

Hope *for those without*



A reflection guide for jobseekers

Welcome!

How to Use This Resource

Over the next four weeks, we'll walk through a rhythm of intentionally sitting with God during this time. And on Christmas Day, we'll remember together that the Light still rises—and still finds its way into everyday work, everyday homes, and everyday people like you and I.

You don't have to rush through these pages. Read them with your morning coffee or at the end of a long day. Let them speak softly into the silence. The prayers, Scriptures, and stories here aren't meant to preach; they're meant to walk beside you - to help you keep moving, keep trusting, keep rising.

Because no matter where you are in the search, no matter how many times the door has stayed closed, there's a truth strong enough to hold you through it:

You are not forgotten. The light is already on its way.

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Introduction

At times, the job search can feel hopeless. It can feel overwhelmingly against you in every respect, with all the highest of highs and the lowest of lows – each day sets a new bar for each. To be candid – it feels dark.

Advent begins in the dark.

It's the stretch of the year when days shorten, silence lingers, and waiting feels heavier than usual. The Church calls this season "hopeful expectation," but for many of us, expectation feels more like exhaustion. You may be between jobs, rebuilding your confidence, or simply trying to remember what it feels like to wake up with purpose and more than a shot in the dark.

If that's where you find yourself, these reflections are for you.

They're written for the jobseeker sending applications into the quiet. For the worker showing up each day wondering if this is still where they belong. For the person who feels unseen, underused, or unsure how to keep believing that their story still matters.

At Rise, we've learned something sacred about work - it's never just about paychecks or placements. Work restores dignity. It builds belonging. And in every person willing to try again, we see a glimpse of redemption. That's why our motto is simple: Hope is the first placement we make.

This season, we invite you to let that hope settle deeper than your circumstances. The reflections ahead won't offer quick fixes or clichés. They will, however, remind you that your worth hasn't changed and your waiting isn't wasted. Advent is proof that God does His best work in the dark.

When nothing seems to move, yet everything is being prepared for light.

Heart *Foundations*

Before you begin this journey, take time to remember who you are and what God might be building through your search.

This space is for you. Be honest. You don't need polished answers. Just the truth of where you are and what you hope for.

Where am I right now?

Describe your current season. Are you searching? Transitioning? Rebuilding? What feels most real about this moment?

What has this season of searching revealed about me?

Think about what waiting has taught you - perseverance, humility, empathy, courage. What strengths have surfaced that you didn't see before?

Where have I seen God at work in my story so far?

What small mercies or moments of clarity have reminded you that you're not forgotten?

What do I hope God restores in me through this reflection journey?

Name the things that feel worn thin - confidence, direction, peace, joy, trust - and what you long to see renewed.

Why am I searching - really?

Beyond the paycheck or title, what do I want my work to mean? How do I want to serve, build, or contribute through it?



Week 1: *Hope*
*Hope is the beginning not the
finish line.*

Hope doesn't arrive after the waiting ends, it begins in the middle of it. This week, we'll learn to see the light where everything feels still, to believe that silence isn't absence, and to trust that our unseen perseverance is already building something real.

This Week At A Glance:

Day 1: *Start Before You See*

Day 2: *The Courage To Try Again*

Day 3: *The Sacred Pause*

Day 4: *Rejected ≠ Finished*

Day 5: *Hire Hope First*

Start Before You See

Hope begins where sight ends

The people who walked in darkness have
seen a great light - Isaiah 9:2

There are seasons when the dark feels endless. The inbox is quiet.

Friends stop asking how the search is going. You wake up to another day that looks exactly like yesterday and wonder if anything is actually moving. It's easy to believe that if nothing changes, nothing ever will.

Yet faith has always started in this exact space - the moment before the light.

Advent reminds us that the story of hope doesn't begin with clarity; it begins with longing. The people Isaiah spoke to were weary and scattered, unsure if God still remembered them. Into that ache came a whisper: Light will return. It didn't come with a timeline, but with a promise -and promises, when believed, start to change us.

