



A SOUL CARE ADVENT A PAPER CHAIN TO FREEDOM

Come experience Christmas like never before — remembering that The Greatest Gift Jesus has ever given us... is all that He has taken away from us... all He has lifted off of us, released us from, liberated us from – to live full lives of freedom!

This Paper Chain to Freedom is both a countdown to Christmas and a daily invitation to exhale into the relief of the freedom Jesus gives you.

Instructions

- Print the paper chain double-sided, and cut each strip.
- Form each link into a circle, and glue or staple the ends together.
- Connect the links to form a long chain.
- Beginning on December 1, tear off one link, read the Scripture passage and devotional, and reflect on what Jesus frees you from.
- Watch the chain grow shorter and your heart grow lighter as you move toward the celebration of His coming.



Day 1

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us.” –Psalm 103:12

The Greatest Gift you've ever been given is what Jesus takes away: Every single thing you've ever got wrong. All you've got wrong is not removed just an inch or two – but an incalculable, infinite distance from you. You get the gift of nothing separating you from the love of God, and the gift of being infinitely separated from your sin.

How can your soul not move closer to the One who removes all the wrong you never could?

Day 2

“Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you.” –Psalm 55:22

The Greatest Gift is that you get to let go and cast off all that's too much to carry and you get to relax into His arms carrying you through. God's big enough to carry all you were never meant to. Grace is weightless.

Day 3

“Are you tired? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life.

I'll show you how to take a real rest... Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”

–Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift is you don't have to keep up, you just get to keep company with Jesus who lets you rest deeply – living freely and lightly. Jesus doesn't just lift your load—He lifts your chin, your hopes, your heart, your whole life.

Day 4

“Look at Him... Never hide your feelings from him.

When you look to Him, your face will never be ashamed.” –Psalm 34:5 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift your soul gets is for all your feelings to find their safest home in Him. You get to look into the eyes of the One looking into yours with smiling love.

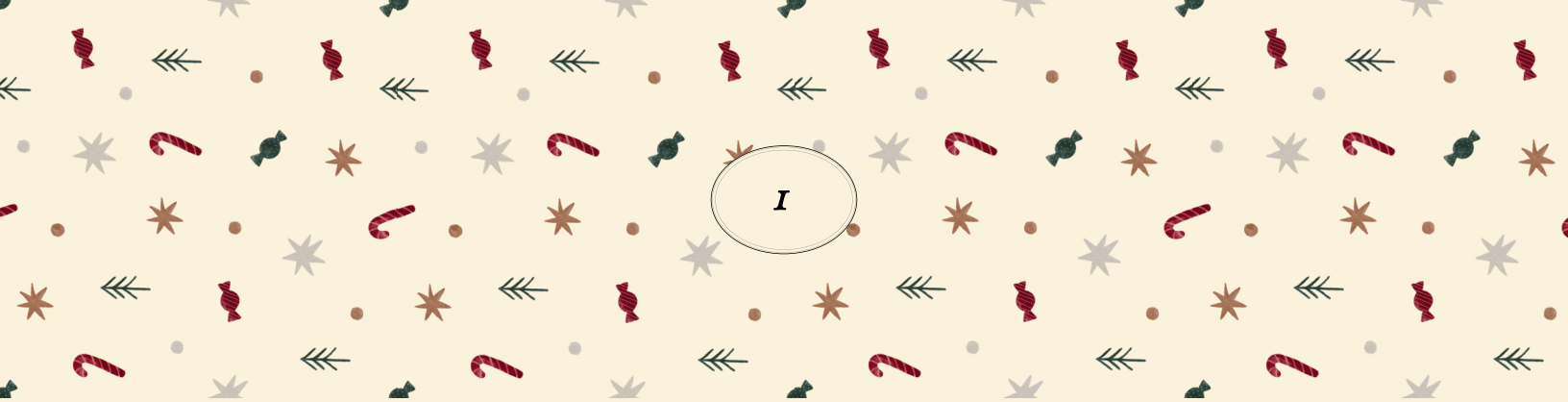
In His eyes, you get to find yourself free from all shame.

