

God

Isaiah 65:24 - I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking to me about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers! (NLT)

Lamentations 3:25 & 26 - The LORD is wonderfully good to those who wait for him and seek him. So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the LORD. (NLT)

Jeremiah 29:12 - 14 - "In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. I will be found by you," says the LORD... (NLT)

KEY UNDERSTANDING: "Nothing encourages spending time alone with God like _____ time alone with God!"

CLOSING THOUGHT:

"Almost Ready" is knowing what _____ to be done.

"Being Ready!" is _____ it.

CLOSING SCRIPTURE:

John 13:17 - You know these things - now do them! That is the path of blessing. (NLT)

ALMOST READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

DECEMBER 17TH, 2017

Revelation 3:15 & 16 - I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, I will spit you out of my mouth! (NLT)

Revelation 3:17 - 22 - You say, "I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!" And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I advise you to buy gold from me — gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. And also buy white garments so you will not be shamed by your nakedness. And buy ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. I am the one who corrects and disciplines everyone I love. Be diligent and turn from your indifference. "Look! Here I stand at the door and knock. If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal as friends... Anyone who is willing to hear should listen to the Spirit and understand what the Spirit is saying." (NLT)

Isaiah 58:2 - 11 Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to hear my laws. You would almost think this was a righteous nation that would never abandon its God. They love to make a show of coming to me and asking me to take action on their behalf. "We have fasted before you!" they say. "Why aren't you impressed? We have done much penance, and you don't even notice it!" "I will tell you why! It's because you are living for yourselves even while you are fasting. You keep right on oppressing your workers. What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. ▶▶▶▶▶▶ You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like a blade of grass in the wind. You dress in sackcloth and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the LORD? No, the kind of fasting I want calls you to free those

who are wrongly imprisoned and to stop oppressing those who work for you. Treat them fairly and give them what they earn. I want you to share your food with the hungry and to welcome poor wanderers into your homes. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. If you do these things, your salvation will come like the dawn. Yes, your healing will come quickly. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the LORD will answer. "Yes, I am here," he will quickly reply." (NLT)

Luke 14:25 - 30 - Great crowds were following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, "If you want to be my follower you must love me more than your own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters — yes, more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And you cannot be my disciple if you do not die to yourself and follow me. But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first getting estimates and then checking to see if there is enough money to pay the bills? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of funds. And then how everyone would laugh at you! They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and ran out of money before it was finished!'" (NLT)

Luke 14:31 - 33 - Or what king would ever dream of going to war without first sitting down with his counselors and discussing whether his army of ten thousand is strong enough to defeat the twenty thousand soldiers who are marching against him? If he is not able, then while the enemy is still far away, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace. So no one can become my disciple without giving up everything for me. (NLT)

Luke 9:59 - 60 - He said to another person, "Come, be my disciple." The man agreed, but he said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father." Jesus replied, "Let those who are spiritually dead care for their own dead. Your duty is to go and preach the coming of the Kingdom of God." (NLT)

Luke 9:61 - 62 - Another said, "Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family." But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God." (NLT)

Matthew 19:16 - 22 - Someone came to Jesus with this ques-

tion: "Teacher, what good things must I do to have eternal life?" "...you can receive eternal life if you keep the commandments." "Which ones?" the man asked. And Jesus replied: "Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother. Love our neighbor as yourself." "I've obeyed all these commandments," the young man replied. "What else must I do?" Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." But when the young man heard this, he went sadly away because he had many possessions. (NLT)

KEY UNDERSTANDING: People who claimed to be "almost ready" in reality are _____ ready, and therefore often _____ what God wants to do _____ and _____ their lives.

3 Starting Points for Getting Ready for Christmas

1. Be _____

Isaiah 57:15 - The Holy One says this: "I live in that high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I refresh the humble and give new courage to those with repentant hearts." (NLT)

Psalms 25:9 - He leads the humble in what is right, teaching them his way. (NLT)

2. Let _____

Hebrews 12:1 - Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress... We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. (NLT)

◊ To be "Ready" we must first _____ the things that have a _____ on us.

◊ I need to let go of _____

3. _____ : Spend time _____ with _____