**A Quiet Circle for Christmas**

By Debbie Salter Goodwin



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Do you need a quiet circle at Christmas?

Do you need a corner in the middle of December’s push?

The world will always give noise, but you don’t have to let it move in.

I'm offering these daily Advent devotionals to help you focus this Christmas.

I want you to enjoy God’s best gifts this Christmas.

Light a candle.  Sip some cider.  Take a 5-minute break.

Quiet every thought about lists and must-do’s.

Use these daily readings to let God speak as He did that first Christmas

His Truth brings life.

May our God who brought hope, peace, love, and joy to the world that first Christmas,

Do it again in yours.

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Christmas blessings!

​**Debbie**

**THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT: LOOKING FOR HOPE**

**First Sunday of Advent: Hoping For. . .**

*But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

*Romans 8:25, NIV*

Hope is elusive when it depends on what you can provide as a reason for it. The push to find a reason to hope on your own is broken, ineffective and sometimes dangerous. God sent hope to us as His Word made flesh. True hope grows from Him, His will, and His help. Hope is not empty anticipation if you set your heart and mind on what God’s hope has for you. Hope springs from every kept promise of God and His unfailing love and integrity. Hoping for God to come, to act, to bring His will, to show you His way can be adventure or agony depending on Who and what you link your hope to.

***In your Quiet Circle:***

*Clearly identify where you put your hope. Affirm why waiting for God’s best is worth it.*

**Day 2: Hope Anchors**

*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.*

*Hebrews 6:19a, NIV*

Whatever hope is tied to becomes your anchor. It weights you to protect you from drifting. If your hope has the wrong anchor, you will be limited in the wrong place. Hope that finds its resting place in the gift of Christ, His love, redemption, empowerment is a hope that secures. Using Christ and His ways as our anchor keeps us from drifting into harmful self-talk or detours that push real hope farther away. Never settle for your own puny, limited reason to hope. God put hope in a manger, grew a baby into a man who understands our human experience. As you draw your Quiet Circle this day, put all your hope in Jesus for security you can find nowhere else.

***In your Quiet Circle:***

*Review where your hope for this day and week is anchored? Is it in Christ or circumstantial change? Which is more secure?*

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**Day 3: True Hope Doesn’t Disappoint**

*And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. Romans 5:5, NIV*

Hope that anchors in the person and mission of Christ is an unchanging hope, no matter the circumstances. Hope in Christ always delivers what Christ promised to bring—His life made new in you. His life infuses every situation you face with whatever you need to do His will and become like Him. What will make an eternal difference? That’s what Christ brings to answer your prayers. Truthfully, the only hope that disappoints is ours that builds on unstable dreams and desires. When we align ourselves to His will, we find that what He brings answers more than we prayed for. This is what will always lead you to hope again.

***In your Quiet Circle:***

*Consider what prayer Christ might want to answer for you today so that you will know that what He brings does not disappoint.*

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**Day 4: Bold Hope**

*Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.2 Corinthians 3:12*

Boldness is not a substitute for substance; it swells from the core belief that God is who He says He is and will always act for your greatest benefit. Boldness is another way to believe that God is for us. Take the smallest amount of hope you have about the future for you or your family, place it in God’s control where it can grow into an undeniable truth He can use to empower you with boldness to believe it. We are so used to hoping for some goal, or change, or success that we don’t know how to take our hands off so God can bring something different, bigger, better. Boldness is the by-product of a certain hope that has no other source than God Himself.

***In your Quiet Circle:***

*Ask God where you have substituted self-made determination for God-given boldness. How can Christmas truth help you rediscover boldness?*

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 **Day 5: Open Your Eyes to Hope**

*I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you. Ephesians 1:18a*

Christmas is a good time to open your eyes to the hope God calls you to have. The symbols of this hope surround us in every nativity scene we see. The shepherds opened their eyes to hope and hurried into Bethlehem to see what the angels predicted. The magi opened their eyes to a journey of many miles. Joseph opened his eyes to a call that set him against religious precedent. Mary opened her eyes to a promise that cost her mother’s heart dearly. The hope that God calls you to is not a call to convenience or comfort. It is outrageous in its demands; but utterly fulfilling in its gifts. Open your eyes to the hope Christ calls you to this Christmas and you will begin to open gifts you did not know to pray for.

***In your Quiet Circle:***

*Where have you substituted your best ideas for the call God would open your eyes to?*

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**Day 6: Certain Hope**

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.Hebrews 11:1, NIV*

The tenacity to hold on to hope in changing circumstances is more than believing that circumstances will change for the better, because they might not. If they don’t, then everything you thought you were sure of becomes the sinking sand from the parable Jesus used to warn us. How can you be sure of something you can’t see? You build your hope “on nothing less; than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.” Take your shepherd’s place in the stable, but remember it must also take you to the cross where you ask the suffering Christ to give you what He died to share. No other hope is more certain.

***In your Quiet Circle:***

*Thank Jesus for what He made certain—your salvation. Ask Him to help you want everything He died to give you.*

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**Day 7: Hold on to Hope**

*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:23*

Christmas is a time to review where we put our hope and why. Unswerving hope has no appetite for anything but what God defines it to be. Can we be bold enough to think that the Creator of all loves us with such outrageous intensity that He refuses to give us anything but the best? He gave His son in manger, His son on a cross, His son resurrected and returned to Heaven to pray for us.

***In your Quiet Circle:***

*Pray -- O Come, Lord Jesus to my stable heart. May I understand that forgiveness, redemption, and transformation bring everything I could hope for and saves me from other hopes that fail!*