Day 5

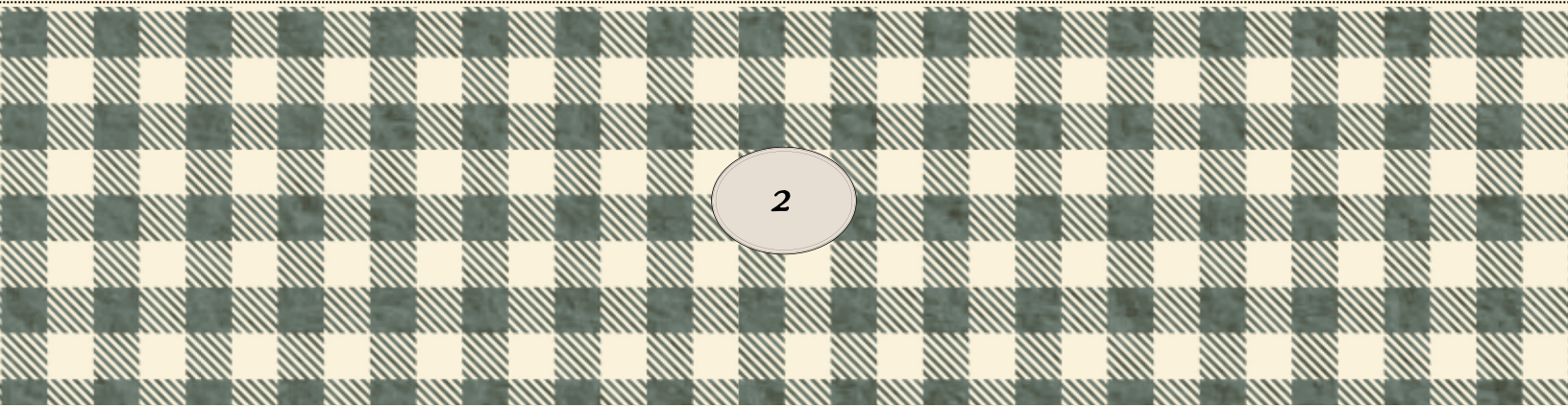
“He'll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone.”

–Revelation 21:4 (MSG)

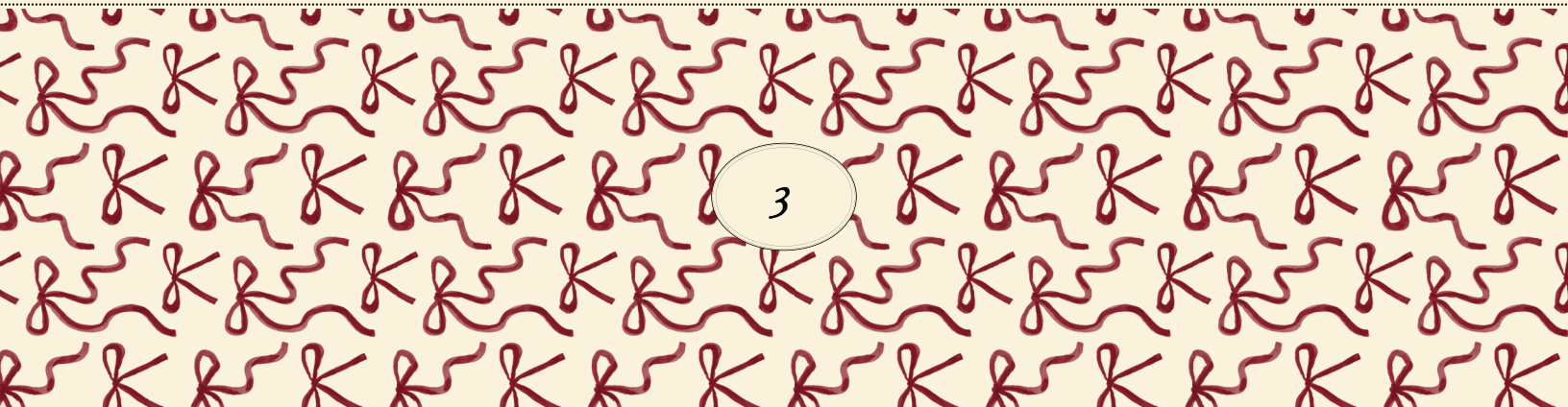
The Greatest Gift your soul gets is what's going to be gone for good. All you've ever wanted gone, will be gone for good: all the brokenness, all the darkness, all the sadness. He's coming to gently wipe away every single tear, wipe away every single mess, wipe away every single sin and undo all that's ever wrecked you. All your pain has the relief of an expiration date.