Maybe you're not ready to be optimistic yet, and that's okay. Hope isn't optimism; it's obedience in the dark. It's brushing your teeth, making coffee, sending another application, believing your life still has purpose when you can't yet see its form. It's not pretending things are easy; it's choosing to act as though they still matter.

Centuries ago, Monica prayed through years of silence for her son Augustine. She never saw evidence her prayers were working. But when her son finally turned home, she discovered hope had been doing its hidden work long before the answer appeared.

You're in that same in-between - the space where God does

His quietest forming. Keep walking toward the light even when it feels far.
Every small, faithful step becomes a declaration: "I still believe."

Questions to Think On:

Where do I need to remember that silence is not absence?
What small act could say, "I still believe light is coming"?

Even in the dark, hope is already on the way.

The Courage to Try Again

Hope isn't optimism; it's courage dressed as faith

In hope we were saved - Romans 8:24

Rejection takes more from you than opportunity - it steals confidence.

After enough no's, self-protection starts to feel wiser than belief.

But the soul was made for risk, and faith only grows when we dare to try again.

Trying again doesn't mean pretending everything's fine; it means choosing obedience over certainty. Faith moves while fear waits for proof. It's sending another résumé even though the last five didn't land. It's calling that contact again even though you hate asking for help. Hope doesn't erase vulnerability; it transforms it into courage.

Nelson Mandela embodied that kind of hope. Twenty-seven years in a cell taught him that hope isn't fragile—it's forged. He lost freedom, time, and opportunities, but he refused to lose vision. When he finally walked free, he carried forgiveness instead of bitterness. His preparation in prison became the soil for reconciliation in a divided nation.

You may be living your own long confinement of waiting - a stretch where everything feels smaller than it once was. But even here, your faithfulness is shaping something unseen. The muscles you build through disappointment are the same ones that will carry opportunity when it finally arrives.

Trying again doesn't prove you're fearless; it proves you're faithful.

Each new attempt is a quiet act of defiance against despair. You don't have to believe you can see the finish line - just believe there's still a reason to move.

Questions to Think On:

Where has disappointment hardened into disbelief?

What one action today could say, "I'm willing to believe again"?

Faith's first motion is often a single step - take yours today

The Sacred Pause

Waiting grows trust if we let it

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart - Psalm 27:14

You've done everything right
-networked, applied, prayed
-and still the silence stretches.

Waiting feels like punishment.
Yet Scripture insists that waiting isn't empty; it's holy ground.

In stillness, something hidden begins to grow.
The heart learns endurance. The mind relearns surrender. Patience becomes more than tolerance. It becomes trust.

God uses pauses not to punish, but to prepare.

Joseph's story proves it. We never read his speeches, only his quiet obedience. He worked, listened, and waited. In a small workshop in Nazareth, he built furniture and faith at the same time. Those silent years made him the kind of man who could protect a miracle when it finally arrived. Your pause may be doing the same.

Waiting is God's workshop. The habits you form now - the prayer you keep saying, the small tasks you keep doing - are forming you into someone steadier, humbler, more ready for what's next.

So don't despise the pause. Treat it as practice for the promise. One day you'll look back and see that this still season was shaping your strength, sanding your edges, and readying you for something you couldn't have handled earlier.

Questions to Think On:

What if this waiting is shaping me for what's next?

How can I practice faithfulness in today's ordinary tasks?

The waiting room becomes sacred when you
treat it as God's workshop

Rejected ≠ Finished

God never wastes detours.

See I have placed before you an open door
that no one can shut - Revelation 3:8

Every closed door echoes louder than the one that opens.

After the fourth rejection, it's easy to wonder if maybe you're the problem.
But detours aren't dead ends - they're directions.

Rejection strips away illusion until what's left is calling. Each "no" forces clarity: what you value, what you'll fight for, what matters enough to keep going. God doesn't waste rejection; He refines through it.

