

31 DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR DECEMBER

Tenacity
at
Christmas



JANET SKETCHLEY

Tenacity at Christmas: 31 Daily Devotions for December

© 2020 by Janet Sketchley janetsketchley.ca.

ISBN 978-1-989581-03-2 (print: Prayer Journal Edition)

ISBN 978-1-989581-04-9 (epub)

ISBN 978-1-989581-05-6 (mobi)

All rights reserved, in all media. Brief quotations from the devotional text are permitted in printed or electronic reviews, or on social media if properly attributed to the book and author. Otherwise, no part of this material may be reproduced or transmitted for commercial purposes in any form, without written permission of the author. Scripture quotations are governed by the copyright information below.

Permissions requests may be directed to the author via the contact page on her website:

janetsketchley.ca/contact/

Scripture quotations marked AMP are taken from the Amplified® Bible (AMP), Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. www.Lockman.org

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from the Living Bible, copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Quote from *A Christmas Carol* (December 2: "Incarnation") is from *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens. Public domain.

Cover by Janet Sketchley. Cover image: [iStock.com/Simon Lehmann](https://www.istock.com/Simon-Lehmann).

Published in Canada by Janet Sketchley.

RELIGION/ CHRISTIAN LIFE/ DEVOTIONAL/ CHRISTMAS

Foreword

And his name will be the hope of all the world.
Matthew 12:21, NLT

Think about this verse. Isn't it beautiful? Doesn't it cause a quiet peace to well up inside? His Name—Jesus—will be the hope of the whole world.

In your busyness and life circumstances, good or bad...

In your relationships, sweet or strained...

I pray you'll sense His nearness, His gentle hand cradling you, and His love lighting your heart. Because of Jesus, we have hope.

May your Christmas season bring at least one new treasured memory, and may you be blessed to be a blessing.

Janet Sketchley
Canada, 2020

PS: If you're particularly attentive to spelling, you'll notice that the Scripture quotations use US spelling, while my text is Canadian (a hybrid of UK and US). The Bible publishers are US-based, which defines their choice of spelling.

December 1

En-Joying Advent

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

Luke 2:10, NIV

Advent—the weeks leading up to Christmas, to the coming of our Saviour King.

It could be a beautiful time of reflection. Worship. Anticipation. Too often these days, it’s anything but. And maybe nothing’s changed. Not everyone was happy and peaceful in Bethlehem when God broke into human history that first Christmas Day.

In the middle of the frenzy, society has missed the point. It’s not about being “ready for Christmas” in the sense of hatches battened down, presents bought and wrapped, cards mailed, freezer stocked with goodies. It’s about being contented in Advent. Finding the joy in it and trusting that the other things will come in due time.

Today’s responsibility is to choose not to accept the calendar-driven anxiety, but to abide with God and to be alert to His presence. May we also be alert to the gift ideas and other nudges that He will give in His own good time.

Let’s take a few quiet minutes each day: hard to carve out of the whirlwind, perhaps, but of great restorative value. Read the Christmas narratives, or some of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. Listen to—truly *hear*—a Christmas carol. Sit with God and ask for His peace.

Precious Saviour, I may not like the commercialism and a lot of what North American culture adds and subtracts from the observance of Your birth, but please remind me I don’t have to beat them or join them. Show me how I can be myself, present with You and enjoying Your presence with me.

Dear Lord,

These are the things I'm concerned about today:

And these are the ways I've seen Your care today:

Help me with

Remind me of

Thank You for loving me.

Amen

December 2

Incarnation

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was
with God, and the Word was God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling
among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the
one and only Son, who came from the Father, full
of grace and truth.

John 1:1,14, NIV

Fully God, fully man... the manger scenes can distract us from this mystery, but in the words of Charles Dickens, "This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate" (*A Christmas Carol*, page 1).

We want to see Christmas as a happy, family time, filled with hope and promise, yet we're aware of the pain in the world, the brokenness. But that's why He came.

Can you imagine God choosing to confine Himself to the limitations of a baby... a growing boy... a man? In the squalor and darkness that is our Earth, after dwelling in the glory of Heaven?

He loves us enough to stoop to our level, to look us in the eyes, to carry our pain and punishment so we could be restored to relationship with Him.