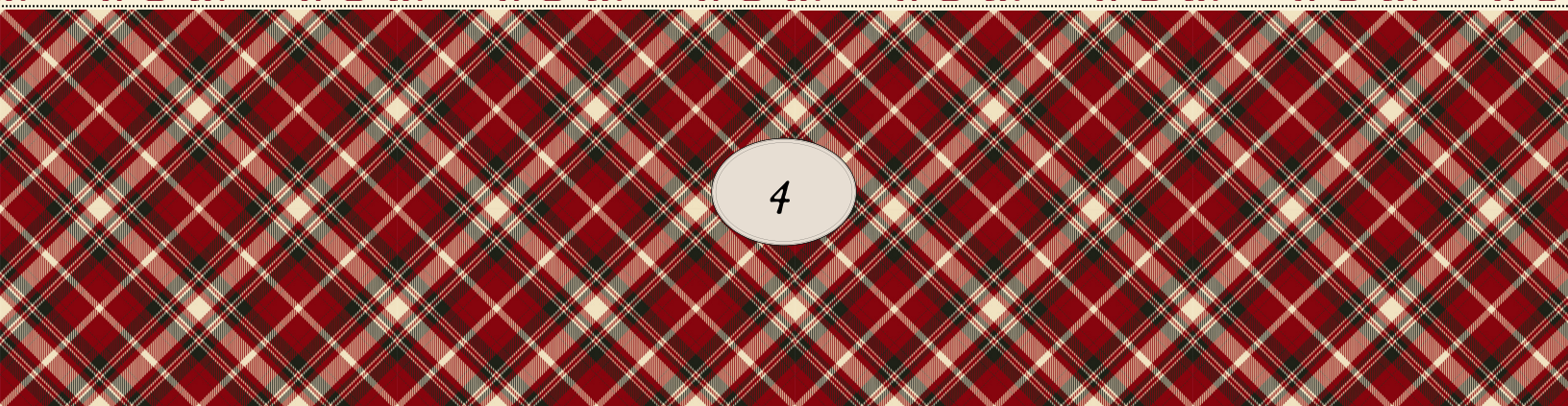
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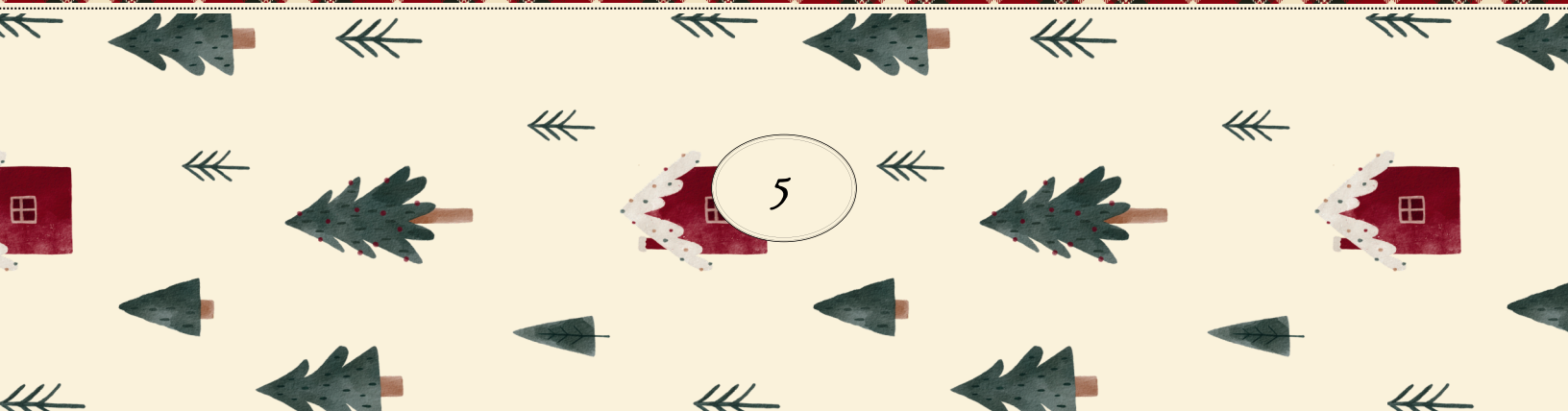
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Day 6

“If the Son sets you free, you are free through and through.” –John 8:36 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift your soul gets is that when Jesus sets you free, there isn't a chain anywhere that gets to again be set upon you. No darkness gets to claim you or enslave you when Jesus claims you and encircles you and renames you: His.

Day 7

“God rescued us from dead-end alleys and dark dungeons;
He set us up in the kingdom of the Son he loves.” –Colossians 1:13–14 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift ever delivered to you is that you've been delivered out of all the dead-ends – and delivered into the realest life! The Greatest Gift your soul gets is that Jesus doesn't just set you free – He set you up in love, for love, for forever.

Day 8

“Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it's logical that the Savior took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death.” –Hebrews 2:14-15 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift your soul gets is to be freed from ever being scared to death of death. His death rescued you from death. Jesus embraced death for you so you get to only embrace life, and life to the full, and life for always and ever.

Day 9

“You shattered the yoke that burdened them...” –Isaiah 9:4 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift your soul receives is the broken chain of bondage, the shattered yoke of discouragement, the busted weight of overwhelmed. The Greatest Gift your soul receives are His unforced gentle rhythms of grace... and grace is always weightless.

