



*Revive Our Hearts™*

# CONSIDER JESUS

A 31-DAY ADVENT DEVOTIONAL  
NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH



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Ministry Partners  
through whose generosity  
women around the world  
are being helped to  
see and savor Jesus*



## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

*Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself,  
so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*

(Hebrews 12:3)

 hristmas is not just a holiday like other holidays. It's not a spring Sunday set aside to honor one of our parents. It's not a summer celebration of national pride and patriotism. It's not even a fall gathering of family and friends with ample servings of thanksgiving on the menu—though I really do love that holiday, and I hope yours was truly special and worshipful this year.

Christmas, though, is different. Christmas is meant to remind us that Christianity, while technically classified as one of the world's major religions, is not at heart a religion at all. It is a *relationship* that focuses on a *Person*. It is not just a means of practicing our faith. It is Christ in me. It is Christ in you. That is Christianity.

And that is Christmas.

It is Jesus—the center, the core, the essence of our lives. And we must not allow the “holiday” to distract us from this great truth or cause us to lose our focus on who He is.

I believe that’s why you’re here. It’s why I’m here too. Together we’re admitting what the holiday aspect of Christmas is capable of doing to us.

We get busy.

Our lists overtake us.

Our memories, whether good or bad or a casserole mixture of the two, create an undertow that can easily engulf us in Christmas culture rather than helping us consider Jesus.

So hear that word again today.

“Consider him.”

Interestingly, the “consider him” of Hebrews 12 is a slightly different original word than the “consider Jesus” of Hebrews 3:1. That earlier mention is an encouragement to stop, as in a moment of temptation, and think of Him. “For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Heb. 2:18). Hebrews 3:1 urges us to think about that fact when we are tempted.

But the “consider him” in Hebrews 12:3 comes in the context of running the “race that is set before us” (12:1). It is an appeal to think *repeatedly* of Him—over and over again—as we move

forward in our lives, knowing we'll never have the endurance to finish the "race" if we let our attention drift elsewhere.

Our only hope for making it through Christmas and (more importantly) through life is to look to Jesus, "the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (v. 2). To look and look and keep on looking. To never look anywhere else.

Perhaps already, this far out from Christmas Day, you can feel yourself growing a bit "weary or fainthearted" from the demands you've come to expect this time of year.

If that is true for you, let me give you something to consider today and each day of this season—again and again, over and over.

Consider Jesus.



## PRAYER

*Lord, fully capture my attention this Christmas. Help me savor You and stay enthralled with You above every activity and event and highlight of this season. Thank You for bringing Your presence so close. May I never tire of looking for You and longing for You—repeatedly, unceasingly. Today and forever.*

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## KEEP READING

— 1 Samuel 12:20-24

*“Consider what great things he has done for you.”* (v. 24)

— Psalm 143:5-10

*“I meditate on all that you have done.”* (v. 5)

— 1 Peter 4:7-11

*“... that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”* (v. 11)

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## CONSIDER

What are the things that tend to draw your focus away from Jesus during the Christmas season?

How could you adjust your plans or expectations to keep Him truly central?





# JESUS


## HIS SAVING PURPOSE

*But when the fullness of time had come,  
God sent forth his Son,  
born of woman, born under the law,  
to redeem those who were under the law,  
so that we might receive adoption as sons.*

(Galatians 4:4-5)

## GIVER OF BLESSING

*So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.  
And God blessed them.  
(Genesis 1:27-28)*

“erry Christmas!” Don’t those words feel like a blessing—a Christmas blessing we receive and also share with others?

Actually, if you’ll notice, we share words of blessing with one another all year long. Implied blessing is tucked inside every “Good morning” and “Good night,” inside every “How are you doing?” and “Have a nice day.” Each is an expression of hope for another person’s happiness and welfare.

“But those are just habits,” you might say. “They’re just social conventions.” And that’s true to a point. But *why* do such expressions come automatically to people’s lips, even if they’re spoken without much thought? Why feel any need for speaking

them at all, even to total strangers? Why do we learn those habits and follow those social conventions wherever we go—from the office elevator to the grocery-store counter to the drive-through window?

It's because God created each one of us to bless and be blessed.

And He created us with hearts that long most of all for His blessing.

We were purposely made with an emptiness inside us for God to continually fill. We depend on Him for our existence, for our every thought and action. And from the opening pages of His story, we see Him doing it. We see Him blessing.

God's very first words to the first man and woman were words of blessing: "God blessed them." He blessed them with relationship and opportunity, with a future of growth and multiplication. He blessed them with purpose and responsibility and provision. All quarters of His creation, from the moment He placed humankind within them, were pictures of His favor, His abundance, His fruitfulness.

His blessing.

All blessing began with God. And all blessing ultimately comes from Him. Life itself, including the most routine, familiar days, remains an ever-opening gift of divine favor. We are constantly receiving blessing from our original Blessor. We've been made this way, made by God, not only to long for blessing but to be blessed. Blessed by Him.

And that's how we arrive at this blessed moment of year. Christmas—the Christ—is God's ultimate Blessing, given from the heart of One who's been blessing us, who's been blessing you, from the beginning of time.

As you begin turning your thoughts more consistently now to your celebration of Christmas, begin by recognizing the great blessing of the birth of Christ. “The blessing of the LORD makes rich,” the Bible says (Prov. 10:22)—rich with eternal reminders of how Jesus' appearance in the flesh has changed our lives, rich with opportunities both for receiving this message ourselves and for sharing it with others.

“Merry Christmas,” we say. “Merry Christmas,” we hear.

But each time you say it and each time you receive it, be reminded of the source of all true joy and blessing—God Himself . . . loving and blessing His people through Jesus, come down from heaven to earth.



## PRAYER

*Lord, I praise You today for things which I cannot fully fathom, yet which compel me even at the fringes of my understanding to fall before You in worship. Thank You for the incalculable blessing You have given me in Jesus. I receive Him with humble joy. May I share Him with extravagant generosity.*

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## KEEP READING

— Deuteronomy 28:1–6

*“All these blessings shall come on you and overtake you.” (v. 2)*

— Psalm 65:9–13

*“You visit the earth and water it;  
you greatly enrich it.” (v. 9)*

— James 1:16–18

*“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” (v. 17)*

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## CONSIDER

How might this awareness of others’ deep need for His blessing affect even your Christmas greetings this year? How could your “Merry Christmas” help fill others with His joy?

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