Eternal God, blessed Saviour, Holy Spirit, my mind isn't big enough to grasp the mystery of the Incarnation, but I offer praise and thanks for Jesus, God made flesh, my Deliverer, my King. Thank You for setting Your love on me. Help me receive it, and help me share it.

Dear Lord,

These are the things I'm concerned about today:

And these are the ways I've seen Your care today:

Help me with

Remind me of

Thank You for loving me.

Amen

December 3

Fulfillment

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed
them.

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago).
Luke 1:68-70, NIV

This is the beginning of Zechariah's song of praise after the birth of his son and the declaration, "His name is John." During his nine months (or more!) of Heaven-sent silence because he hadn't believed the angel Gabriel's message, Zechariah must have had plenty of time to ponder.

Now the Holy Spirit fills him with words, and he pours out this beautiful declaration. It's worth reading in its entirety, verses 68-79, but today let's focus on this: "He has come to his people and redeemed them."

John the Baptist, he who is to prepare the way for the Messiah, has just been born. Jesus Himself won't be born for six more months. He hasn't really "come to His people" yet. He won't go to the Cross and sacrifice Himself for us for another 33 years.

The barest sign of completion has appeared, yet these words of praise declare the work of redemption finished.

That's trust.

God of grace and mercy, when I can't see what You're doing and the wait seems long, please strengthen my faith to count Your work as done. Help me praise You in the waiting and walk each day in trust.

Dear Lord,

These are the things I'm concerned about today:

And these are the ways I've seen Your care today:

Help me with

Remind me of

Thank You for loving me.

Amen

December 4

Preparing for His Coming

Then Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.”

Leviticus 9:6, NIV

There’s something about the Scriptures detailing the preparations for God’s coming into the Israelites’ Tabernacle, with the people freshly under his Law, that makes me wonder about the preparations for Jesus’ coming as the Son of Man to fulfill the Law and to inaugurate the rule of Grace.

In the New Testament we see the angel Gabriel’s announcement to Mary, and before that to Zechariah about the birth of John the Baptist. But God was planning since the beginning for this moment.

We’ve heard about the birth of Baby Jesus so many times that we can get kind of blasé about it, especially when we’re overwhelmed by the non-faith aspects of preparing for the holidays.

The Old Testament is a good cure for blasé-ness about God. It’s a reminder of the mystery of this Unknowable One who reveals Himself to us.

Let’s pause this Advent season to remember just Who it is that we’re preparing to welcome.

Jesus, long-promised Saviour, thank You that I don’t have to fall down in fear at the manger because You came to rescue, not to condemn. May Your Holy Spirit draw me to my knees in awe and worship. Let my heart prepare You room.

Dear Lord,

These are the things I'm concerned about today:

And these are the ways I've seen Your care today:

Help me with

Remind me of

Thank You for loving me.

Amen

ALSO BY JANET SKETCHLEY

The Redemption's Edge Series:

Heaven's Prey

Secrets and Lies

Without Proof

The Green Dory Inn Mysteries:

Unknown Enemy

Hidden Secrets

Book 3 (TBA)

Book 4 (TBA)

Nonfiction:

A Year of Tenacity

365 Daily Devotions to Warm Your Spirit and Encourage Your Heart

Reads to Remember

A book lover's journal to track your next 100 reads
(paperback only, available with two cover choices)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Janet Sketchley's other devotional book is *A Year of Tenacity: 365 Daily Devotions to Warm Your Spirit and Encourage Your Heart*. She has also produced a fill-in reader's journal, *Reads to Remember: A book lover's journal to track your next 100 reads* (only available in print, with two different cover design options), and she's a contributor to the Hot Apple Cider inspirational anthology series.

She's an Atlantic Canadian writer who likes her fiction with a splash of mystery or adventure as well as a dash of Christianity. Why leave faith out of our stories if it's part of our lives? Janet's fiction includes the Green Dory Inn mystery series and the Redemption's Edge Christian suspense series. You can find her online at janetsketchley.ca.

Janet loves Jesus and her family, and enjoys reading, worship music, and tea. Fans of Christian suspense are invited to join her writing journey through her author newsletter: bit.ly/JanetSketchleyNews or follow her on Bookbub at bookbub.com/authors/janet-sketchley.