

# SCRIPTURE SCRATCHING

A Guide for the Spiritual Discipline of  
Writing and Meditating on God's Word



“Write them deep within your heart.”

Proverbs 3:3

**Bill & Phyllis Nichols**



I painted this landscape looking from the room from which Phyllis and I do our “Scripture Scratching.” Bill

**From Bill:** Thank you for accepting God’s invitation and ours to “Write them deep within your heart,” a scripture-writing project for the year. My wife, Phyllis, and I like to do things together. We pray, walk these beautiful Texas hills, serve, write, and enjoy our lives walking hand in hand. So we decided to do this project together.

As a theologian, professor, philosopher, and Bible teacher, I have spent my life studying God’s Word and the world’s philosophies. After all these years, I have come to the same conclusion as many before me—all truth comes from God, but to know what is true and what is not, we must turn to God’s Word. When I wrote the book *HEALTHY FAITH*, which is a manual for developing a healthy and fulfilling relationship with God that engages your head, your heart, and your hands, I stressed the importance of daily Bible study. It is there you will find the recorded stories of God’s activity in human history and the characteristics that make Him holy. There are many methods of studying the Bible. We have found the spiritual discipline of writing and meditating on God’s Word is a highly productive way to keep you in God’s Word and to help the Truth you find there become the fabric of your life and faith.

In this guide, each month you will find one key theme found in the scripture with a related verse or short passage for each day. Your scripture writing and meditation will only take you about ten minutes. I would suggest you print these pages and put them in a three-ring binder where you may add your pages of “scripture scratching” and your journaling.

You might begin each day by reading the passage and asking God to help you truly listen and move beyond your own limited ideas of what this biblical text is saying. Then as you write the passage, meditate on each word, asking what the text is saying specifically to you. As you finish, I would suggest you pray, using the text and asking God to help you apply it to the way you will live out your life today.

**From Phyllis:** You’re probably scratching your head at the phrase “scripture scratching” when scripture writing has been around for a long time. When I started this discipline as a part of my daily devotional life, I realized I was doing more than just copying verses. I had images of birds scratching in the grass and soil for seeds and kernels, and that was exactly what I was doing—searching for a kernel of truth or a seed of hope. And since “scratching” is what some call their handwriting, thus the phrase “scripture scratching” was born. As you “scratch,” I hope God’s Word will become three-dimensional for you as you meditate and pray. And I hope the passage will come back into your thoughts throughout the day and that you will even have opportunity to share it with someone else.

Having used many scripture-writing guides that were practical, I explained to Bill that I wanted this one to be also visually attractive. The Bible is filled with mentions of birds, from eagles to sparrows, and these passages and our own birdwatching have taught us many life lessons. All the images you see in this guide are from actual oil paintings hanging in our home—Bill’s paintings of the birds that we feed, see, and enjoy every day. He takes photos and then uses them as subjects for creating these paintings. I hope you will enjoy and ponder these beautiful images as you turn the pages. My prayer is that you will feel God’s care for the sparrow and experience His strength in the wings of the eagle.



# Meet Bill and Phyllis



**Bill Nichols**, PhD, has given his life to helping people develop a healthy faith. He was senior pastor of three churches, founded the South Georgia Pastoral Counseling Center, and has been a popular public speaker. Dr. Nichols taught Christian apologetics and faith communications at the nation's largest Protestant seminary, helped establish the nation's first 24/7 faith-based, inter-denominational television network, and founded America's first health television channel.

Dr. Nichols has also authored [Heathy Faith: A Strategic Lifestyle Plan to Transform Your Head, Heart & Hands](#) and [Devotions for a Healthy Faith](#). Bill is an accomplished artist, enjoys traveling, teaching, and nature.

He and his wife, Phyllis, live in the Texas Hill Country.

Bill's social media presence: Website: [healthyfaith.net](http://healthyfaith.net)

Facebook: Bill Nichols

Twitter: [cslnsmore](https://twitter.com/cslnsmore)

**Phyllis Clark Nichols** was raised in the deep shade of magnolia trees in Cairo, Georgia. Now she lives in the Texas Hill Country with her husband where red birds and axis deer are her ever-ravenous neighbors. She is an English major, seminary graduate, concert artist, and co-founder of a national cable network for people with disabilities. For many years, she led mission teams to work in the orphanages of Guatemala and currently serves on non-profit boards where she works with others who are equally passionate about bringing hope and light to those who need it most.