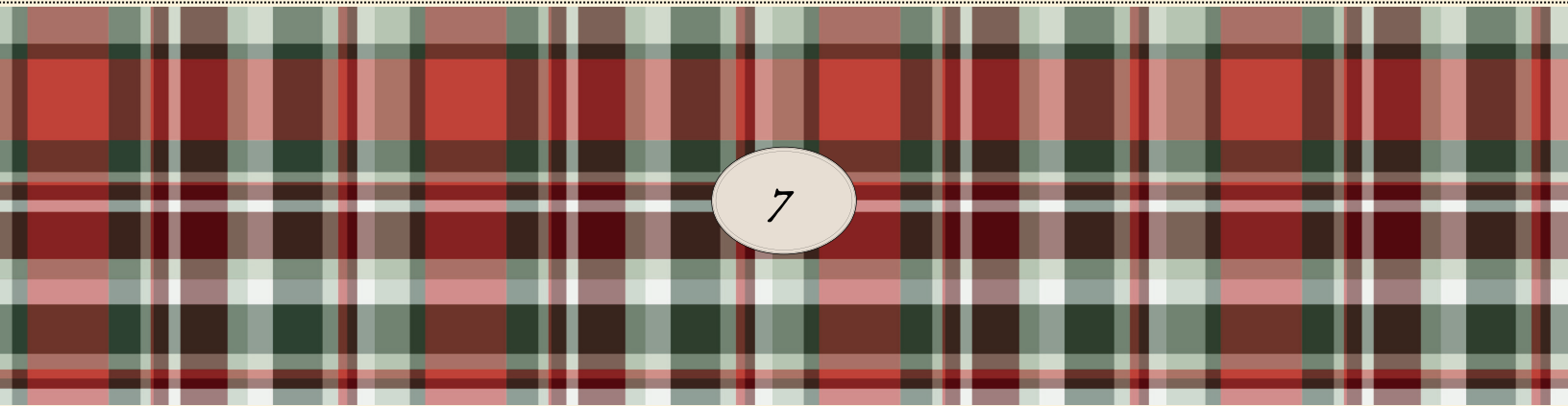
Day 10

“[God] Sent Me to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, To set the burdened and battered free, to announce, ‘This is God's time to shine!’” –Luke 4:18-19 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift your burdened soul gets in a battered world is to be set free to live in the arms of the One who calls you Beloved. How can we not radiate when we live in a love like His?



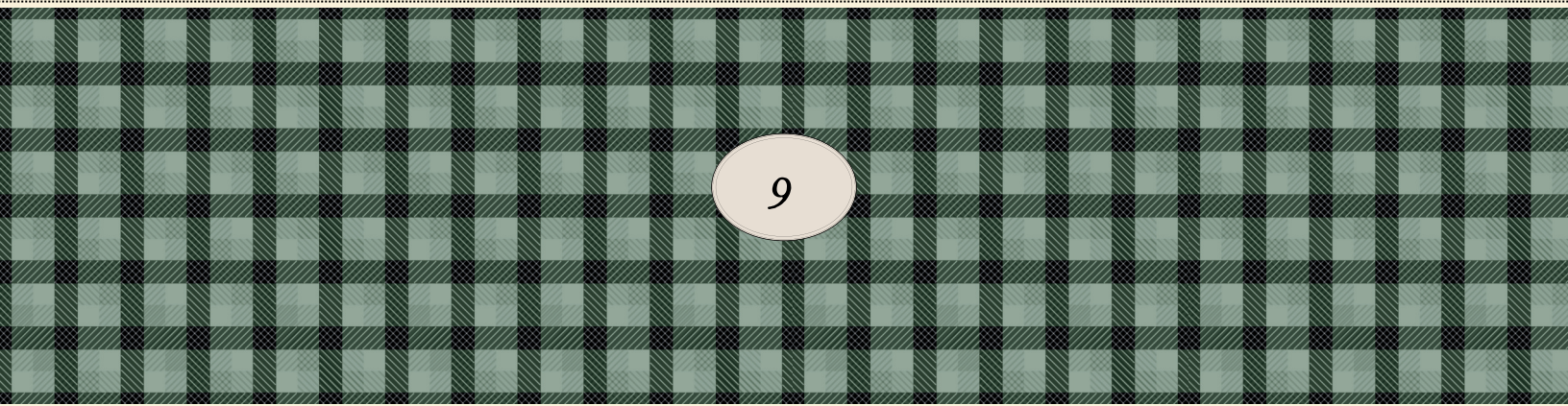
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Day 11

“Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer captive to sin’s demands!” –Romans 6:6 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift is that your soul's released from the chains of dysfunctional and sinful demands. Because He comes, You're released from the bondage of hopelessness, to now bond with Hope and Life Himself!

Day 12

“You’ll sink our sins to the bottom of the ocean.” –Micah 7:18–19 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift your soul gets to know is that God buries your sins where no one can dredge them up again. What you got wrong today, what you keep getting wrong these days, what you'd do anything to go back and make right - you get to know it's all been thrown to the bottom of the ocean.

Day 13

“Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble... He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and broke their chains apart.” –Psalm 107:13–14

The Greatest Gift your soul gets, in the midst of all kinds of trouble, is the breaking of your darkness with a ray of warming hope. Though you've known the ache of a broken heart, Jesus comes to break your chains of hopelessness apart, because nothing can ever drive His heart apart from yours.