J.K. Rowling faced twelve rejections before one publisher believed in her story. Each no taught her persistence until her words met the right moment. The delay didn't deny her destiny; it prepared her audience.

The same can be true for you. Maybe what feels like delay is actually protection from a path too small for what's ahead. Sometimes God closes doors not to limit you, but to lead you toward a place that better fits your purpose.

Let rejection refine you, not define you.

Your value isn't set by approval rates or call-backs.

You're not finished because one opportunity didn't work - you're being redirected toward the right one.

Questions to Think On:

Which rejections might have been redirections?

What faithful step can I take while I wait for the right fit?

Closed doors don't end stories - they aim them.

Hire Hope First

Every placement begins with belief that change is possible

Faith is the assurance of the things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen -
Hebrews 11:1

Hope might be the only thing you can afford - and the one thing you can't afford to lose. Before resumes or interviews, before call-backs or contracts, hope must clock in first.

This hope isn't sentimental - it's disciplined.

It shows up. It works. It keeps believing that something meaningful is still possible, even when every number says otherwise.

Omobonus, a 12th-century merchant, understood this kind of sacred work. He treated commerce as worship - paying fair wages as prayer, practicing generosity as policy. His business became a testimony that faith and labor belong together.

You may not be managing an empire, but you're building something just as holy: a life that still believes goodness can grow from hard ground.

Every small act of integrity - sending that follow-up, encouraging a friend, refusing to quit - is hope in motion.

When you "hire" hope first, everything else follows.


Work becomes worship. Effort becomes prayer. Progress becomes praise.

Questions to Think On:

Where do I need to "rehire" hope in my life right now?

How can today's persistence become worship?

Hope is the first placement we make - and the one that makes every other possible.



Week 2: Persistence

Persistence is prayer in motion

Persistence isn't about never slowing down; it's about refusing to stop believing when everything stalls. This week we'll learn that waiting doesn't mean weakness - that stillness can be strength, and every small act of faithfulness is its own prayer. Trust that God's timing refines more than it withholds and discover that endurance becomes the place where character is forged.

This Week At A Glance:

Day 1: *When Nothing Moves*

Day 2: Keep Knocking Anyway

Day 3: Faith Has Calluses

Day 4: The Middle is Where We're Made

Day 5: *Prayer in Motion*

When Nothing Moves

Stillness isn't stuckness.

The Lord will fight for you; you have only to be still - Exodus 14:14

You've pushed every button, sent every email, and followed every lead - and still, the silence hums. You refresh your inbox again, half expecting something to change, and when it doesn't, the stillness feels like a verdict. But stillness is not failure; it's formation.

At the Red Sea, Israel thought delay meant danger. Pharaoh's army was behind them, water in front, and God seemed nowhere. But what looked like the end was only the space between command and miracle. God used the waiting not to punish, but to prepare them for what He was about to do.

Stillness is the soil where trust takes root. The spiritual life isn't a race to prove effort - it's a rhythm of learning when to rest. John the Baptist knew this better than most. Before his public ministry, he spent years in wilderness obscurity.

No crowds, no applause - just quiet formation. His hidden years tuned his ear so finely to God's voice that when it finally spoke, he recognized it immediately. Your own quiet may be the same kind of classroom. When nothing moves on the outside, something unseen strengthens within. Faith stretches in the silence; confidence matures without applause.

Stillness can feel like invisibility, but it's actually the workshop of dependence - where you learn to release what you can't control and trust that God is still working behind the curtain.

So breathe.

The still season doesn't mean you've been forgotten; it means you're being fortified. The hands that hold your future haven't let go—they're simply shaping it in ways you can't yet see.

Questions to Think On:

What is God teaching me through enforced stillness?

How can I trade panic for peace while I wait?

Stillness can become the doorway to strength

Keep Knocking Anyway

Closed doors train your faith

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you - Matthew 7:7

You've lost track of how many applications you've sent.

Each rejection lands heavier than the last, each silence another weight added to the chest.

The temptation is to stop - to protect your heart from one more "we've decided to move in another direction." But persistence isn't pretending it doesn't hurt; it's deciding the pain won't define you.

