

jingle and JOY

PRAYING BENEATH
THE TREE

JODIE BARRETT

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AN ADVENT PRAYER JOURNAL



PRAYING BENEATH THE TREE



FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING MINISTRIES.ORG

Dedication



This book is dedicated to the memory of my son,
Ryan Thomas.

I am ever grateful for the 22 years we shared
together before Jesus welcomed you home.

Your fingerprints are all over my heart.

Thank you for always cheering your momma
forward and reminding me to smile.





Endorsements



Beautifully written with stories that will touch your heart, this guide is a wonderful (but realistic) reminder of practical ways to keep the focus on Christ this Christmas. With humor, candor, and always grace, Jodie Barrett encourages like no other. Her come alongside you attitude makes it feel as if a close friend is helping you to get the balance back in your life this Christmas season. I'm looking forward to following her guide this year as I take a step back from all that sparkles and remember to focus on the practical ways Jodie encourages us to plug into others.

Laura Adams, Designer, writer, and speaker at lauraadamscreative.net

Jodie Barrett truly lives her faith, and prayer is an integral part of everything she does. I know I struggle with the Christmas season sometimes—as much as I love God, I have trouble keeping my focus on the meaning behind Christmas, and I can get caught up in all the décor and busyness and forget that we are doing all of this because God is truly with us. What a gift. With Jingle and Joy, Jodie has hit upon a meaningful way to bring out the beauty and joy of the season and deepen our relationship with God at the same time. This book will become a regular part of my Christmas traditions.

Kelly O'Dell Stanley, author of *Praying Upside Down: A Creative Prayer Experience to Transform Your Time with God and Designed to Pray: Creative Ways to Engage with God.*

Jingle and Joy— Praying Beneath the Tree

A 25 Day Advent Prayer Journal

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Introduction

Standing three feet tall, filled with anticipation, right beside my daddy, I was one happy little girl. We were off to find a Christmas tree at the corner lot. Daddy and I go way back! For as long as I can remember I've been a Daddy's girl and I've loved Christmas trees just as long. This was going to be a great day!

My mind fails on all the details of that day at the tree lot, but I imagine we cased the place in search of the perfect tree. One just the right size, with a strong, straight trunk, and lively needles. The salesman pulling out each tree I pointed to, placing it upright, letting Daddy and me peer at its beauty until we were satisfied and said, "Yes, that's the one!"

I assume others and their families were doing the same. Those details are fuzzy, but I clearly remember being right beside my Daddy seeking the perfect tree to take home for Christmas. Imagine my surprise when I looked up, clinging to my Daddy's britches leg, only to see it wasn't my daddy's face attached to the leg I was holding onto tightly. Somewhere in the process I was fooled by someone that looked very much like my daddy.

I grasped onto him, because that was where I wanted to be... right beside my Father, preparing for Christmas. Only, in the jingle of things, I was lost.

Isn't that how Christmas can be sometimes?

We set out with our hearts focused on our Father preparing for the Christmas season. Our intention is to celebrate and

honor His Son, our Savior.

***"The Savior--yes, the Messiah, the Lord- has been
born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"***

Luke 2:11 NLT

We are grateful for a gift freely given. The birth of Jesus warrants a time of reflection and celebration. But somewhere, somehow “the jingle” takes our joy, our focus gets shifted from Jesus to the world, and we become lost. Suddenly, we look up, expecting to see the smile of our Daddy, only to find we are not even close to Him.

We get wrapped up in ribbon, tangled up in lights, distracted by traditions that were meant to help us keep Christ the center of Christmas, only to find the world has won our affection and attention. Furthermore, many of us will lose the joy of the season as we let the hoopla drain us physically, financially, and yes, spiritually.

Join me on a journey. One that led me to the foot of a Christmas tree and carried me back to focusing on a manger and the babe that was born for you and me. Each day we will walk through scripture and pray. We will keep some traditions, like putting up Christmas trees, but maybe, just maybe, a little slower, a little more intentional, and a little less distracted.

