

HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED

DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

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Wonderful Counselor

For to us a child is born, . . . and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor.

ISAIAH 9:6

Many people in our culture today are looking for counsel about life's problems and even the purpose of life itself. Some seek counsel from family or friends. Others seek counsel from trained psychologists or clergy of various religions. Some of this counsel may be good, if it is in line with God's Word. But much of the counsel available in our culture today is in conflict with God's Word and leads people away from God and into sin and confusion.

In Isaiah chapter 9, we learn that the Son of God will be given various titles, and one of these titles is "Wonderful Counselor." The Son of God speaks to us on behalf of the Father. His teaching is given to us through His prophets and apostles in Holy Scripture (see Hebrews 1:1–3). Christ's counsel teaches us many things that we need to know—where the world came from, why there is suffering and death, how God wants us to live. But Christ's counsel especially shows us that we can be set free from sin and reconciled to God because of His sacrificial work for us (see Matthew 1:21; 20:28; John 3:16–17; 8:31–32).

Wonderful Counselor, help me to learn from Your Word that sets me free from a life of sin so that I might live as Your dearly loved child forever.

Did God Really Say?

[The serpent] said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

GENESIS 3:1

If Christianity were true,” asks the skeptic, “would you want to be a Christian?” Sadly, many say “No!” This shows that their problem with Christianity is not lack of evidence. Their problem with Christianity is that they don’t like God’s wonderful counsel in Holy Scripture.

The devil deceived Adam and Eve by tempting them to doubt God’s Word (see Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 20:2). The devil continues to tempt us to doubt God’s wonderful counsel—and every time we sin in desire, thought, word, or deed, we are guilty of believing the devil’s lie just like Adam and Eve did.

The good news is that God’s Son has defeated Satan and our sin for us! The devil tried to tempt Jesus to doubt God’s Word (see Luke 4:1–12), but He remained faithful. Even when Christ was on the cross, the devil worked through people to tempt Him to save Himself (see Luke 4:13; 23:35–39). But God’s Son stayed on the cross *for you* because He loves you!

The Holy Spirit moves us to trust God’s wonderful counsel because His Son loved us enough to die for our sins of doubting His Word.

Dear Jesus, thank You for dying for my sin of doubting Your Word and for helping me to trust Your wonderful counsel.

God Spoke All These Words

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

EXODUS 20:1–2

Some think God spoke the Ten Commandments so that by obeying them we might merit His mercy and eternal life. But this is not the purpose of God's Law.

God's Law is not a means for us to merit God's mercy. Instead, God's Law shows us how to love God and our neighbor. But since we inherited a sinful nature from Adam (see Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22), we rebel against God's Law. As a result, the Law exposes our sin and shows us we deserve God's wrath (see Romans 3:19–20).

But God has rescued us from the slavery of our sin. In fact, the first word God spoke to His people in Exodus chapter 20 was Gospel—declaring that He had saved them from slavery in Egypt. In an even greater way, God's Son has rescued us from the slavery of sin and death (see John 8:34–36; Colossians 1:13–14).

Christ fulfilled God's Law for us and was condemned for our sin against God's Law (see Romans 8:1–4), and now we are free to view the wonderful counsel of God's Law as a guide for how we are to love God and our neighbor (see Romans 12:1–2; 13:9–10).

Lord, thank You for rescuing me from my sin against Your Law, and help me to live according to it.

God's Word on Our Hearts

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

DEUTERONOMY 6:6

God's Word is more than mere information. By His Word God spoke creation into existence (see Genesis 1:1–3; Hebrews 11:1–3). His Gospel Word is the power of our salvation (see Romans 1:16–17).

In 2 Corinthians 4:6, the apostle Paul writes, “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

We who have been saved view the wonderful counsel of God's Word as a precious gift. God's Word shows us how He wants us to live so that we can avoid sin and live according to His loving will for our lives (see Psalm 119:11). Even more, God's Word points us to His Son, who suffered in our place of punishment and conquered death for us so that we can be forgiven and live now and forever as God's people.

In 2 Timothy 3:14–15, the apostle Paul writes, “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Lord, help me to study Your Word so that it may be in my mind and heart.