Jesus' words about asking, seeking, and knocking weren't motivational slogans. They were invitations to stay in conversation with heaven. Every knock echoes in eternity, even when the hallway feels empty. God isn't teasing you with opportunity - He's training you through endurance.

Every unopened door, every ignored email, every "not yet" becomes sandpaper shaping your perseverance. Thomas Edison tested thousands of filaments before one finally produced light. When asked how he managed failure, he said, "I've not failed. I've found ten thousand ways that won't work." That's what faith looks like in motion - sore hands, patient heart, eyes fixed on promise.

Keep knocking. Not frantically, but faithfully. The door that's meant for you cannot stay shut forever. Rejection doesn't mean absence; it means timing. And when that door does open, you'll discover it wasn't luck—it was loyalty to hope.

You're not knocking in vain. You're knocking your way into wisdom, into resilience, into readiness.

Questions to Think On:

Where have I stopped knocking out of fatigue?

What does persistence look like today?

Keep your hand on the handle - grace might turn it today.

Callused Faith

Growth comes from resistance.

The testing of your faith produces perseverance - James 1:3

Faith isn't fragile - it's forged.

And like any good tool, it gains its edge through friction.

We all love the idea of strength, but few of us want the process that builds it. Real faith comes from repetition - showing up when the outcome still hurts, believing when there's no visible reason to. Every disappointment that doesn't break you, builds you.

Harriet Tubman knew this kind of endurance. Every trip back into slave territory could have been her last. She faced betrayal, darkness, and fear - and kept moving forward anyway. Her courage wasn't the absence of fear; it was faith that had been tested until it couldn't break. Every callus told a story of persistence that set others free.

You, too, are learning resilience. Each "no," each setback, each closed chapter thickens the skin of your resolve. The friction you face isn't punishment - it's practice. God allows the grind to shape strength that comfort never could.

Maybe the pressure you feel right now isn't meant to crush you, but to carve capacity into you - to prepare you to hold more purpose later. Faith calluses form in the hard days, the ones where you keep walking even when your steps don't feel inspired.

Your scars are proof of survival. And survival, under grace, becomes strength.

Questions to Think On:

What pressures might be producing endurance in me?

How can I honor the strength already forming?

Strong faith isn't smooth - it's scarred and steady.

The Middle Is Where We're Made

Most miracles form from the inside out.

Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. - Galatians 6:9

The middle is monotonous.

The first steps feel exciting; the finish line feels glorious. But in between? Long stretches of ordinary effort with little applause. Yet every lasting story is built in this space between beginning and breakthrough.

The middle teaches consistency. It humbles pride and builds staying power. It's where your roots dig deep enough to hold the fruit when it comes.

Mother Teresa spent decades in hidden labor - cleaning wounds, feeding the dying, serving without spotlight. Her unseen faithfulness became the foundation for a movement of compassion that changed the world. The middle made her.

Your middle season is doing the same. You may feel invisible, but invisibility often precedes impact. When you think nothing is happening, God is growing roots - deep, unseen, essential.

Don't rush what's ripening beneath the soil. Keep tending the small tasks. Keep showing up. Miracles take time to mature; they're forming even now, quietly beneath the surface of your obedience.

Questions to Think On:

Where am I tempted to quit just before growth?
What daily rhythm can keep me grounded?

Miracles ripen slowly - stay in the field.

Prayer Looks Like Motion

Showing up becomes your offering.

They should always pray and not give up - Luke 18:1

Prayer doesn't always sound like words; sometimes it sounds like footsteps. Every act of persistence is its own kind of prayer - unspoken faith that says, "I still believe."

You may not feel holy when you send another application or clock in for another day, but heaven hears the heartbeat beneath the action. God receives motion as worship.

Effort can be prayer when it's fueled by trust.

Juan Diego's faith turned miles into miracles. He walked cold roads, carrying messages others dismissed. When he kept showing up, the impossible happened - a barren hillside bloomed with roses. His footsteps became the language of faith.