Day 14

“And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” –Ezekiel 36:26

The Greatest Gift your soul receives is that Jesus removes the distant heart, the jaded heart, the apathetic, cold, stony heart and gives you a tender heart, a responsive heart, an expansive, forgiving, whole heart. Jesus comes to take away your heart you'd do anything to change – and give you the gift of a miraculously new, otherworldly heart of love from above.

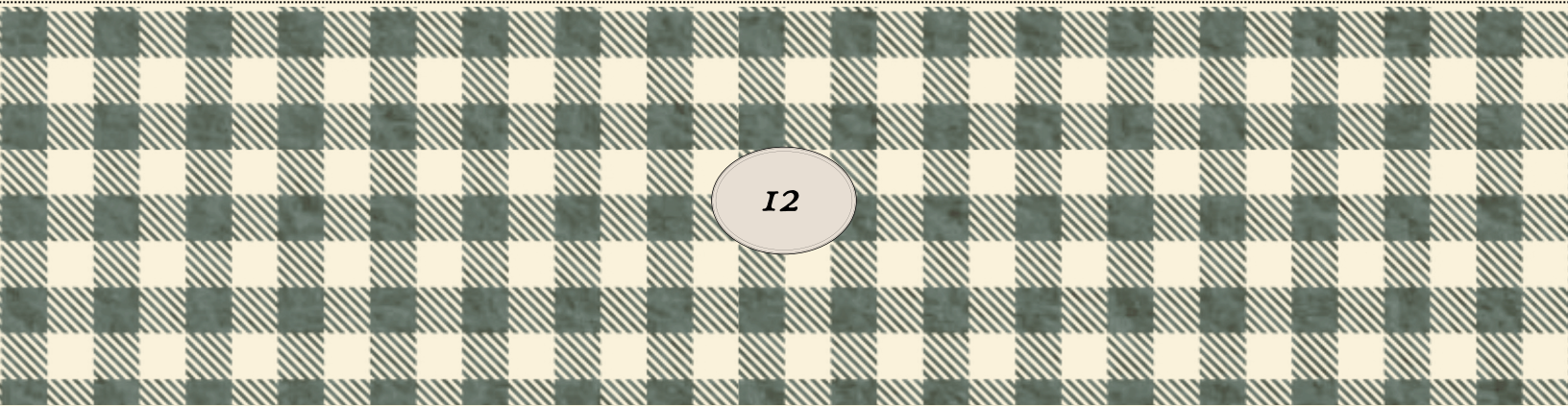
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“Oh, God, here I am, your servant, your faithful servant: set me free for your service!” –Psalm 116:16

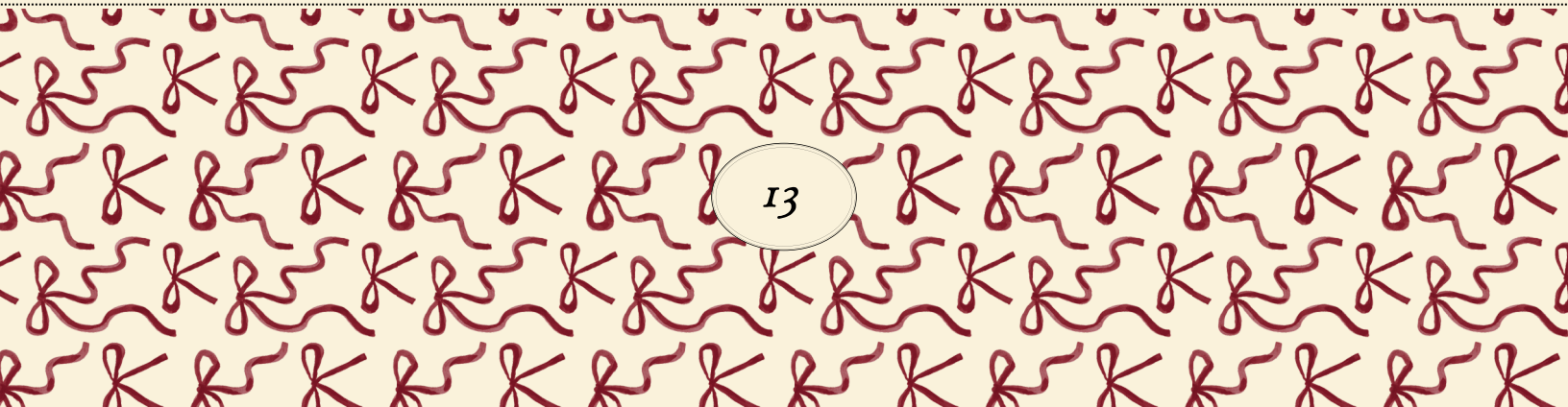
The Greatest Gift your soul receives is you are released from all kinds of resistance that lurks in old hearts of stone, and given a new heart and are set free to belong wholly to Jesus, set free to serve like Him, set free to love like Him!