WE CAN HAVE
a little jingle and a whole lotta joy
AS WE KEEP CHRIST
THE CENTER OF CHRISTMAS



Scripture Reading List

1. Pray for all people - 1 Timothy 2:1
2. Pray for your neighbors - Luke 10:27
3. Pray for the homeless - Isaiah 25:4
4. Pray for those who work day and night - Luke 2:8
5. Pray for the difficult people - Luke 1:47-49
6. Pray for marriages - Matthew 1:19-20
7. Pray with and for your children - Proverbs 22:6
8. Pray for the grieving - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
9. Pray for a student - Luke 2:52
10. Pray for the lost - John 3:16-17
11. Pray for the sick - Luke 1:37
12. Pray for teachers- 1 Thessalonians 5:11
13. Pray for missionaries - Isaiah 52:7
14. Pray for caregivers- Matthew 11:28
15. Pray for peace (inner) - John 14:27
16. Pray for the military- Psalm 18:29
17. Pray for the lonely - Psalm 68:6
18. Pray for leaders - 1 Timothy 2:1-3
19. Pray for retail workers - James 1:19
20. Pray for those battling addiction - Psalm 31:1-2
21. Pray for those with depression - Psalm 143:7-8
22. Pray for a coworker- Colossians 3:23
23. Pray for the fragile - Luke 2:7
24. Pray for forgiveness- John 3:16-17
25. Praise God for Jesus - Luke 2:11-15
26. Continue lifting prayers - Psalm 5:3



Week One



Prayer Tree 1-2-3

1-2-3 start your prayer tree:

The last thing you need is a complicated process in an already busy season. I will keep this super simple! Because really, it's less about the tree and more about the prayer.



First, a little background. Several years ago, a friend shared how she would slowly unpack her ornaments and hang them prayerfully on the tree as she remembered others in prayer. That year as I decorated my tree I did the same. I was amazed at how the process prepared my heart for Christmas and inspired me to be intentional about praying for others! After that I began looking for ornaments that reminded me to pray for certain people and things. Then while my husband was deployed at Christmas I began sitting under the tree longer and invited others to join me. One year later I wanted a specific focus to help me keep the purpose of the prayer tree first and foremost. God led me to 1 Timothy 2:1 which reads, "***I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people.***" The urgency of this verse and directive to pray for all people guided me to stay focused on the purpose, rather than the process.

Here's the 1-2-3

1. Grab a notebook, your bible, and maybe even some tags to write on and hang on the tree. Your notebook will help you track your many prayers. Your bible will help you pray scripture for others. Use the tags to write names/needs on and hang them on the tree. When you pass by and see a name or a need you will remember to pray.

2. Pick a time of day when you pause beneath the tree and pray for others. I picked evening because the lights are glowing, and the day is slowing, but any time is perfect.
3. Pray each day being intentional to include others. Those you know and those you do not know. Use the prayer prompts in this book to help you pray for others each day.

Optional:

Keep a basket of ornaments below the tree and hang one each day as you pray for others. You will be surprised how many ornaments you have that already hold meaning. If you wish, you can add to your collection purchasing ornaments that remind you to think of others.

No room for another tree? Use the tree you have and add the prayer tags. No room for any tree, keep a prayer journal.

Lord, Thank you for this time of year. It's a time we often give gifts to one another in celebration of your son's birthday. Let this be the year we give the gift of prayer. The year we slow the pace, clear the distractions, and embrace the joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Lord
THANK YOU
FOR ALLOWING
Your children
TO &
COME
LAY THEIR REQUESTS AT
YOUR
feet

amen

day 1

PRAY EXPECTANTLY FOR ALL PEOPLE

"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people." 1 Timothy 2:1 NLT

We pray with honest and open hearts. We pray bringing our hearts to Jesus. We pray to comfort others. We pray to a BIG God who does BIG things. We pray expectantly.

Does it seem too bold to expect God to respond?

He asks us to come and bring our burdens. He asks us to come and share our concerns. He asks us to come and confess our sins. He asks us to pray for others.

And, we can expect.

- ⇒ Expect God to hear us.
- ⇒ Expect God to respond.
- ⇒ Expect God to answer.
- ⇒ TRUST God to be God.