Yours can too. Every move forward - each e-mail, each quiet act of integrity, each day you refuse to give up - is a living prayer, whispered through your work.

Keep showing up.

You may not feel like a saint or a success, but your faith in motion is shaping eternity more than you know.

Questions to Think On:

Where might my perseverance already be prayer?

How can I bring peace into today's effort?

Every step forward whispers, "I still believe"



Week 3: *Joy*

Joy is found - not earned

Joy doesn't depend on everything going right; it depends on remembering that God is still present when nothing makes sense. This week invites us to find laughter in the ordinary, gratitude in the grind, and purpose in the pauses. We'll practice noticing small wins, giving thanks before the breakthrough, and reclaiming joy as strength for the journey - not the prize at the end of it.

This Week At A Glance:

Day 1: *Joy in Plain Sight*

Day 2: Count Small Wins

Day 3: *Thankfulness Changes the Air*

Day 4: *Meaning Beats Momentum*

Day 5: *Say Yes Again*

Joy in Plain Sight

Joy hides in ordinary obedience.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice - Philippians 4:4

It's the silence that wears you down - the same unanswered emails, the same polite rejections, the same thin hope that maybe today something will move. It's hard to feel joy when nothing around you looks redeemable.

If you're honest, you'd settle for relief. Joy seems like a luxury for people whose prayers have already been answered.

Yet the kind of joy Scripture speaks of isn't a mood that follows good news; it's the quiet rebellion that chooses light before dawn. It refuses to let circumstances have the final word. Paul wrote rejoice always from a prison cell. He wasn't naïve - he was already free inside. Joy begins there, where gratitude and trust meet even the smallest evidence of grace.

Francis of Assisi lived that way. He was misunderstood, poor, often sick - yet he laughed easily. He praised God for sparrows, for wind, even for hunger. His joy wasn't denial; it was attention. He saw holiness hiding in the mundane, beauty shimmering through simplicity. The world called it foolish; heaven called it freedom.

Joy is learned the same way for us. It's not found at the end of the job offer or the answered prayer - it's found when you begin to see again. Look for it in the steam of morning coffee, the sound of your child's laughter, the moment a friend checks in unprompted. When you name those small mercies, despair loses ground.

You don't have to force happiness; you simply have to notice grace. Because when you see differently, you live differently. And when you live differently, hope follows close behind.

Questions to Think On:

Where might small gratitude open space for unexpected joy?

What ordinary moment today could become a prayer of thanks?

Joy doesn't wait for arrival - it travels with you.

Count Small Wins

Every yes matters, even the quiet ones.

Do not despise these small beginnings - Zechariah 4:10

Progress rarely shouts; it whispers.

It hides inside ordinary days that feel like nothing special - the ones where you send another application, polish another sentence, make another call that may or may not be returned. You go to bed thinking you've moved nowhere. But heaven measures movement differently.

God loves small starts because they train the soul in faithfulness. Staying steady when unseen proves you're ready for what will one day be visible. That's the rhythm of the Kingdom: roots before fruit. The miracle grows underground before anyone claps.

Fred Rogers understood that sacred persistence. For decades he spoke into a camera, unseen by the children whose hearts he was shaping. He trusted that gentle repetition would do its quiet work. Millions grew kinder because one man kept showing up without spectacle.

You're doing something similar each time you choose diligence over despair. Every resume revised, every early morning, every honest task says to God, I'm still in. These micro-moments of effort are bricks in the bridge that will eventually carry you forward.

So celebrate the small wins - the e-mail sent, the phone call returned, the courage to try again. Gratitude for progress trains your heart to see grace as it grows. The harvest may not be visible yet, but heaven keeps score differently. Your perseverance is becoming strength you'll need for the bigger assignments ahead.

Questions to Think On:

Which small win this week deserves celebration?

How can I practice gratitude for motion, not perfection?

Small faithful steps become great stories over time.

