



A Simple Christmas
Devotional
2024



Simple Promise

Simple Questions

1. God made several promises to us a long time ago. Though it took time, he kept those promises. Are you a person who makes promises but doesn't keep them or do you tend to be a promise keeper?
2. Have you ever made a promise you did not keep or could not keep? What kept you from keeping your promise?
3. God is faithful to us. Are you faithful in all your relationships? If not, which one(s) do you struggle being faithful to and why? Is God telling you to do something about it, but you've been putting it off?
4. God kept his promises to us. In response, what promise do you want to make to God this Christmas? (Some examples to help you brainstorm a potential promise. Make just one!)
 - I promise not to stress out this Christmas.
 - I promise to keep Christ at the center of my Christmas.
 - I promise to keep it simple this year.
 - I promise to de-emphasize material gifts and emphasize non-material gifts.

Complete the sentence: In honor of your birth, Jesus I promise

_____.



Simple Passages

Below are the promises God made to us in the Old Testament that Jesus fulfilled through his coming.

Sunday	Isaiah 11:1-5; Jeremiah 33:15 – Fulfilled in Matthew 1:1-16
Monday	Ezekiel 37:24; Hosea 3:5 - Also fulfilled in Matthew 1:1-16
Tuesday	Isaiah 7:14; 8:8,10 – Fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-23
Wednesday	Micah 5:2; 2 Samuel 5:2 – Fulfilled in Matthew 2:1-6
Thursday	Hosea 11:1 – Fulfilled in Matthew 2:13-15
Friday 2	Samuel 7:16 – Fulfilled in Luke 1:26-33
Saturday	Matthew 1:18-23 – Promises made about Jesus that he kept!

Simple Activities (Keep it simple. Pick only 1)



Make good on a promise that you broke even if it's going to cost you something financially or emotionally. Tell the person why you are making good on the promise.



Is there a person that you haven't been as faithful to as you should have, like your spouse, your children, your parents, a close friend etc.? Take steps to become more faithful.



Make a promise to God as to how you are going to observe Christmas in a way that's more honoring of him. Use the list in Question 4 to help you brainstorm potential promises.

Simple Gifts

Simple Questions

1. Do you think Christmas has become overly commercialized and the giving of gifts has become too materialistic?
2. Talk about how gift-giving took place in your family when you were a child. What traditions have you continued when it comes to the giving of gifts and what traditions have you changed and why?
3. In response to the birth of Jesus the Wisemen (or Magi) gave gifts in celebration of his birth. Ever since gift-giving has been an integral part of celebrating His birth.

Read the story of the Wisemen in Matthew 2:9-11 and reflect on the gifts they gave Jesus. How would our gift-giving change if we gave the way the wisemen did?

In particular, reflect on the number of gifts given, the purpose of each gift, the meaning of each gift, the costliness of each gift, and the person to whom the gift is given.

Simple Passages


Consider giving one of these simple but meaningful gifts to someone this Christmas.

Sunday	The Gift of Time	Luke 10:38-42
Monday	A Fruit of the Spirit	Galatians 5: 22-23
Tuesday	An Action	Romans 12:6-18
Wednesday	An Act of Kindness	Galatians 6:10
Thursday	Bless a Child	Mark 10:13-16
Friday	Bless the poor	Proverbs 19:17

Simple Activities



Give the gift of time to someone who needs it.

Give  someone the gift of patience every day during the Christmas season.



Live in harmony with those around you throughout the season! Maybe patch up a broken relationship.



Look for opportunities to do something nice to a stranger.



Take a tag or two off the Gift Giving Tree and bless a child this Christmas.



Instead of passing up the Salvation Army bell ringer, stop by and thank them for their service and make a one-time donation.



Consider putting up a Nativity to show your neighbors why you celebrate Christmas or show the Gospel with someone.