Psalm 61:1-2 NLT says, ***"O God, listen to my cry! Hear my prayer! From the ends of the earth, I cry to you for help."*** There is an urgency in the psalmist's voice. A call for help. A cry lifted to the one we know and trust can help.

It's how He desires us to come. He wants us to turn to the One who can do more than we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20)! And as we come to Him with expectant hearts we also come with hearts filled with praise. Psalm 61:8 NLT says, ***"Sing praises to your name forever as I fulfill my vows each day."***

As we kneel beneath our prayer trees each day, kneel expectantly. Kneel with prayerful hearts. Kneel with hearts filled with praise and pray expectantly for all people.



Lord, Thank you for being a God who listens. A God with open doors awaiting our knock. A God who loves, forgives, comforts, and strengthens His people. Thank you for allowing your children to come and lay their requests at your feet. We thank you now for all you will do in response to our prayers. Amen.

day 1

Meet the Author



Jodie Barrett is a girl who loves Jesus and sharing his word. Wife to Thomas, her high school sweetheart, mother to their children Ryan and Lauren, and ministry leader with Faithfully Following Ministries. Her passion is teaching women the Word of God, helping women unearth the treasure of God's love letter, verse by verse. She looks for joy in everyday things like laundry, waiting in line and cooking, considering each an opportunity to share God's love with others!

Catch up with Jodie and her ministry partner Donna Fender on their blog at FaithfullyFollowingMinistries.org.



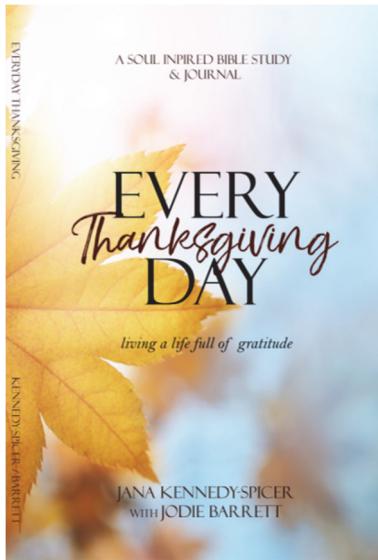
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Also from Jodie



Our world needs more joy!
Will you join us on a mission to deliver joy,
One Jar At A Time?

For more information visit
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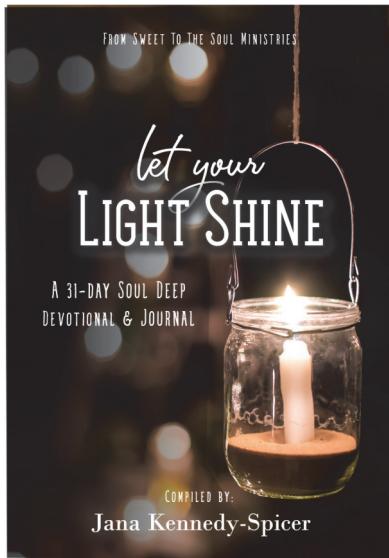


True thanksgiving is so much more than a holiday or a by-product of changing seasons.

True thanksgiving is a heart condition displayed in our normal day to day life.

*True thanksgiving is
everyday **thanksgiving**.*

For more information visit
SweetToTheSoul.com/everydaythanksgiving.htm



We live in a dark world, and it seems to be getting darker day by day. Fear, depression, grief, abuse, illness can seem overwhelming. But there is a hope.
There is a light.

"Prayer and Bible study can flip a switch on in a dark room."

~ Jodie Barrett

For more information visit
SweetToTheSoul.com/let-your-light-shine.htm

jingle and JOY



JOY oozes from Jodie Barrett's soul as she conveys her message of advent in *Jingle and Joy*.

She reminds us that getting caught up in the busyness of life can cause us to miss out on the most beautiful season of the year.

Jesus is the greatest gift of all and this book provides a meaningful and relevant perspective to keep us grounded all year long.

Jingle and Joy will be a favorite for years to come.

Mitzi Neely - Author of
A Thankful Heart: 30 Days to the Grateful Life
and *Dwell in the Psalms*.



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