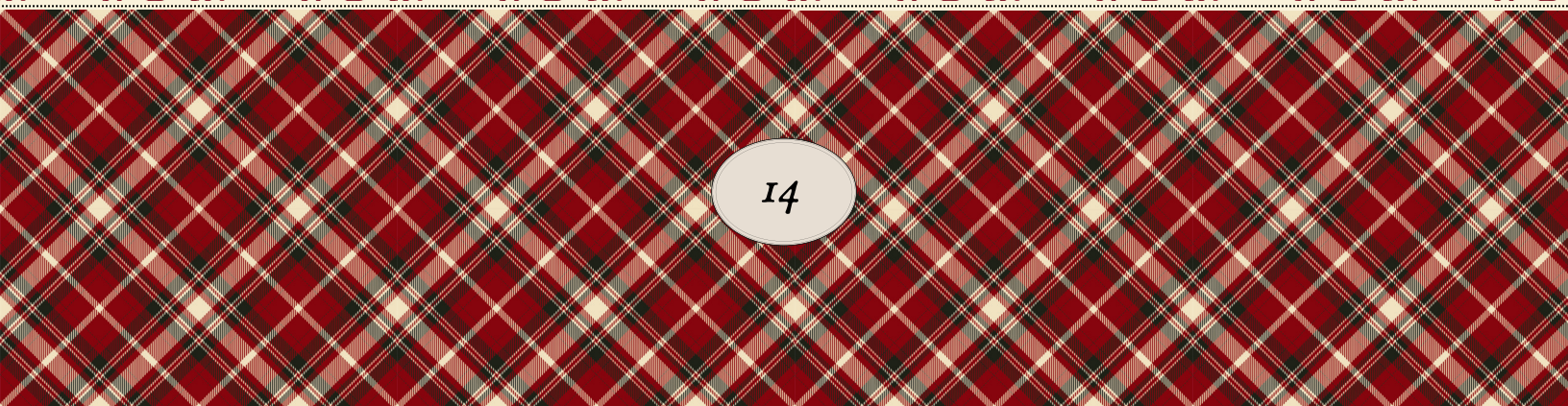
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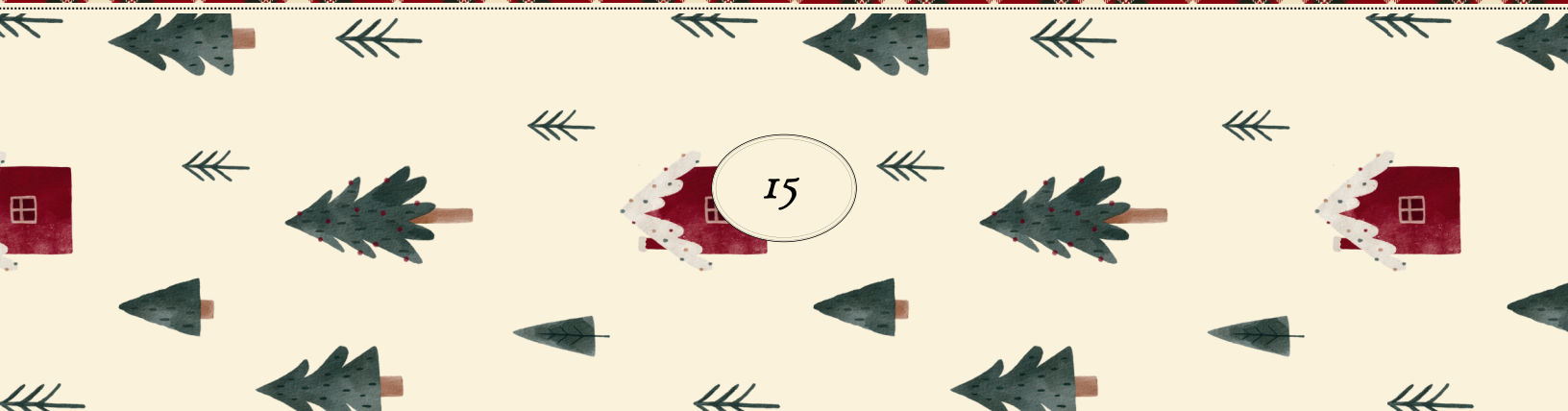
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Day 16

“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted...” –Luke 4:18 (Isaiah 61:1)

The Greatest Gift your soul receives is the tender hands of Jesus, loosening, breaking, all that binds your heart in bondage -- and then Him gently, tenderly, binding up the wounds this ole world has inflicted on your hurting heart - by binding your heart right next to His. The binding of His heart close to yours - heals yours.