As an author of eight books, Phyllis believes everyone could use a little more hope and light. Her character-driven Southern fiction explores profound human questions from within the simple lives of small town communities you just know you've visited before. With a love for nature, art, music, cooking, faith, and ordinary people, she tells redemptive tales of loss and recovery, estrangement and connection, longing and fulfillment, often through surprisingly serendipitous events. Phyllis is the author of the *Family Portrait series*, the *Rockwater Suite series of 4 novels*, *Christmas at Grey Sage*, and *Silent Days, Holy Night*.

Phyllis's social media presence:

Website: [phyllisclarknichols.com](http://phyllisclarknichols.com)

Facebook: [PhyllisClarkNichols](https://www.facebook.com/PhyllisClarkNichols)

Twitter: [PhyllisCNichols](https://twitter.com/PhyllisCNichols)

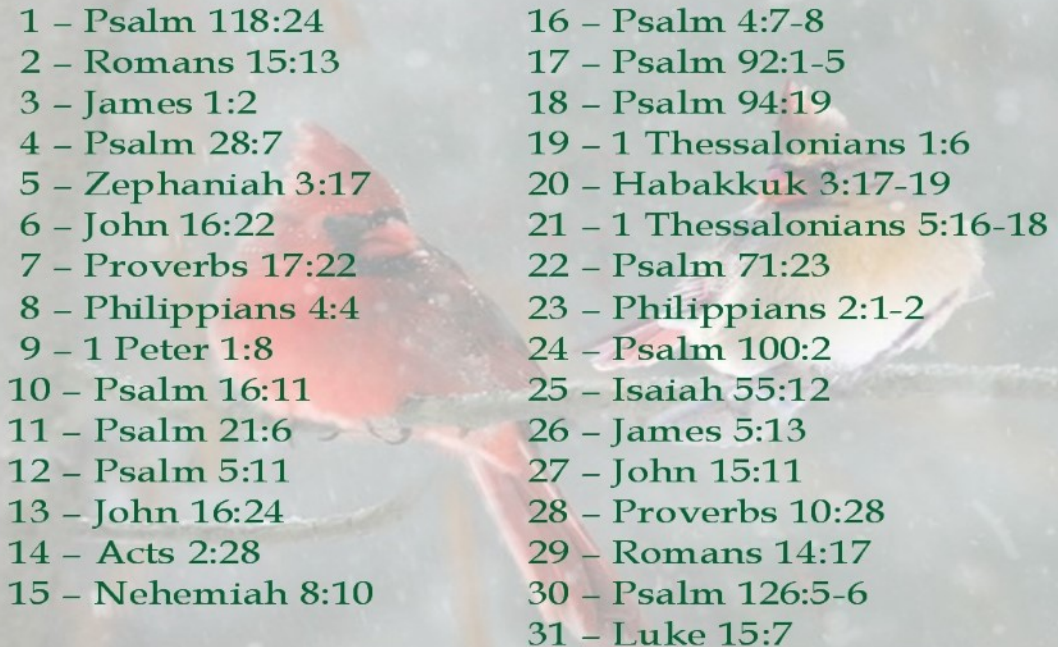


# JANUARY

Scripture Scratching For

## JOY

God wants to have a meaningful relationship with you so that you will have joy. The Bible word *joy* means a deep peace and satisfying contentment that you have no matter the circumstances. Joy grows and multiplies in a heart rooted in gratitude for God's presence and activity in one's life.

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|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 – Psalm 118:24    | 16 – Psalm 4:7-8             |
| 2 – Romans 15:13    | 17 – Psalm 92:1-5            |
| 3 – James 1:2       | 18 – Psalm 94:19             |
| 4 – Psalm 28:7      | 19 – 1 Thessalonians 1:6     |
| 5 – Zephaniah 3:17  | 20 – Habakkuk 3:17-19        |
| 6 – John 16:22      | 21 – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 |
| 7 – Proverbs 17:22  | 22 – Psalm 71:23             |
| 8 – Philippians 4:4 | 23 – Philippians 2:1-2       |
| 9 – 1 Peter 1:8     | 24 – Psalm 100:2             |
| 10 – Psalm 16:11    | 25 – Isaiah 55:12            |
| 11 – Psalm 21:6     | 26 – James 5:13              |
| 12 – Psalm 5:11     | 27 – John 15:11              |
| 13 – John 16:24     | 28 – Proverbs 10:28          |
| 14 – Acts 2:28      | 29 – Romans 14:17            |
| 15 – Nehemiah 8:10  | 30 – Psalm 126:5-6           |
|                     | 31 – Luke 15:7               |

For a Healthy Faith

*“Write them deep within your heart.”*



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# FEBRUARY

Scripture Scratching For

## Love

God's Word tells of His love for you. In the Bible, the word *love* means more than an emotional feeling. It is a genuine, unselfish active commitment. God loved us so much that He sacrificed Himself so that we could be His. That is the way He wants us to love Him and to love others.

