



# DAY 1

## *The Gift of Hope*

It is currently said that hope goes with youth, and lends to youth its wings of a butterfly; but I fancy that hope is the last gift given to man, and the only gift not given to youth. Youth is pre-eminently the period in which a man can be lyric, fanatical, poetic; but youth is the period in which a man can be hopeless. The end of every episode is the end of the world. But the power of hoping through everything, the knowledge that the soul survives its adventures, that great inspiration comes to the middle-aged; God has kept that good wine until now. It is from the backs of the elderly gentlemen that the wings of the butterfly should burst.

*CHARLES DICKENS: LAST OF THE GREAT MEN*

## HOPE IN THE GOSPEL

*In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.*

COLOSSIANS 1:3–6

## PRAYER

God of hope, Giver of hope, help us in our hopeless moments. Turn our hearts and minds to the promise of the gospel, to your dear Son, Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith in what we have heard. Especially in our troubles, remind us of our true home with you in heaven. Help us to hope for eternal life with you.

## ADVENT ACTION

Make a list of the things you are currently hoping for. This may include advancement in your career, the success of an important relationship, the completion of a project, or any number of things. When you have finished the list, look over it. Circle one item and say a brief prayer for God's help in bringing this about. If praying feels uncomfortable, consider whether the item you have chosen is something you should hope for. Ask God for clarity. Resolve to hope for those things that bring you closest to God.

