



Welcome to the 12 Days of Christmas devotion and reading plan! The 12 Days of Christmas are traditionally celebrated starting on Christmas Day, December 25th and ending with Epiphany on January 6th. There is much debate on if the famous Christmas carol "12 Days of Christmas" has any hidden or significant meaning, however, there are some traditions that say each day represents a Christian teaching. Our time in the Word can get muddled and missed among all the holiday festivities, so this devotion takes the silliness of the 12 days of Christmas and matches them with a bit of meaning and Scripture to read from Christmas Day to Epiphany. May the Lord bless the reading of His Word and encourage you as you see His incredible redemptive plan throughout the Scriptures.

December 25th: 1st day of Christmas: A Partridge in a Pear Tree

Jesus came into the world in order to reconcile sinful man back to God. His birth led the way to his death on a tree (cross), and he became the Savior of the world, the greatest gift ever to be given.

Read Luke 2:1-20

Describe how Jesus came into the world and ways people worshiped Him.

December 26th: 2nd Day of Christmas: Two Turtle Doves

The two birds represent the Old and New Testaments. This is the complete story of God's plan for the world and contains all we need life and godliness. There are 66 total books in the Bible and every word was breathed out by God (2 Timothy 2:16). God used approximately 40 men over the course of 1500 years to write the Bible.

Read: 1 Peter 1:10-25

Describe the prophets who foretold about the coming Christ.

December 27th: 3rd Day of Christmas: Three French Hens

The three French hens represent faith, hope, and love which are gifts of the Holy Spirit that remain forever. These three gifts are for all Christians and abide eternally.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Discuss the great of these gifts: Love; what are some things love does and doesn't do?

December 28th: 4th Day of Christmas: Four Calling Birds

These four birds represent the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. The Gospels are the eyewitness accounts of our Lord and Savior Jesus.

Read Luke 1:1-4; John 21:24-25

Discuss a few observations about the authors of Luke and John.

December 29th: 5th Day of Christmas: Five Golden Rings

The five golden rings represent the first five books of the Bible called the Pentateuch. Bible scholars believe Moses authored the first five books, and Jesus himself refers to this section of the Old Testament as the "Law of Moses." Penta means "five" and tuechos is translated as "scroll."

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-25

Discuss why the law was a blessing to the people.

December 30th: 6th Day of Christmas: Six Geese A-Laying

The six geese laying six eggs represent the six days of creation. God created the world in six days and rested on day seven. It's why every week is seven days on our calendar.

Read Genesis 1

Identify what God created on each day of the six days of creation.

December 31st: 7th Day of Christmas: Seven Swans A-Swimming

The seven swans represent the seven spiritual gifts. Each gift is given by God to his people according to his grace and choice. The gifts are to be used to build up the church and glorify the Lord.

Read Romans 12:1-8

Identify these seven spiritual gifts and discuss how they build up the church.

January 1st: 8th Day of Christmas: Eight Maids A-Milking

According to history, being a milk maid was a low-ranking job in England during the time this song was written. In the "Beattitudes" listed in Jesus' sermon on the mount, we know that Jesus came to save the humble. The eight descriptions of the lowly and blessed are described in Matthew 5: poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.

Read Matthew 5:1-12

Discuss the blessings received by the lowly and humble in heart.

January 2nd: 9th Day of Christmas: Nine Ladies Dancing

The nine dancers represent the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits are evidence of our salvation and the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work happening in our hearts.

Read Galatians 5:13-26

Discuss the difference between the fruits of the Spirit and the works of the flesh. (Tip: pick a few fruits and works and define them.)

January 3rd: 10th Day of Christmas: Ten Lords A-Leaping

The lords represent the judges who were in charge of the law. The Law in Scripture refers to the 10 Commands given to Moses to give and teach the people. The Law teaches people how to love God and how to love others.

Read Exodus 20:1-21

Discuss how we are to love God and love others.

January 4th: 11th Day of Christmas: Eleven Pipers Piping

The 11 pipers represent the 11 disciples of our Lord Jesus who were faithful to the end. Jesus had 12 disciples during His earthly ministry but one disciple betrayed Him. The disciples became apostles after Christ ascended to heaven and preached the good news of the Gospel making more disciples of Christ.

Read Acts 1:1-26

Discuss who replaced Judas Iscariot as a disciple and how they disciples made that decision.

January 5th: 12th Day of Christmas: Twelve Drummers Drumming

The 12 drummers represent the 12 points of doctrine in the Apostles Creed. The Apostles Creed was written about 150 years after the apostles had all died, but is supposed to be a record of what they taught. It is a good summary of Christian doctrine.

The Apostles Creed:
I believe in God, the Father
Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and
earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only
Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived of the
Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was
buried.
He descended into hades.

The third day He arose again
from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of
God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to
judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the
holy catholic church,
the communion of the saints;
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

Read Acts 5:12-42

Discuss who the apostles obeyed and why.

January 6th: Epiphany

Epiphany is the day celebrated by Christians when the Magi visited Jesus, bringing gifts to worship the true King. It is unknown how many magi (or wise men) visited Jesus and it is a misconception that they visited Jesus at His birth. The magi most likely came days, months, or even years later indicated by where they visited and worshipped Jesus (in a house), and the fact that Herod requested all male children two and under be killed in an attempt to dispose of this new King. The three gifts presented were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Tradition presents meaning to the three gifts: gold being symbolic of Jesus' divinity; frankincense was burned making a pleasant offering to God. Jesus was our sacrifice that pleased God. Myrrh was an embalming spice which was sometimes put into wine; it was offered to Jesus on the cross (referred to as gall). Myrrh foretells the great suffering and bitterness Jesus endured in his sacrifice on the cross for our sin.

Read Matthew 2:1-23

Discuss how the wise men worship Jesus and why they disobeyed King Herod.