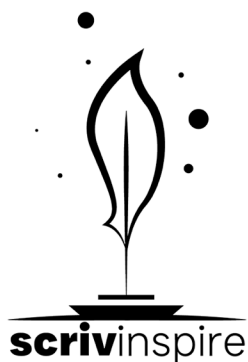


*31 Daily Devotions with Annual  
Reflection and Journaling Pages*

# REFLECTING ON CHRISTMAS PAST

HEATHER GREER



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*To everyone seeking God's peace, love, and joy this Christmas. I pray you  
find them as you draw closer to Him.*



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# Dear Reader ...



Why reflect on Christmas Past?

The weeks from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day often pass in a blur. We feel pressed to deliver a picture-perfect Christmas and that takes a toll on our emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Amid all the activity, it's easy to set aside one of the most spiritually significant times of year to focus on our deep to-do lists.

*Reflecting on Christmas Past* is designed for annual use. Though it can be useful any time during the Christmas season, I recommend starting on November 24<sup>th</sup>. This timeline will encourage putting meaning into your holiday.

After the introductory devotion, readings are divided into six themes, containing five devotions each. Each section of five devotions ends with journaling space for you to reflect on the message and record your memories. Your reflections will help move truth from your head to your heart and spur you into action.

This unique devotional also serves as a journal to record future holidays. The Your Christmas Heritage and Annual Reflection pages give

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additional space to consider the devotional themes. When full, the journal is a collection of memories from your Christmases past.

May God speak to your heart through each devotion, giving this Christmas and those to come renewed focus on Him.

Heather Greer



# A Time to Remember



*Luke 2:19 "But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart."*

*Luke 2:51 "And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart."*

Mary pondered. Probably more than most new mothers, she considered deeply the events surrounding her child's birth. She held those happenings safely tucked away in her heart. God's Word, the Bible, tells us this, but why? The gospels lay out all the details surrounding the birth of Jesus. Why did God deem Mary's ponderings important enough to let us in on her mindset as she considered each detail of her Son's birth?

Mary remembered. She is in good company! Looking through Scripture, especially in the Old Testament, we see remembering is important to God.

When the Israelites experienced God's provision in separating the waters of the Jordan River in Joshua 4, God commanded them to set up 12 stones after the crossing in a place of remembrance. When God

established the celebration of Purim, it was to remember God's salvation of Israel from Haman.

Every part of the Passover seder is God reminding His people of their time as slaves in Egypt, His intervention to free them, and His promises for their future. But remembrance also takes a front row seat in the New Testament at Jesus's final celebration of the Passover meal. At that time, He tied past events into what He was about to accomplish for mankind and told His disciples to "do this in remembrance of me."

Why does God want us to remember? Does He want His followers stuck in the glory days? Absolutely not. God encourages us to recall these times, so the lessons learned about who God is, how He works, and who they are to Him will not be lost. He did it to give us a spiritual heritage to pass down from generation to generation that will strengthen our faith, give us peace, and provide us with true hope in the midst of our struggles.

Mary pondered God's fulfillment of prophecy in the birth of Jesus. She remembered the shepherds' worship, the angels' message, and the wise men's gifts. Later, as her son grew, she would hold onto the memory of His passion to be about His father's purpose.

As a mother, I firmly believe those memories came to mind 33 years later as she watched her innocent son, her firstborn child, hanging on a cross. She knew this was part of God's plan. But I believe as she helplessly watched her son's anguish and death, Mary's heart broke and all of the things she'd pondered and tucked away came flooding to her mind to give her a measure of strength and hope.

This is what comes from remembering the past workings of God in our lives. We see it in the rituals of the various Old Testament feasts. We see it in the practice of communion as Jesus instructed it to be done. And if we look through the events of our lives, we will see it there too.

Daily Reflection: This Christmas season take time to remember both your physical and spiritual heritage. As you ponder these memories, open your heart to the messages God has for you and reflect on how He has worked in your past.

# A Time for Remembering



Mary pondered. Now it's your turn. Think about a time when God has worked in your life. It could be a time when God spoke to you, worked through you, or worked through someone else for your benefit. It may not include shepherds and angels on a hillside, but that doesn't mean it isn't an important piece of your spiritual heritage. A memory you turn to for peace, strength, and hope.

***My spiritual heritage:***

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Now focus on Christmas specifically. Try to recall one special Christmas that has stayed with you through the years. It may be spiritually related, but it doesn't have to be.

*My Christmas Heritage:*

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Why is this particular Christmas memory so meaningful to you?

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Looking at your thoughts about this Christmas, can you pinpoint in a few words what made this time special? Was it family time, a time of giving, or possibly a heartfelt gift? Sum up what's special in three to four words.

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As you go into this Christmas season, let this special memory of the past point you toward what makes a holiday season special. Give attention this year to including activities related to that theme. You're not trying to recreate Christmas past, but rather focusing your time on the things you find most memorable and meaningful in the holiday.

Be careful not to make this one more thing on your to-do list. With Christmas often comes a demanding schedule. Our goal is not to cram

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more in. It is to help you know which things to cut and which things to embrace. Taking time to learn what means the most to you is a great way to start that process.