



A GUIDE FOR
WORKING WOMEN
CREATED BY

POLISHED

Advent

EMBRACING
WONDER +
WAITING
IN OUR
WORK

© 2022


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Dear friend,

If you're like us, when you were growing up, December was known as the "Christmas season" and was marked by gifts and sweets, decor and parties, family time and a feeling of busyness. For many, our only notion of Advent was a pop-up calendar filled with treats that counted down the days until Christmas. And while we may remember our childhood Christmas memories with fondness, many of us at Polished have come to appreciate the liturgical season of Advent. It's a four week period in the traditional Church calendar that invites you to anticipate, prepare, and reflect on the profound gift of Jesus' birth.



At Polished, we want to approach the Advent season with our whole selves – including the part of us that is work oriented. That's why we created this guide. We invite you to enter a space of wonder and waiting with God, holding in tandem the mystery of Jesus' birth and the mystery of how He's using you on this earth right now. They are not separate. And perhaps this season has something to offer you that permeates into your work life too.



The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7

Hope

WEEK ONE | SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27

This first week of the Advent season reminds us that we have a profound and ultimate hope: the rule and reign of Jesus. He is good and what He does is for our good and it is good to remember that one day we will get to live in peace in the fullness of His Kingdom. Hope is a powerful invitation. Where uncertainty and darkness threaten to overwhelm, hope opens our eyes to the light that exists.

When it comes to our work, we are often tempted to grasp at darkness, misplacing our hope in outcomes, rather than the person of Jesus. And while metrics are important in business, we need to remember not to lose sight of the best outcome of all and the source of our greatest hope: Jesus.

It seems discouragement that leads to hopelessness is always lurking around the corner.

You wonder if the business you've poured your blood, sweat, and tears into will ever really take off.

You fear that you don't have the background, experience, or qualifications to land your dream job.

You are overwhelmed by the pressure of work and cannot see how to find relief.

You sense that your boss undervalues and maybe even looks down upon you.

You feel lost in the unknown and are crippled by indecision.

These are all very real and completely valid human experiences, especially when it comes to our desire to contribute something meaningful to the world through our work.

If you find yourself in a moment of discouragement or hopelessness, hear now this: **Advent is here!** This week, we are reminded that we have hope because of Jesus. Because of Him, our value is not tied to our work, production or others' estimations of us. Because of Him, we have access to clarity through the Holy Spirit. We are adopted as children of God and our belovedness is secure in Him.

Set your intention towards **hope in Him** this week. Let this time of soaking in the reality of hope in Jesus reset your mind, infusing hope into every fold.

Take some time this week to reflect on the following questions:

- Where are you feeling hopeless right now?
- To what or whom have you secured your hope? How do you see that play out in your work?
- Imagine how your work journey would feel if you placed your hope in Jesus over outcomes.
- How do you hold onto hope even when you aren't promised a particular outcome when it comes to your work?
- What are you promised?

Be careful not to spiritually bypass your very real experience, even if that includes a sense of hopelessness. Part of our invitation to hope this week includes the reality that because *Jesus is our hope*, we can go to Him in complete honesty about our true thoughts and feelings. Use this week as a reminder to turn towards Him and let Him show you care and compassion. Let Him give Himself to you. Let Him give you hope.



A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

**And the glory of the
Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see
it together.**

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

ISAIAH 40:3-5

Faith

WEEK TWO | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

When you hear the word “faith,” what comes to your mind?

A cross? A church? The Bible? Does it evoke feelings of affection and devotion? Perhaps pain, rejection, or confusion? Bible verses and sayings about faith have stamped on things such as coffee mugs, t-shirts, and Christmas ornaments for a reason. Faith is the invitation to live in the space between Jesus’ birth and His return.

During this week of Advent, we will hone in on the concept of faith. If you’ll recall, Advent is a season of remembering the longing of God’s people in ages past. A little over two thousand years ago, God’s people were waiting in anticipation of a messiah. Now, we step into Advent as a time to remember that we are also waiting — for the *return* of Jesus. Our faith now is anchored in the story of Jesus’ life. But we are still waiting. And this waiting still requires faith.

So what does faith look like for us right now? More specifically, what does faith look like for us as women who feel called to contribute something meaningful to the world? And how is that connected to our calling to bring the kingdom of Heaven here to earth?

See, while faith is a noun, it requires the action of trust. Trust is not passive. Trust is a choice we make. Picture a trust fall, where someone steps out in faith, believing that others will catch them.

When it comes to our work, whether you are in a helping profession, the corporate world, or you are an entrepreneur,

our faith means we are a part of a bigger story. Every thread of your life, every aspect of your individual wiring, every relationship you've built serves a purpose in your role in God's story.

It's OK if you've lost sight of your part in God's desire to bring His kingdom to completion on earth. Truthfully, it's OK if you've never considered your role in that. Let this week of Advent be an intentional space for you to ask Him to show you what He's calling you to right now. As He does, ask Him to help you embody faith in all that you do.

Take some time this week to reflect on the following questions:

- What is something you are waiting for when it comes to your work?
- Take a moment to imagine God's purpose in its fullness in that situation. What do you see?
- As a person of faith in the "now and not yet" of Christ's birth and His return, how is God inviting you to join Him in bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth? How is that interwoven with your ambitions, passions, and giftings?
- While faith and trust are not passive, sometimes waiting does require us to be still. Where might God be nudging you to slow down or be still?
- During the Advent season, we are reminded that waiting has a purpose, and that God's timing is perfect. What benefit do you see as a potential for waiting in your life?



When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary,

And they bowed down and worshiped Him.

Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

MATTHEW 2:10-11

Joy

WEEK THREE | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

Did you know that *Joy to the World* was not actually written as a Christmas carol? It was originally published in 1719 by a man named Isaac Watts, who wrote it in midlife when he was 45 years old. Upon discovering his passion for writing hymns, he set out to write one every week for two years. By the end of his life, he had written 750 hymns, including *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*.

Joy to the World was part of a large collection called (prepare yourself – it’s a super long title), *The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament and Applied to the Christian State and Worship*. In this collection, Isaac Watts took Biblical Psalms and infused them with language from the New Testament while speaking new, Gospel-laced life into the Psalms that had been sung by the Church for centuries.

His new way of writing hymns that added words to the traditionally sung Psalms was widely dismissed as “unbiblical,” yet Watts remained steadfast in his conviction. He had a passion for connecting the Gospel to all of Scripture and inviting people to a deeper, more complete understanding of God’s love and grace. Reflecting back to our devotional in week 2, you can see that Watts understood his assignment to be an active participant in bringing God’s Kingdom to earth. He didn’t just fall in line to the cultural expectations; He used his unique gifts, desires, and creativity to innovate and contribute beauty to the world.

The rich history of *Joy to the World* reminds us of our opportunity to use our work to bring value to the world. And the song itself reminds us of the heart of Advent. We have a

reason to rejoice! There's obvious truth to soak in — the birth of Jesus is something to celebrate! Jesus' coming was long awaited and it means we can be saved!

But there is another invitation at the heart of Jesus' birth, and it's the reason for which He came: His love for us.

Hebrews 12:2 reminds us that it was “for the joy that was set before Him” that Jesus endured the cross. And what is that joy? You, my friend.

Relationship with you is His joy. He delights in you. Unlike hope and faith, which look forward to a time that will come where they will no longer be needed, joy is abiding. It already is and it will remain forever.

So maybe this Advent season we can look at the call of “joy to the world” from a different perspective. Where we may feel pressure to create, feel or find joy, may we take notice of the endless delight that God enjoys in us. And may we see how that reception of His delight sparks immense joy in us.

Take some time this week to reflect on the following questions:

- What is joy? What (or who) is the source of joy?
- Reflecting on your own life during Advent, what has the relationship between joy and longing looked like in your life?
- How can your knowledge of God's delight in you spark joy in the spaces that feel heavy, dark, or overwhelming?
- What does joy look like in your work? Give yourself time to connect with the source of joy, rather than working to contrive it yourself.
- God loves to give us His joy! If you're lacking, ask Him to restore joy to you.



For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,

**that whoever believes
in Him shall not perish
but have eternal life.**

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

JOHN 3:16-19

Love

WEEK FOUR | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

“For God so loved the world that He ...”

Love. It has to be one of THE most compelling forces in our world. Love broke through the pride and prejudice of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. Love sent the lowly Westley on a life-threatening journey to reunite with Princess Buttercup. Love compelled Chance, Sassy, and Shadow to leave the leisure of a sprawling ranch in a dangerous pursuit of their beloved kids. Love drives us. And Scripture explains to us that “love covers a multitude of wrongdoing” (1 John 4:8). The Bible also tells us that even if your life is full of good things and righteous deeds, if you don’t have love then it’s all meaningless in the end.

Love is powerful. And for those of us who want to live a meaningful life, it is essential.

Remember that Advent is an invitation to slow down in anticipation and preparation for the birth of Jesus. In this last week before Christmas, where tensions may be high with co-workers taking time off, family expectations looming overhead, and culture pulling you towards distraction, lean into the invitation of Advent. Embrace grace. Carve out time for restorative rest. Give yourself space to consider the force of love in your life, remembering that God is love.

Checklists, to-do lists, production, and outcomes are valuable tools and measures, but without love, they are meaningless in the end. When it comes to our work, love matters. Love for our clients or customers compels us to keep going when we feel discouraged and overwhelmed. Love for God invites us to take risks even when the stakes feel high. Knowing that we are

beloved allows us to honor our limitations and trust the process. Without love, our work can become stale, or worse, it can swallow us up in an endless pursuit of shadows. But in love, our work is both anchored and empowered.

Take some time this week to reflect on the following questions:

- When do you feel most loved? What does it mean to be a beloved child of God?
- How can your belovedness impact your relationship with work? In what ways does love propel you in your work?
- Ask a coworker or peer to share honest feedback on their experience of you. Do they convey a sense of love at work in you?
- With love as the driving force, what changes might you need to make in regards to work? In your demeanor and countenance? In your speech? In your posture? In your time management?
- As you reflect on Advent and the love that Jesus has for you in His coming, consider how you might be a vessel of powerful love this week.



The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.

JOHN 1:14

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

**for to us a child is born,
to us a Son is given,**

and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

ISAIAH 9:2-7

The Light of the World is born

WEEK FIVE | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

The Light of the World is here. We no longer have to live in darkness. We no longer have to chase the light. It is here. **He** is here.

Today we remember that there will come a day where our longing will be no more. There will come a day that Jesus returns and the things that make life and work exceedingly difficult and complicated will be smoothed out completely. There will come a day when His rule and reign will no longer be in veiled light – it will be the way of the world. His Kingdom will come FULLY on earth as it is in Heaven.

Today, rest in the gift that has come in His birth and that will come again with His return.

Reflection

Imagine what your work-life will look like under the full reign of Jesus in the completion of His Kingdom. What do you hope your work will be like in heaven? Take delight in the joy of it. Wonder at the beauty of it. And ask Him where and how He wants you to more fully embody that vision in your life here and now.

Merry Christmas!

