



# APPNOTES

**Date:** December 17-21, 2018

**Series:** God With Us

**Luke 24:1-12** When Jesus was crucified, it looked like the devil had won. The disciples thought so. But God had a wonderful plan in mind. Jesus had warned the disciples that He would be killed and raised again, but they didn't understand. It didn't fit in with their knowledge of how the world works. We live in the world and we think the way the world thinks. It didn't seem logical that tragedy could lead to triumph. But it did. Does your Christmas season seem full of challenges, opposition and even despair? Maybe Mary and Joseph had those feelings as they traveled to Bethlehem. Our lives can feel like a train wreck with no hope of recovery. But when we focus on Jesus and His resurrection, we have hope that cannot be quenched. He chose to be born into our world so we could have life everlasting. Setting our eyes on Jesus puts things in perspective.

**Romans 8:28-29** On October 5, while on a walk, I slipped on a rock, fell and broke my hip. The next day I had a partial hip replacement. Suddenly, all my plans came crashing to a halt. Instead of traveling on vacation, I was navigating with a walker. When life deals us an unexpected blow, how do we respond? Do we feel cheated, get depressed and question God? All those thoughts came to my mind. But God's thoughts are higher than my thoughts. He gave me a season of "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46: 10) It wasn't easy, and I wasn't always comfortable with rest and quiet. But it did make me refocus on God and realize that no bad thing that happens can change God's plans and desires for me. This Christmas season, let's remember that Jesus will cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him no matter what our slip-ups.

**1 Samuel 30:1-6** David found himself in a terrible predicament. When he and his soldiers returned from battle, raiders had destroyed their city and taken their families captive. David and his men wept until they couldn't weep anymore. When bad things happen, we can be overcome with grief. David's men assigned blame to David and wanted to kill him. They chose to be bitter about their circumstances. When we get bitter, we often hurt those to whom we are closest. But we can choose to get better instead, and that's what David did. Imagine how he must have felt. He didn't know if his family was alive or dead, and all his closest friends were against him. With no one to turn to for support, he chose to strengthen himself in God. He had a relationship with

God built on the hope that God would see him through any circumstance, and He did. Even when all the cards seem stacked against you, you can turn to the One who will never desert you. He won't disappoint.

**Hebrews 11:8-12** We don't exactly know what Abraham was doing before God told him to move to a far country, but I think it's safe to say Abraham had a plan. And when Sarah married Abraham, she had a plan: children. Our plans are not necessarily wrong, but God's plans are so much better! God moved Abraham and Sarah, and He promised them land, children, and blessings. Through Abraham and Sarah, God raised up the nation Israel. Through the nation of Israel, God brought forth His Son Jesus, and through Jesus the world is saved. Abraham and Sarah's plan for their lives wasn't wrong; it just wasn't big enough. What is God calling you to do? Ask a neighbor to church? Pray for a colleague or classmate? Trust that God's plan for you is bigger and better than you can ever imagine.

**Judges 7:1-7** Has God ever asked you to do something you didn't think you could handle? I'm not qualified. I've messed up too many times. I'm too old, too young. Nobody will believe me. God planned a victory for Israel against their oppressors and chose Gideon to orchestrate it. Although thousands volunteered, God eliminated all but 300 men. Our natural minds can't fathom the concept that less is more. How can God bring victory when we think we don't have what it takes? We can't take the credit when God's assignment is too big for us to manage by ourselves. Gideon's obedience gave God room to work His miracles.

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