

**Q: Why rejoice?**

**A: Hope**

Psalms 33:20-22, Psalms 40:11, Luke 2:28-32, Luke 11:36, 1 Peter 1:3-4

**Understanding weariness.**

**We are part of His grand story.**

Hebrews 11:1-12:3

**Hope comes in unexpected ways.**

Matthew 2:1-12

**Remembering builds hope.**

## NEXT STEPS

*Use these study questions to turn a message into a conversation.*

### Food for Thought

Read Luke 1

The story of Jesus' birth is a story of unexpected circumstances. In the most unlikely of ways love came to the world. Hope and mercy fills the world.

Review the following verses of hope: Psalm 33:20-22; Psalms 40:11; Luke 2:28-32; Luke 11:36; 1 Peter 1:3-4

Make a list of the ways God has shown hope and mercy. Remembering builds our hope and is another aspect of a heart that worships fully.

This week try to worship fully in all you do by recognizing God around you.

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The story of Christ's birth is a miraculous story of love expressed in an unlikely way. It's a story of promise, hope and a revolutionary love that is still changing the world to this day. What if Christmas became a world-changing event again by turning our focus back to the birth of Christ? What could happen to your family if this focus was celebrated in loud, bold and totally unexpected ways? What if you could actually trade your season of stress for a season of celebration and unbelievable memories with your friends and family? What if all of this could change a life at the same time? It can.

**Welcome to Advent Conspiracy!**

**[Worship Fully]** It starts with Jesus. It ends with Jesus. This is the holistic approach God had in mind for Christmas. It's a season where we are called to put down our burdens and lift a song up to our God. It's a season where love wins, peace reigns, and a king is celebrated with each breath. It's the party of the year. Entering the story of advent means entering this season with an overwhelming passion to worship Jesus to the fullest.

**[Spend Less]** Before you think we're getting all Scrooge on you, let us explain what we mean. We like gifts. Our kids really like gifts. But consider this: America spends an average of \$450 billion a year every Christmas. How often have you spent money on Christmas presents for no other reason than obligation? How many times have you received a gift out of that same obligation? Thanks, but no thanks, right? We're asking people to consider buying ONE LESS GIFT this Christmas. Just one. Sounds insignificant, yet many who have taken this small sacrifice have experienced something nothing less than a miracle: They have been more available to celebrate Christ during the advent season.

**[Give More]** God's gift to us was a relationship built on love. So it's no wonder why we're drawn to the idea that Christmas should be a time to love our friends and family in the most memorable ways possible. Time is the real gift Christmas offers us, and no matter how hard we look, it can't be found at the mall. Time to make a gift that turns into the next family heirloom. Time to write mom a letter. Time to take the kids sledding. Time to bake really good cookies and sing really bad Christmas carols. Time to make love visible through relational giving.

**[Love All]** When Jesus loved, He loved in ways never imagined. Though rich, he became poor to love the poor, the forgotten, the overlooked and the sick. He played to the margins. By spending less at Christmas we have the opportunity to join Him in giving resources to those who need help the most. As we, as a community of faith, continue to take hold of these simple steps in Advent Conspiracy, we have been able to feed and help and support many individuals and families in our community. One less gift, unbelievable presence in the name of Christ.

**This week look for ways to join the Advent Conspiracy by making it a part of your week.**

**Worship fully** by recognizing YOU are part of an amazing love story written by the hand of God.

**Spend less** by looking for ways to give relationally to friends and family. Share your story of hope with someone you care about, it costs nothing but the gift is priceless.

**Give more** by putting together a food box for a family this season. There is a suggested food list in the foyer or online. Also the giving tree has information on meeting needs in our community.

**Love all** by giving the gift of invitation. Invite someone to join you in worship this season. Invite someone to explore the festive lights in the community. Taking an old fashioned drive around town or watching the Christmas boats is a great relational time—finish up with a cup of cocoa. The key is to express love and care to others by giving of your self.