

Follow Along Advent Reading, Day 1



Shopping, wrapping, baking. Cooking, traveling, caroling. Although Christmas is one of the busiest times of the year, I try to make it a priority to prepare my heart during the Advent season. This year in my search for an Advent devotional, I happened upon a free seven-day devotional on the Bible app that is based upon the paintings of artist Ron Dicianni called A Painted Advent.

I've been enjoying this beautiful devotional, and each day as I read, I record my thoughts about that day's topic. I thought it might be interesting to share my writings each day. If you are also reading A Painted Advent, I'd love if you could add your thoughts in the comment section.

If you'd like, you can make reading your devotion a cozy time. Try lighting a beeswax candle, playing soft Christmas music in the background, or adding whatever you'd like to make it special. Please share your ideas below.

Let's get started.

Day 1 Thoughts from Luke 1:1-38

Question: What can I learn from Luke 1?

Answer: With God I can expect the unexpected!

How amazing that the two women who bore the most important children in the Christmas story (John the Baptist and Jesus) were beyond the ability to be pregnant.

Elizabeth was an old woman beyond childbearing years and had been barren all her married life. Mary was an unmarried virgin.

Yet God didn't let these realities stop Him. He chose these two not for their "fitness" for the job, but because of the fitness of their hearts.

Luke 1:6 tells us that both Zacharias and Elizabeth "were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." Gabriel also tells Zacharias in verse 13 that "your prayer is heard."

And in Luke 1:28 the angel Gabriel tells Mary "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women." When Mary became frightened in verse 30, he told her not to be afraid for "she has found favor with God."

How this should give us hope in our own lives! God can do anything as He sees fit, and He saw fit to use an old woman and a virgin as moms in the Christmas story. Because of this, we too can expect the unexpected because God is always on the look for willing people ready to be used by Him. As Gabriel explained to Mary in verse 36, "For with God nothing will be impossible."

**Two words are so important there:
with God. With God changes
everything.**

When we charge ahead in our own strength, we will miss the blessing God has for others and ourselves.

But when we make *with God* the basis of our lives, dreams, and plans, we greatly expand the effectiveness, the possibilities, the potential harvest because we open ourselves up to His power.

With God opens up the possibility of expecting the unexpected.

What do you think? Share your thoughts below.