

NATIVITY

WEEK 3: LABOR OF LOVE

DAY 1: READ HEBREWS 12

From the perspective of the Trinity, how was Jesus' birth, death and resurrection a labor of love? As Christ-followers who look through a new lens at an eternal perspective, how are our lives a labor of love? What does this passage tell us about the difficult, labor aspect of our life in service to Christ? Why is it important to continue on, not lose heart and cling to the Word and Living Spirit of God?

DAY 2: READ ROMANS 8

Let this be an encouragement to you. Paul describes the eager longing of creation to be set free from the bondage of corruption (through Jesus) as the pains of childbirth. As we encounter the frustrating, seemingly impossible pains of life with Jesus in a fallen world, let's remember to cling to the hope we have in Jesus. Reflect on what it means to have the Spirit of God dwelling in you and interceding for you, even in the midst of these circumstances.

DAY 3: READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5

In the ESV translation, "groaning" is repeatedly used to describe our longing for our heavenly home in the presence of God in the Highest. A life of obedience to Jesus means we no longer live for the things of our flesh or think about this life in terms of our fleshly desires or circumstances. Are you still thinking/acting in the mindset of our old, dead lives? How? If the old has died and the new has come, what would this new perspective look like for you in those situations?



DAY 4: READ GALATIANS 4:1-20

What does this passage say about our enslavement and, therein, the significance of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection? Paul describes us as being adopted into God's household. If we, as Christ-followers, are truly adopted sons/daughters of God, what does that say about God's willingness to come to us through the birth of Jesus? What does it say about Jesus' willingness to endure and persist in God's plan?

DAY 5: READ DEUTERONOMY 8

Just like Moses, Mary, John the Baptist, the disciples, the Israelites, the prophets and, ultimately, Jesus, we endure trials, temptations, hardship or persecution in faithful confidence of God's plan to redeem and restore. Reflect on verses 2-10. Maybe you've been through a hard time or are going through one right now. How has God used these tough, unknown times to test you, strengthen you or demonstrate His righteous ability and desire to care for you or those around you? If you don't know, take time today to pray and reflect on the past/present situation to try and understand how the Lord is at work in your circumstances. He is faithful and His promises remain true.

DAY 6: READ 2 SAMUEL 7

In verses 18-29, David responds to the word of the Lord brought to him by Nathan the prophet. How does David respond? What is the attitude of his heart? If we, like David, trust in the faithful promises of God, our response should be similar. Take time to thank God for the birth, death and resurrection of His Son. Now, like David, confidently trust in God's promises as we serve him and eagerly look for His return.

DAY 7: READ PSALM 94 & PSALM 119

Whether for discipline or because of persecution, choose today to give God glory and thanks for the great things He has done through Jesus and has still promised to do. Remember the ways His words have been proven true. Reflect on what happens when we forget His words or refuse His ways. Regardless of circumstance, emotion or plans, choose to delight in His Spirit today. Spend time talking with Him and patiently listening. He is present.