

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

29 center
(verb)
\ 'sen-tər

30 memory
(noun)
\ 'mem-rē

1 silence
(noun)
\ 'sī-lən(t)s

2 grief
(noun)
\ 'grēf

3 believe
(verb)
\ bə-'lēv

4 guide
(verb)
\ 'gīd

5 dark
(noun)
\ 'därk

6 breathe
(verb)
\ 'brēth

7 faith
(noun)
\ 'fāth

8 walk
(verb)
\ 'wɔk

9 break
(verb)
\ 'brāk

10 grace
(noun)
\ 'grās

11 give
(verb)
\ 'giv

12 light
(noun)
\ 'līt

13 bless
(verb)
\ 'bles

14 love
(verb)
\ 'ləv

15 peace
(noun)
\ 'pēs

16 remember
(verb)
\ ri-'mem-bər

17 love
(noun)
\ 'ləv

18 sing
(verb)
\ 'sɪŋ

19 reverberation
(noun)
\ ri-'vər-bə-'rā-shən

20 adore
(verb)
\ ə-'dɔr

21 hope
(verb)
\ 'hōp

22 child
(noun)
\ 'chī(-ə)ld

23 receive
(verb)
\ ri-'jɔis

24 rejoice
(verb)
\ ri-'jɔis

NOUNS & VERBS ADVENT 2020



Genia Rocco Thomas

- 1** **silence** Find time today for silence. No distractions. No notifications or interruptions. **Sit still** for 3 minutes of silence. How has God been good? How have you felt disappointed? **Reflect** on Psalm 46:10: How is He reflected in you in your nation? **Listen** to your favorite version of Silent Night.
- 2** **grief** "Great grief isn't made to fit inside your body. It's why your heart breaks," said Ann Voskamp in *The Broken Way*. What are you grieving today? **Place** your hand where you feel the grief most in your body. **Take** two deep breaths. **Reflect** on Isaiah 53:3: How does Christ hold the grief he felt?
- 3** **believe** "I believe, Lord help my unbelief!" Mark 9:24 is so raw and real. **Read** that passage. **Ask** yourself what you are struggling to believe right now. What miracle are you reaching for? **Fill** in the blank and **meditate** on it today. "Lord, I believe that You can _____."
- 4** **guide** Honestly, I know the Word is a lamp unto our feet (Ps. 119:105), but that is in tension with how often is the Word is interpreted in oppressive ways. **Think** through that tension for a minute. What feels most tense to you? **Determine** how you can stay connected to the Word while recognizing its potentially harmful power. **Consider** reading books by biblical scholars on interpreting well.
- 5** **dark** "...new life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark," said Barbara Brown Taylor in *Learning to Walk in the Dark*. Today, intentionally sit in darkness, at least for one minute. **Listen. Breathe. Stay still. Say** a prayer about darkness.

6

breathe

In Genesis 2:7, God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." The Spirit of God is called the Holy Ruach (or breath). **Consider** why God's breath has so much power. **Meditate** on the Breath of Life as you **take** two deep breaths with your hand on your chest to feel your lungs inflate.

7

faith

In Matthew 17:20 Jesus tells his disciples that if they have faith as *small* as a mustard seed, they can move mountains. In a world where so much is measured in largeness, Jesus gave a measurement of smallness. **Reflect**: what smallness of faith can you hold onto today? **Say** a prayer of thanksgiving for that smallness.

8

walk

I often think of Jacob's limp (from Genesis 32). It's the people of faith who limp I trust the most. They've had no easy lives. They walk in pain, and so very often walk toward others in pain rather than away from them. **Examine** your own walk with the Lord. In what areas do you limp? **Interpret** how those areas might lead you to minister to others.

9

break

"The [Eucharist] sacrament, when not administered in coercion and anxiety, is a gesture of divine abundance that breaks the scarcity system," says Walter Brueggemann in *Journey to the Common Good*. **Reflect** on how God breaking bread bursts open abundance. **Investigate** where in your own life brokenness has made way for abundance.

10

grace

In 2 Corinthians 12:9 Paul says the Lord tells him: "My grace is enough for you, because power is made perfect in weakness." **Differentiate** grace as the Lord sees it and grace as we see it. Is it the same? **Reflect** how grace and power are connected. **Mediate** on God's enoughness for you today.

