

Christmas Season Devotionals

Week One – Day 1

I heard The Bells on Christmas Day

"The celebrated literary critic and poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a 57-year-old widowed father of six children, the oldest of which had been nearly paralyzed as his country fought the Civil War, wrote a poem on Christmas day, 1863. He sought to capture the dynamic and dissonance in his own heart and the world he observed around him. He heard the Christmas bells that December day and the singing of "peace on earth" (Luke 2:14), but he observed the world of injustice and violence that seemed to mock the truthfulness of this optimistic outlook. The theme of *listening* recurred throughout the poem, eventually leading to a settledness of confident hope even in the midst of bleak despair." (By Justin Taylor, 12.21.14. thegospelcoalition.org)

Craft Ideas – Bells: <https://www.adiyprojects.com/christmas-decorations-with-bells-25-awesome-diy-ideas/>

Video by hymncharts.com: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvMWcl8xuKg>

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Then ringing, singing on its way
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

Then pealed the bells more, loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail
With peace on earth, good will to men"

Questions/statements for individuals or families to respond to:

- Where do you or should you go for help when you are sad?
- Memorize Luke 2:14. What do you think God wants to tell us through Luke, one of the Gospel writers?
- Talk about what the line in the song, "**God is not dead, nor doth He sleep,**" means to you?

Digging Deeper

1. When life has seemed hopeless, like it seemed at the time to Longfellow, who or what have you had a tendency to turned to? And why?
2. How do you maintain hope and strive for joy in the midst of a hopeless and darkened world?
3. How do the following references encourage you? (2 Timothy 1:7; Deuteronomy 31:6; Psalm 23:4; 27:1; Luke 12:25; Romans 8:38-39)