

Live out the Advent Season

By Carrie Dameron

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:13, ESV)

Advent is a time of anticipation! One website describes the anticipation of advent as: *The weekly themes of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy are meant to guide people through a time of spiritual preparation and reflection. As each week of Advent passes, people are encouraged to align their hearts with the message of Christ's birth. Advent is a time to prepare for the anniversary of Christ's birth on Christmas and his second coming.*

This holiday season I encourage each of us to purposefully radiate each theme to all in need of the spirit of Advent. Take a moment, right now and ask the Holy Spirit. Who do I know that needs Hope? Peace? Love? Joy? Let's review each theme and discover the miraculous work of Christ.

Hope: As believers our hope is based on the truth of the Gospel through Jesus Christ.

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Romans 8:24-25).

Our hope is not based on something tangible like leaders, policies, health and economics. Instead our hope is based on the truth found in scripture. When the tide and concerns of this world threaten to lead us to hopelessness, we open the word of God and find the tangible, realistic hope solidly rooted in faith. *And Jesus said to him, If you can! All things are possible for one who believes. (Mark 9:23).* Faith is believing in the teachings of scripture. Through our act of belief, the Holy Spirit grows our hope into an miraculous experience where we can confidently say, *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to*

come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39).

Peace: Maybe you know someone in need of the miraculous peace of Christ. First, Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and our peace is found in Him. Paul, who suffered extensively in order to spread the Gospel, blessed each believer in many of the Epistles: *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”* The Peace of Christ is a peace that surpasses understanding as described by Paul in the letter to the Philippians: *‘And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (4:7).* Paul then gives us directions on how to obtain this miraculous peace: *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (4:8-9).*

Love: As believers we are more familiar with the love of God and how it radiates to each one of us. *We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).* Jesus’ life exemplified how the love of God was to be dispensed to humanity, thus we can be the love of God to others by imitating Jesus. Once again Paul helps us out with his teachings found in 1 Corinthians 13: *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. (4-8).*

Joy Joy is the final theme for advent and a great way to wrap up our advent reflections of hope, peace, and love. We can have all three, yet if we lack joy, then we can’t shine. Joy is an outward expression of an inside state of mind. Jesus promised joy through himself and his teachings. *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)* through the indwelling, continuous Holy Spirit *And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.(Acts 13:52).*

Let’s spread Advent to our colleagues, patients, friends and family. For through us they experience the tangible presence of hope, peace, love and joy found in Christ Jesus.

Final Prayer:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:13)

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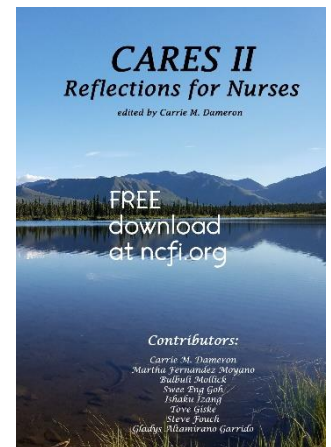
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