11 give

Luke 6:38 says, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good amount will be poured into your lap. It will be pressed down, shaken together, and running over." **Notice** it doesn't say, it will be given to you first and then you give. **Reflect** on how you can give even before receiving. **Decide** on one way you can give *before* you receive this week.

12 light

John 1 says, "What came into being through the Word was life, and the life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light. **Reflect** on all that has felt dark this year. **List** your disappointments before God. **Consider** where God has shone through despite the hardness of this year.

13 bless

At the Last Supper (Matt 26) Christ blesses the bread. "While gratitude seems innocent enough, it is a revolutionary idea. In a consumer society, contentment is a radical proposition," said Robin Wall Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass*. During this very consumeristic season, **ask** yourself what can you be grateful for right now in this moment even if you bought nothing & received nothing for Christmas? **Consider** how you can find contentment apart from consumerism.

14 love

The verb love is described in 1 Cor 13 with several other verbs: "Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things." **Critique** your own acts of love over the past two days. **Reflect**: does your love put up with, trust in, hope for and endure? **Decide** on one action you can take to move toward this type of love.

15 peace

In Isaiah 9, Christ is called the Prince of Peace. In John 14, Christ says he gives us his peace which is distinct from how the world gives peace. **Consider** what ways you find your own peace in the systems of this world. **Discuss** with someone else the difference between Christ's peace and the world's, and why it is critical to find our peace in Christ.

16

remember

Do you remember the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt 18)? **Consider** a time when you forgot the anguish of your own oppression & refused to acknowledge the oppression of others. **Reflect**: how does remembering keep us from sin? **Judge** whether you think remembering can be a shield in our battle against powers and principalities.

17

love

Jeremiah 31:3 says "I have loved you with a love that lasts forever. And so with unfailing love, I have drawn you to myself." **Contrast** God's unfailing love with the best love you have to give. **Demonstrate** that love today in one selfless act.

18

sing

What is your favorite song? Why is it your favorite? **Meditate** on Luke 1: 46-55, Mary's Song. What section of her words are most challenging to you? **Listen** to the song *Sing Mary Sing* by Jennifer Knapp. **Sing** along with a favorite song or sing a new song today.

19

reverberation

Hope is an intergenerational reverberation that pulses from the beginning of time through the present to eternity & back again. **Reflect** on Job 14:7: What seed of hope has been as resilient as the tree that is cut down and grows again, despite the drought of 2020? **Write** down one hope you have for 2021.

20

adore

In John 12:3, Mary anoints Jesus' feet with a pound of expensive perfume. "The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume." In Song of Songs 1:3, "Your fragrance is sweet; your very name is perfume." **Listen** to the song *Oh Come Let Us Adore Him*, and **engage** your sense of smell: **light** a candle or **infuse** essential oils & **imagine** adoring Christ as Mary did.

21

hope

Hope came in the deepest cry of Christ's humanity (Matt 27:46) God! Why have you forsaken me? Papa! Where are you? I can't see or sense you. Come! **Consider** how hope comes when we mimic his cry; when we don't cover our authenticity in a mask of who we think we ought to be. **Examine** how you can **uncover** your authenticity and **unmask** your vulnerability with God.

22

child

Christ came as a child. **Mediate** on that. Reflect on how a child teaches us to ask our father for a cold glass of water. Christ, the child, grows in awkwardness & grace into the Prince of Peace he always has been and ever will be. **Consider** how children remind us to come to Christ in all our mess and humanity. **Hug** or **bless** a child in your life today.

23

receive

Christ, in Luke 11:10, tell us to ask and we will receive. **Read** Luke 11:5-10. **Reflect** on how communal this ask-and-you-will-receive context is within the passage. **Critique** yourself: are you too prideful to ask those around you when you are in need? **Consider** how human it is to *need*, and therefore, *ask*, and therefore *receive*. **Share** a need with a friend today.

24

rejoice

The feasts of the Old Testament pointed to a culture of celebration. **Dance** in the kitchen (or elsewhere) with your family to your favorite dance song. 2020 has been long and hard for all of us. **Commit** to celebrating the little things and inviting others into your celebration. Christ is coming, Christ has come, The Light of the World is here, dwelling among us!

Thank you so much for joining in this Advent season. I pray God feels near, and even if he doesn't, you will know without a doubt, that he is.

God with us, forever and ever. Amen.

— Gena Ruocco Thomas