Thankfulness Changes the Air

Gratitude is joy's doorway.

Give thanks in all circumstances - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

When life narrows - when every day feels smaller than the one before
- gratitude re-opens the room.

It doesn't fix the leaks or repaint the walls; it lets in oxygen. Sometimes oxygen is all you need to remember you're still alive inside the story God is telling.

Gratitude doesn't start as a feeling; it starts as defiance. You stare disappointment in the eye and say, You will not have the last word. You thank God not for the hardship but within it, trusting that thanksgiving can hold sorrow and hope at the same table.

Some days that feels impossible. You're tired, weary of pretending, done hearing that things "happen for a reason." But somewhere beneath the ache you realize - you've been carried farther than you knew.

Start there. Thank Him for breath, for the strength to try again, for the friend who texted when you needed to hear your name.

Desmond Doss, the World War II medic who refused to carry a weapon, practiced this kind of gratitude. Running into enemy fire, he whispered, "Lord, help me get one more."

He didn't thank God after safety; he thanked Him through danger. Gratitude became his courage.

You may not face gunfire, but you do face unseen wars - discouragement, doubt, fear. Gratitude is your armor too. Name what's good, even if the list is short. The air will shift. Hope will rush back in. Joy follows the sound of thanksgiving like light follows dawn.

Questions to Think On:

What can I thank God for before the breakthrough arrives?
How might daily gratitude reshape the tone of my waiting?

Thankfulness turns survival into strength.

Meaning Beats Momentum

Joy is endurance fueled by purpose

The joy of the Lord is your strength - Nehemiah 8:10

Fatigue isn't always physical; sometimes it's spiritual
-the ache that comes from forgetting why you began.

You can do everything "right" and still feel hollow when meaning drains from motion. When the search drags, when work feels like repetition without reward, momentum fades and motivation follows.

But joy doesn't depend on speed; it depends on significance.

You don't need to move faster - you need to remember why you started. Viktor Frankl, who survived the concentration camps, wrote that people can endure almost any how if they have a why. Purpose became oxygen where none should have existed.

Your own why may be simple - to provide, to serve, to grow, to honor God through your work. Yet that quiet intention sanctifies the routine. Every e-mail, every conversation, every small act of honesty becomes a thread in redemption's tapestry.

When meaning returns, strength returns with it.
Joy doesn't erase exhaustion; it transforms it into perseverance.

Keep showing up.

Keep offering your effort as worship.

The God who gave you purpose hasn't revoked it just because progress feels slow.

Questions to Think On:

Where can I rediscover the "why" behind my effort?

How might meaning—not success—become my measure of strength?

When purpose stays, strength stays.

Say Yes Again

Every act of faith creates room for another's hope.

Let it be done to me according to your word - Luke 1:38

You've said yes before and watched it fall flat - yes to interviews that went nowhere, prayers that seemed unheard, risks that cost more than they returned.

After enough disappointment, the heart starts guarding itself. Saying yes again feels naïve.

But Advent reminds us that redemption always begins with another yes. Mary didn't offer hers because she had guarantees; she offered it because she trusted the One who asked. Her yes didn't cancel fear - it carried it.

Through that trembling courage, God changed the world.

Faith still moves that way. God rarely explains outcomes; He invites trust. Each time you say yes to trying again - to hope, to generosity, to belief - you reopen the door for grace to enter. The size of the yes doesn't matter; its sincerity does.

Heaven's greatest miracles have ordinary beginnings: a carpenter's obedience, a widow's meal, your willingness to keep moving forward when quitting would make more sense.

Your yes may seem small now, but eternity often swings on hinges that small.

Say yes again - not because you're sure, but because God still is. Your obedience could be the light someone else needs to find their way.

Questions to Think On:

- What "yes" is God inviting from me today?
- Who might find courage because I kept going?

One faithful yes can impact more lives than you know.



