

The Advent Calendar

Worrying

Circumstances seemed to always get in the way. There was so much to do and so little time to do it in, and yet one thing after another kept them from success. There was no doubt that what lay before them was God's great plan, and yet God seemed to have abandoned them and left them to their own devices ... and their own devices were nowhere near enough to deliver them. All that seemed to be left was to fret, to worry, to bite their nails, and give into despair. And yet, there's that promise: "I've chosen you ... I will uphold you."

Isaiah 41:8–10

1. The truth is, some of our worries are _____ .
2. God has chosen *you* for some _____ .
3. The key to God's promises are found in the phrase "For I am your God." (v 10) –The question is: have you made _____
_____?

My Count Me In! Commitment

- I'll be here next Sunday
- I'll invite a friend
- I will make a "Worry List" and sort through to see which worries are my own fault and which ones are beyond my control.
- If I'm struggling with the worries I'm responsible for, I'll check out Celebrate Recovery (Mondays at 7:00 PM CST)
- I will do whatever it takes to persevere through the worries beyond my control because of God's promises.

Additional Notes

Digging Deeper

Week of December 13, 2020
The Advent Calendar: Worrying

Scripture: Isaiah 41:8–10

Introduction: In a perfect world, Advent would be less a time of “preparation” and more a time for quiet reflection, peace, tranquility, kicking back, and enjoying the beauty and joy and goodwill of the season. Last I checked, that’s not the world most of us live in. Instead, Advent brings a slew of anxieties, fears, guilts, shames, and worry. Worry robs us of our sleep, but worse, it robs us of the life abundant Jesus promised – which was the whole point of his birth. During the Babylonian captivity, some 600 years before the Christmas story, the Israelites were struggling to find peace in their own time of preparation while they waited for a deliverer ... a messiah that they’d lost all hope in. And then God spoke ...

1. Read Isaiah 41:8–10. This is the introduction to a much longer Promise Passage where God reminds Israel that he is with them. In these three verses, jot down each of the promises God gives to his people.
2. Read through the account of the “Babylonian Exile” at Wikipedia.com. Describe the conditions for those who remained in the city of Jerusalem.
3. How difficult do you think it would be to maintain your faith when the only “church building” in town was destroyed and all of the trained, educated pastors deported? What are some of the similarities between those living in that time and those of us who are exiled from our church building today?
4. Although the Covid exile has lasted about 40 weeks for us (so far), the Babylonian exile lasted over 70 years. What do you think the Jerusalem residents could have done to maintain their faith?
5. Glance through the rest of Isaiah 41. Do you think the Jerusalem residents received these words with gladness or with skepticism?
6. Read John 14:1–21. Jot down the promises Jesus makes to those who are his disciples. Do you think the American Church receives these words with gladness or with skepticism? Why do you think that is?
7. Do you *really* think the promises Jesus made reflect reality? How does your life reflect that?

Next Week: The Advent Calendar: Wonder. The holiday season is a time for waiting, watching, and wondering ... what brings you great wonder?