Simple Celebration

Simple Questions

1. Think of all the characters in the Christmas story. How did they respond to the announcement of Jesus' birth or the birth itself? Notice the variety of responses. What act (s) of worship can you offer God this year?
2. The problem with the way we celebrate Christmas today is we're trying to take 200 years of good ideas that the church has come up with and are trying to do them all. Look at all your Christmas traditions. Which ones help you celebrate Jesus' birth and which ones do not?

Simplify your Christmas celebration by eliminating the traditions that are merely busywork for you. Retain the ones that are a reflection of your heart. What would that look like in your life?






3. When it comes to preparing for Jesus' birth who are you more like, the Magi, Mary and Joseph, Zechariah, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds, who?
4. Do you anticipate Jesus' birth or is it just a repetitive holiday? How can you cultivate an anticipatory heart that expects God to show up at Christmas and every Sunday?

Simple Passages Arranged in the order of who knew about Jesus' birth first to last.

Focus on how each person celebrated Jesus' birth

Sunday	The Angels	Luke 1: 26-33; 2:9-14
Monday	The Wisemen	Matthew 2:1-11
Tuesday	Mary	Luke 1:26-37, 46-55
Wednesday	Joseph	Matthew 1:18-25
Thursday	Elizabeth	Luke 1:39-45, 56
Friday	The Shepherds	Luke 2:8-21
Saturday	Anna/Simeon	Luke 2:25-40

Simple Activities

-  Make an advent wreath. Each day leading to Christmas read the passage for the day and talk about it with your family. Play some Christmas music softly in the background. End with a short prayer! It'll take just 10-20 minutes of your time.
-  Watch a significant Christmas movie, one that focuses on Jesus and his birth.
-  If making an advent wreath is too much, just light a candle and read a scripture passage, then sit quietly in the light of the candle to reflect on it and pray.
-  Quietly drive around looking for manger scenes. See how many you can find.
-  Go star gazing and think about the Magi's journey and how they looked up at the same stars long ago in search of Jesus.



Simple Family

Simple Questions

As you read the Christmas story this week, observe how simple their family relationships were.

1. Are you too busy and do you need to simplify your life so you can spend more time with the people you love?
2. Mary and Joseph were poor and they began life together under “less than optimal” circumstances. Does that describe your life right now? Are you allowing the circumstances of your life to dictate how you are experiencing the Christmas season?
3. Hard times are good opportunities to discover what we’re made of and what we really value. The past few years have been tough for many due to the rising cost of goods. What have you learned about yourself during this period?
4. The Magi were a wonderful, unexpected blessing from God that came out of nowhere for Mary and Joseph. Consider doing the same for a poor family or just look for ways you can be an unexpected, divine blessing to someone.
5. Think of Mary and how she dropped in unexpectedly on Elizabeth. How would you have responded? Maybe the key to your holiday season is to invite family over you haven’t seen for a while or you’ve been estranged from. reconciled?

Simple Passages

Look at the relationships shared in each of the passages. Make people a priority during your Christmas season.

Sunday	Matthew 1:1-16	The Family Tree
Monday	Matthew 1:18-25	Marriage
Tuesday	Matthew 2:9-11	Strangers
Wednesday	Luke 1:5-2	God
Thursday	Luke 1:39-45,56	Family
Friday	Luke 2:8-21	Friends
Saturday	Luke 2:1-7	A simple Christmas

Simple Activities (Keep it simple. Pick only 1)



Look for opportunities to “refresh others” in a way that will catch people off guard. (For example: Buy a cup of coffee for the person behind you in line; give a cashier a gift card for a 30-minute massage; give a single parent a night out free from the kids!)



Get together with a group of people from the church and perform some form of charitable service.



Make Two lists. Have the kids write a list of gifts they want to receive and a list of things they want to do as a family. Give gifts from both lists!



Give gifts without bows: the gift of patience, kindness, love, gentleness, forgiveness, etc.



For each kind act the kids do have them grab a handful of straw for the Baby Jesus’ manger. Hopefully by the time Christmas rolls around the kids will have provided Jesus a nice, soft layer of straw in which to lie.