Week 4: *Love*

When Communities Rise

Love isn't theory; it's presence. It's the courage to show up - at work, at home, in someone else's ache - when there's nothing impressive to offer but yourself. This week, we'll remember that faith works through love; quiet labor, honest conversation and simple hospitality can become holy ground. The goal isn't perfection; it's presence. The kind that heals, steadies and reminds the world that God still dwells among us.

This Week At A Glance:

Day 1: Be There. Really Be There.

Day 2: Work Like It Matters

Day 3: *Presence Over Perfection*

Day 4: *The Light Still Rises (Christmas Day)*

Epilogue: *Hope Has A Name*

Be There. Really Be There.

Love Is Presence in Motion.

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us - John 1:14

Absence can echo louder than noise.

You can sit in a crowd and still feel unseen, craving someone who simply stays. We spend so much of life performing - at work, in friendship, even in faith - forgetting that love often begins with something quieter: presence.

Not advice. Not fixing. Just being there.

You don't have to solve someone's pain to become part of their healing. Sometimes ministry looks like sitting through the silence, listening when words fail, or showing up when everyone else has moved on. Love arrives long before it understands what to say.

That same presence matters in your own waiting. When life feels uncertain, it's easy to disappear—to postpone connection until you feel "ready." But waiting for polish can stretch into paralysis. Showing up—to pray, to text a friend, to try again—is how you remind your soul that your story isn't over.

Henri Nouwen discovered the sacredness of presence when he left academia to live among people with disabilities at L'Arche Daybreak. He found that success had left him empty, but quiet companionship refilled his soul. His presence, not his sermons, became his ministry.

He learned that healing flows both ways when we choose to stay.

That's the invitation: to be there- for others, for yourself, for God.

Presence is a rebellion against indifference.

It says, You matter enough for me to stop and stay.

Questions to Think On:

Where can I practice love today through simple presence rather than advice?

How might I let God's steady nearness heal my own restlessness?

Love begins wherever you decide to be present.

Work Like It Matters.

To serve others through work is to mirror the Incarnation.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord
- Colossians 3:23

Some days the quiet feels heavier than the workload.

You wonder if your effort still counts, if your unseen diligence makes any difference. Yet love rarely looks like applause. Most of the time, it looks like showing up for another ordinary day and doing the next right thing with care.

Work was never punishment. Before the fall, God invited humanity to cultivate the garden- to join Him in creation. When you labor with integrity, you echo that first calling: to tend what's entrusted to you.

When you feel unseen, remember that excellence itself is a prayer. Folding laundry, entering data, serving customers - each can become worship when love directs it.

Dorothy Day lived this truth. She founded the Catholic Worker Movement during the Great Depression, feeding the hungry and writing with conviction that "love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams." She believed holiness hides in the day's most ordinary work.

If you're between jobs, your task is to stay ready - learning, giving, practicing steadiness. Growth itself is labor; faithfulness its wage.

Heaven doesn't measure your value by title but by love.

Work like it matters, because it does. The world doesn't need more impressive résumés; it needs people who believe their labor can be love made visible.

Questions to Think On:

- How can I see my current tasks as participation in God's work?
- What habit of excellence could turn my daily effort into prayer?

Every task becomes holy when done in love.

Presence Over Perfection.

The greatest gift is simply showing up.

They call Him Emmanuel, which means God with us - Matthew 1:23

December invites performance - perfect gatherings, polished updates, curated success. But the story we celebrate isn't about perfection achieved; it's about presence offered.

God didn't choose a palace but a stable.

The first Christmas smelled of straw and exhaustion, yet that's how love entered the world - through imperfection made holy.

Perfection isolates; presence connects. When you insist on being flawless, you miss the intimacy honesty brings. Healing - at work, in family, in friendship - starts when someone shows up unpolished and real.

Thérèse of Lisieux called this "the little way." She believed holiness hides in the smallest acts of love - a smile through weariness, a kindness no one sees. Her humility proved that greatness is never required for grace.

You don't need to dazzle anyone. Your children, coworkers, and friends need the version of you willing to laugh at the mess and admit uncertainty. God isn't waiting for a finished version of you; He's already with you in what's unfinished.

