



PASTOR KATHY'S WEEKLY DEVOTION

Devotion for Dec. 5-11

Second Week of Advent

Word for the week: Prepare

Of course, we prepare for Christmas! There's the stack of Christmas cards to send out, the gifts to buy, the parties to attend and/or host. But when we arrive on Dec. 25, do we feel full of joy or just plain tuckered out?

Here's my tip on how to prepare for Christmas: Keep in mind what Jesus said when asked what was the greatest commandment. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. And the second is, love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandments are greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31)

So to feel Christmas joy, keep J-O-Y in its proper order: Jesus, Others, You:

- **J**esus: My brother has a birthday on Christmas Day, and often feels it gets overlooked in all of our Christmas celebrations. How much more does Jesus feel this way? During Advent, be intentional about keeping Jesus first. Be sure to have a daily time to read scripture or a devotional. Set up prayer time for all persons in your household. Keep Jesus first in this season – and see how this can become a great habit for the year that follows.
- **O**thers: Don't make the holidays all about you – what is on your gift list or your desire for family gatherings. Think about what would truly bring joy to your loved ones, and work toward that end. And beyond those you know, expand your vision of your neighbor to include a stranger. Give anonymously to a good need by sneaking cash into a Salvation Army kettle or extra toys into the Toys for Tots collections.
- **Y**ou: After you have Jesus and others in place, take time for you. Don't feel guilty about taking a day away from the holiday madness to do something for you. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves, and so we are allowed to be good to us too during this season.

God bless you in this Advent season with peace, love and JOY!
Pastor Kathy