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|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 - Romans 8:38-39     | 16 - Isaiah 54:10         |
| 2 - Psalm 13:5         | 17 - 1 Kings 8:23         |
| 3 - John 3:16          | 18 - Exodus 15:13         |
| 4 - 1 Peter 5:7        | 19 - Romans 5:5           |
| 5 - Psalm 36:7-9       | 20 - Isaiah 40:11         |
| 6 - Jeremiah 31:3      | 21 - Lamentations 3:22-26 |
| 7 - Psalm 31:16        | 22 - Deuteronomy 6:5      |
| 8 - 1 John 4:15-19     | 23 - 1 John 4:7-8         |
| 9 - 1 Peter 4:8        | 24 - 1 John 3:1           |
| 10 - Psalm 107:8       | 25 - Ephesians 2:4-5      |
| 11 - Psalm 52:8        | 26 - Ephesians 3:17-19    |
| 12 - Deuteronomy 33:12 | 27 - Psalm 90:14          |
| 13 - John 15:13-15     | 28 - Proverbs 10:12       |
| 14 - Psalm 143:8       | 29 - Matthew 22:37-39     |
| 15 - Psalm 103:11      |                           |

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# MARCH

Scripture Scratching For

## Peace

God wants you to have peace and to be a peacemaker. The Biblical word *peace* is not the absence of problems or suffering, but the peace God gives is His presence. Peace is that sense of calm even in the midst of the storms of life.

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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 – John 16:33            | 16 – Romans 12:18        |
| 2 – Romans 8:6            | 17 – Ephesians 4:3       |
| 3 – Exodus 33:14          | 18 – Philippians 4:6-7   |
| 4 – Hebrews 12:14         | 19 – 1 Peter 3:11        |
| 5 – Isaiah 26:3           | 20 – James 3:18          |
| 6 – Numbers 6:24-26       | 21 – Proverbs 12:20      |
| 7 – John 14:27            | 22 – Psalm 34:14         |
| 8 – Colossians 3:15       | 23 – Psalm 37:37         |
| 9 – Psalm 29:11           | 24 – Psalm 119:165       |
| 10 – 2 Thessalonians 3:16 | 25 – Isaiah 26:12        |
| 11 – Romans 5:1           | 26 – Romans 14:17-19     |
| 12 – Psalm 4:6-8          | 27 – 1 Corinthians 14:33 |
| 13 – 2 Peter 1:2          | 28 – Matthew 5:9         |
| 14 – Luke 1:79            | 29 – Romans 15:13        |
| 15 – Psalm 112:7          | 30 – Isaiah 32:17        |
|                           | 31 – Mark 9:50           |

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# APRIL

Scripture Scratching For

## Humility

The Biblical word for *humility* means to think and to act selflessly as God did in coming to earth and giving His life so we can be a part of His family forever. Whether teaching, healing, or washing His disciples' feet, Jesus put others ahead of Himself. We are to be like Him as we serve Him and others.

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 – 1 Peter 3:4          | 16 – Colossians 3:12 |
| 2 – 2 Corinthians 12:9   | 17 – James 4:6       |
| 3 – 2 Corinthians 4:7    | 18 – Proverbs 11:2   |
| 4 – Ephesians 4:1-6      | 19 – James 4:10      |
| 5 – Isaiah 64:8          | 20 – Proverbs 15:33  |
| 6 – Matthew 23:12        | 21 – Luke 14:11      |
| 7 – Isaiah 55:8-9        | 22 – Philippians 2:3 |
| 8 – 1 Peter 5:5-6        | 23 – Romans 12:3     |
| 9 – Micah 6:8            | 24 – James 3:13      |
| 10 – Matthew 6:1         | 25 – Psalm 25:9      |
| 11 – James 1:19          | 26 – Isaiah 57:15    |
| 12 – 2 Corinthians 11:30 | 27 – Romans 12:16    |
| 13 – Philippians 2:5-8   | 28 – Isaiah 66:2     |
| 14 – Proverbs 22:4       | 29 – Zephaniah 2:3   |
| 15 – 2 Chronicles 7:14   | 30 – Jeremiah 9:23   |

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# MAY

Scripture Scratching For

## TRUTH

The Biblical word for *truth* means that which you can depend on. The only One we can depend on is God Himself, and He gave us His Word which is absolute Truth for all time. Then He gave us His Son, who said of Himself, "I am the Truth."