Day 17

“Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely... looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.” –Hebrews 12:1-2

The Greatest Gift your soul gets is that you get to let go of every weight, every burden, every wrong, every overwhelm, every impossible, every sin, and you get to break free and keep your eyes and heart simply and completely fixed on Jesus - and feel your life made whole, complete, at deep rest.

Day 18

“Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.”
–Zechariah 3:5

The Greatest Gift your soul gets to behold is what you get taken away from you: Accusations. Condemnation. Shame. Labels, sin, all the brokenness that has ever marked you. And Jesus lifts your chin and says: I have taken it all away. And I will give you the gift of being clothed in clean rightness, pure beauty, My perfection.

Day 19

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” –John 1:29

The Greatest Gift your soul gets is to behold. Behold the Lamb of God who comes, behold the Babe in the manger who comes, behold Love of the cosmos who comes - to take away all the brokenness... all the bondage... all the busted ache ... that we never could have taken away. And He gives us Himself... give us His arms that take all of us, all of us that is never too much for Him, for always and forever.

Day 20

“...by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” –Colossians 2:14

The Greatest Gift your soul gets is that Jesus takes away the record against us - that we aren't enough, that we haven't done enough, that we can't keep up enough. He takes away the record of all the demands we have fell short of - He gives us the gift of setting it all aside - and coming to be by our side. Loved. Approved. Wanted.



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Day 21

“Jesus Christ rescued us from this evil world we’re in by offering himself as a sacrifice for our sins. God’s plan is that we all experience that rescue. Glory to God forever! Oh, yes!” –Galatians 1:4-5 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift your soul receives is that you’ve been busted out of a hopeless dark, released from the chains of despair, and rescued! You’ve been rescued by King Jesus – so others can experience the rescue of King Jesus and live into the fullness and freedom of the Kingdom! You’ve been rescued by Love – to love!

Day 22

“...when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed...Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom...we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed...” –2 Corinthians 3:16–18

The Greatest Gift your soul gets is that the veil is taken away. And now our hearts are free to fully come into the living presence of the Love who is Jesus! Everything between us and God is taken away! Because we are now living where the Spirit of the Lord is – we are living in FREEDOM! Free to be love! Free to be loved! Free to be like Jesus, Love come here, right here!

Day 23

“Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time...into God’s way of doing things. Sin can’t tell you how to live. After all, you’re not living under that old tyranny any longer. You’re living in the freedom of God!” –Romans 6:14 (MSG)

The Greatest Gift your soul gets is that the old way of doing things is thrown away, and you get to throw yourself wholeheartedly into God’s freeing way! You get the gift of the old way of doing things – being driven by pressure, perfectionism, performance – no longer being the boss of you anymore. You get to live every moment now in the freedom of God!

Day 24

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...” –Romans 8:1

The Greatest Gift your soul gets with the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, is that the constant pressure of never being enough, of never getting it all right, of never being all of what everyone needs or you want to be, is completely broken once and for all. Jesus comes and gloriously, magnificently, breaks you free from that tyranny, and you get to relax into His transforming, encircling grace!