Love proves itself not through success but through presence. Make the call. Offer the smile. Sit with the grief. Let someone sit with you.

Emmanuel is still the promise: God with us - right here.

Questions to Think On:

Who might need my honest presence this week more than my polished words?
How can I extend that same grace and patience to myself?

Presence, freely given, is love made visible.

The Light Still Rises.

Christ enters every workplace that welcomes hope.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it - John 1:5

Christmas morning brings a rare quiet.

The world pauses, light spills through windows, and for a moment peace feels possible. Then reality whispers - bills, deadlines, uncertainty - and you wonder what difference this story makes for a life still waiting on answers.

That's the miracle: the Light doesn't erase darkness; it transforms how we see within it.

The same Light that broke into Bethlehem now steps quietly into kitchens, offices, and job sites. He doesn't divide life into sacred and secular; He fills both. The Christ who once shaped wood still shapes hearts through everyday work.

Corrie ten Boom knew that kind of light. During World War II she hid Jewish families in her home, surviving Ravensbrück concentration camp with a faith that refused to die. Afterward, she preached forgiveness, declaring, "There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still." Her courage proved that light can bloom even in the world's darkest rooms.

If you're waiting or rebuilding, your patience and honesty glow the same way. Each small act of perseverance becomes a lantern in someone else's night.

The manger proves that God chooses the plain and unfinished as His dwelling. The same Light that filled that stable now fills your ordinary acts with eternal meaning.

Questions to Think On:

What new beginning might God be offering me now, even if it feels small?

How can I carry this Light into the ordinary routines that follow today?

The Light has come and it still rises wherever hope goes to work.

Epilogue | Hope Has A Name

A meditation for the days after Christmas.

The tree will come down. The lights will dim. The world will move forward as if nothing miraculous just happened. Yet something has shifted inside you. Waiting has turned into knowing; hope has found its footing again.

Advent teaches a rhythm - darkness, waiting, dawn - the same cadence behind every comeback and calling. God works in the silence, planting what will bloom later.

You've practiced the habits that keep hope alive - persistence, gratitude, courage, love. They may never trend, but they're forming who you're becoming. Strength is rarely born in success; it's forged in faithful routine.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer lived that rhythm. Imprisoned for resisting evil, he wrote letters filled with quiet confidence: "Whoever regards themselves as a child of God should know that nothing happens apart from His will." His hope didn't ignore the dark; it defied it.

That's your calling now - to carry that same hope into motion.

The emails, meetings, and errands ahead aren't distractions from faith; they're where faith keeps growing. Hope doesn't retire when Christmas ends; it reports for work beside you.

You may not have every answer, but you are not unfinished. The Light that began in Bethlehem now burns in your corner of the world.

Hope has a name - and He still calls us to rise.

About The Rise Initiative

Why Rise Matters

The Rise Initiative connects good people with good jobs in great companies.

We exist to ignite potential through redemptive hiring - linking overlooked talent to meaningful careers that restore purpose, dignity, and stability.

Since May of 2025, Rise has placed individuals into full-time roles with trusted partners generating more than \$2.4 million in wages and over \$6 million in economic impact within just five months.

How Rise Creates Change

Rise builds bridges between untapped talent and employers ready to hire differently, serving:

- Individuals with nonviolent criminal records seeking a second chance
- Veterans transitioning into civilian life
- Survivors of trafficking rebuilding stability
- Young adults who have aged out of foster care

By 2030, Rise aims to achieve 1,000 cumulative job placements, representing over \$97 million in wages and \$243 million in community impact.

Our mission is proof that when one person rises, entire communities do too.



Next Steps



Learn More

coregroupcares.com

Discover The Rise Initiative, a national nonprofit helping individuals overcome barriers to employment through workforce pathways and employer partnerships.

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Follow along for stories of transformation, community impact, and opportunities to collaborate.

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Help expand access to life-changing job opportunities and holistic workforce development across the country.