

# Advent Devotionals 2024

November 30 / December 1

*Written by Aaron Feather*

Are you part of the 60% of Americans who feel lonely every day? We all have a deep longing to be seen, known, loved, and valued. All of these feelings are very normal. They're part of this human experience.

When Joseph found out that Mary was with child, he planned to leave her quietly to avoid the public scrutiny. It's easy to imagine that Joseph felt very alone in that moment. It wasn't until the Lord came to Joseph and explained who exactly this child was and how this pregnancy came to be, did Joseph step into his role as husband and father.

On the other side of this story is Mary, blessed with a child promised to be the fulfillment of prophecy. There was no one else on earth who would ever experience this same miracle. It must have been a lonely feeling. Who was she going to run to for advice? Who would step up and offer tips for raising a savior?

In their loneliness, Mary and Joseph were never alone. In Isaiah 41:13 God gives us this promise: "For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you." There is hope in loneliness, because God is with us in every unknown, unexpected, unimaginable situation – and He has given us Jesus, His Son, as our ever-present Savior!

Today we light the first candle of Advent as a reminder of Emmanuel – God with us. May the single flame of this candle speak to the reality of God's ever-present Spirit filling us with his presence and uniting our hearts and lives to each other.