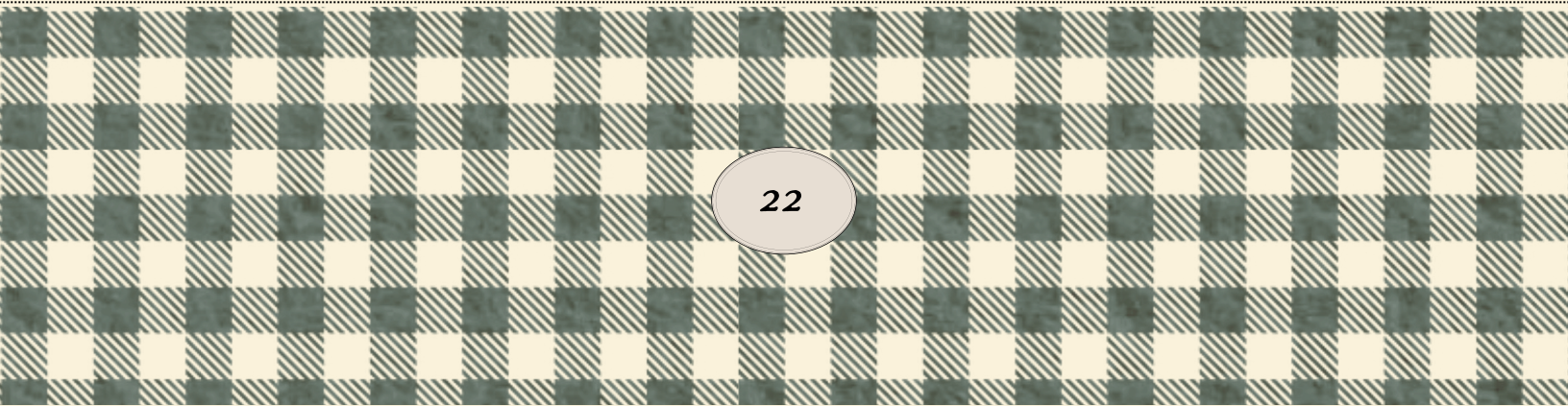
Day 25

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” –Galatians 5:1

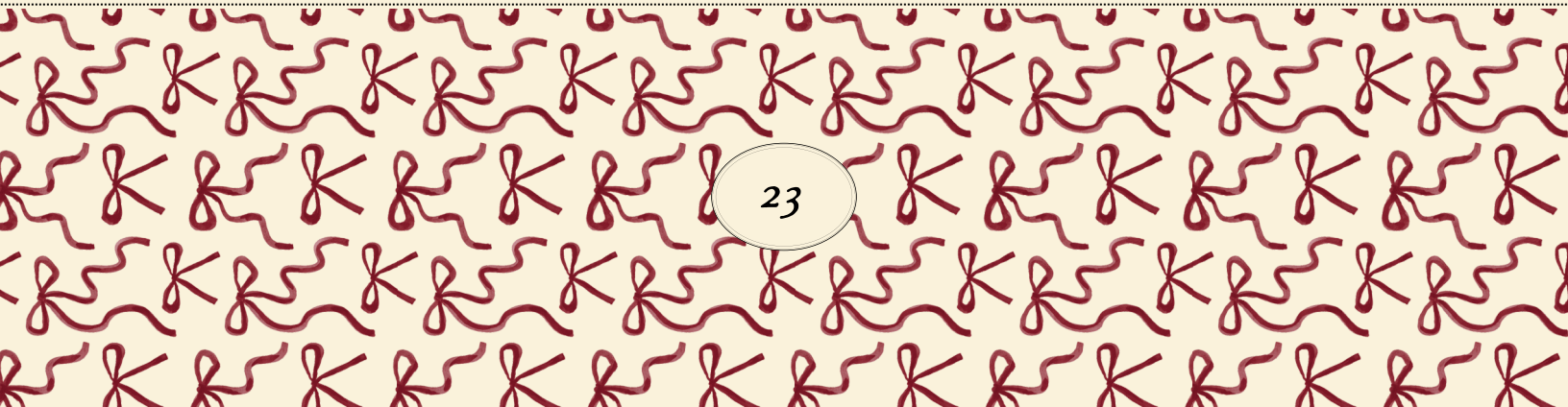
The Greatest Gift your soul gets is that Jesus comes to take your hand, take away your old heart, your old ways, and give you His heart, and set you wholly free to live a holy new way – a wholehearted, fully free life! We’re rescued! Free! Marvel... savor... delight... wonder! Let everything else fall away now – and come, let us adore Him! He is yours, and you are His, and you get to live all of your life in the freeing, forever life of God!



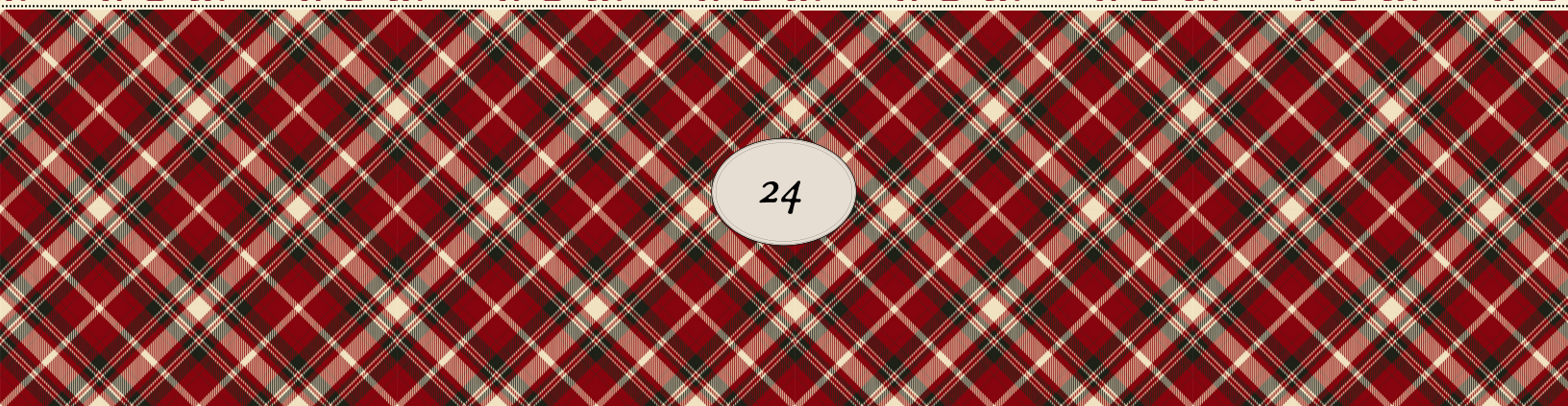
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