PIPERS PIPING - SHEPHERDS PRAISING



THOUGHT

Pipers piping conjures up images of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, playing away on his pipe with widows opening as children listen to the music. Multiply this by 9 and there is great music to be heard. While the Pied Piper was playing for manipulation, the Shepherds were telling a story out of excitement, which caused them to praise God. Imagine the scene as the shepherds told everyone they saw what had just happened.



LUKE 2:17-18&20

'When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them... v20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.'



QUESTION

Can you think of a time when something made you so excited you wanted to tell everyone? What about this Christmas might cause you to praise God?



PRAYER

Thank you for leaving your glory and living in this world. Thank you that you understand all the pains of life and yet remain completely holy. You are worthy of all praise and honour and glory. Amen.

Day Ten

TEN DRUMMERS DRUMMING - CHRISTMAS NOISE



THOUGHT

Does Christmas and all the hoopla surrounding it get to you much like the next door neighbour's teenager who practices their drumming day and night. It gets to a point where you are just over it. Over the stress, over the multiple diary entries, over the present lists. Or maybe you revel in the Christmas beat. Filling your days with tinsel and Christmas traditions. However you approach Christmas each year it is important not to lose sight of what it is all about.



TITUS 3:3-7

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life



QUESTION

What can you do differently this year to help focus on the true meaning of Christmas?



PRAYER

Lord help me to not lose sight of the amazing gift of your Son amongst the Christmas noise. Amen.

Day Eleven

ELEVEN LADIES DANCING - KEEP ON YOUR TOES



THOUGHT

Christmas is just over week away. Does this strike fear or are you able to remember the hope it brings? We do have a great hope, hope that is bigger than all of the mountains in life.



1 PETER 3:15

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.



QUESTION

What is the hope we have? How can you articulate this to colleagues and friends when they ask?



PRAYER

Lord, help me to rely on the hope I have in you. Please make it bigger than all of the troubles I have and use this to open opportunities for me to speak about you. Amen.

Day Twelve

TWELVE LORDS A LEAPING ... FOR JOY



THOUGHT

When was the last time you literally leapt for joy? I can't think of a time I've leapt for joy, but there may have been a happy dance or two. But where does true joy come from? Surely it must come when true victory is won over our greatest enemy. The angels brought tidings of great joy, and that tidings was that God has come into the world to save the world. Jesus is the only source of true joy because he brings a victory over sin and death that can never be taken away. It is a joy that is completely dependant on Him and not us, and is a victory we have no matter what challenges or trials we are facing.



LUKE 6:20-23

Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man." Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.



QUESTION

When was the last time you reflected on the joy that Jesus brings? How can reflecting on Jesus' victory help you through difficult times?



PRAYER

God, my heart is filled with Joy knowing you have come to flip the world upside down. Where there is poverty you bring plenty, where there is hunger you bring satisfaction, where there is weeping you bring laughter, where there is hate and persecution, you bring a reward in heaven that far outweighs anything in this world. Thank you for the cross, and that Jesus rose again so I will rise with him too. In his name I pray, Amen.

*"GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN
LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY
REMEMBER CHRIST OUR SAVIOR
WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY
TO SAVE US ALL FROM SATAN'S POW'R
WHEN WE WERE GONE ASTRAY
OH TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY
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OH TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY".*



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