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- 1 – Proverbs 30:5
  - 2 – Proverbs 3:5-6
  - 3 – Psalm 32:8
  - 4 – Matthew 6:33
  - 5 – Hebrews 6:18-19
  - 6 – Psalm 139:1-4
  - 7 – John 4:24
  - 8 – Psalm 86:11
  - 9 – Revelation 22:13
  - 10 – 2 Samuel 22:29
  - 11 – 1 John 3:19-20
  - 12 – Isaiah 55:8-9
  - 13 – Colossians 2:2-3
  - 14 – Romans 11:33
  - 15 – Hebrews 4:12
  - 16 – John 8:32
  - 17 – John 14:6
  - 18 – Ephesians 4:15
  - 19 – Psalm 18:30
  - 20 – Psalm 25:5
  - 21 – 2 Samuel 22:31
  - 22 – 1 Corinthians 13:6
  - 23 – Philippians 4:8
  - 24 – John 18:37
  - 25 – John 16:13
  - 26 – Psalm 119:160
  - 27 – Psalm 19:7
  - 28 – James 3:17
  - 29 – John 17:17
  - 30 – 2 Timothy 2:15
  - 31 – 2 Timothy 3:16-17

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# JUNE

Scripture Scratching For

## FORGIVENESS

The Biblical idea of *forgiveness* means being made clean and free of guilt. There is the picture of being washed clean so that we are acceptable to God. Jesus's blood did that for all who will follow Him. As His children, we are to be like Him, offering forgiveness to others.

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|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 – Luke 6:37          | 16 – Colossians 3:13  |
| 2 – Hebrews 7:25       | 17 – Matthew 18:21-22 |
| 3 – Romans 8:1-2       | 18 – Matthew 6:14-15  |
| 4 – Psalm 40:2         | 19 – Isaiah 53:5      |
| 5 – 2 Corinthians 5:21 | 20 – James 5:16       |
| 6 – Ephesians 2:13     | 21 – Acts 2:38        |
| 7 – 1 John 1:9         | 22 – Isaiah 1:18      |
| 8 – Psalm 103:10-12    | 23 – Psalm 32:5       |
| 9 – Ephesians 2:8      | 24 – Matthew 26:28    |
| 10 – Matthew 6:12      | 25 – Luke 7:45-50     |
| 11 – 2 Chronicles 7:14 | 26 – 1 John 2:1       |
| 12 – Psalm 86:5        | 27 – Romans 6:23      |
| 13 – Ephesians 4:32    | 28 – Hebrews 10:17    |
| 14 – Luke 17:3-4       | 29 – Jeremiah 31:34   |
| 15 – Mark 11:25        | 30 – Hebrews 8:12     |

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# JULY

Scripture Scratching For

## PATIENCE

The Biblical idea of *patience* is God's gracious and understanding way of relating to His creation. It is God's patience that makes Him accepting of His children even when they are undeserving. Patience is a fruit of Christ's Spirit living in us, and we are to practice patience with others.

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|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 – Romans 12:12         | 16 – Exodus 14:14         |
| 2 – Hebrews 6:12         | 17 – Isaiah 40:31         |
| 3 – Luke 8:15            | 18 – Galatians 6:9        |
| 4 – Galatians 5:22       | 19 – Ephesians 4:2        |
| 5 – Psalm 27:14          | 20 – 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 |
| 6 – 2 Corinthians 4:17   | 21 – Proverbs 15:18       |
| 7 – Lamentations 3:25-26 | 22 – Colossians 3:12      |
| 8 – Psalm 5:3            | 23 – Ecclesiastes 7:8-9   |
| 9 – Psalm 37:7           | 24 – James 1:19           |
| 10 – Micah 7:7           | 25 – 1 Thessalonians 5:14 |
| 11 – Psalm 40:1-2        | 26 – James 5:7-8          |
| 12 – Psalm 33:20         | 27 – 2 Peter 3:9          |
| 13 – James 1:4           | 28 – Colossians 1:11      |
| 14 – Psalm 130:5         | 29 – Proverbs 14:29       |
| 15 – Romans 8:25         | 30 – Luke 21:19           |
|                          | 31 – Revelation 14:12     |

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# AUGUST

Scripture Scratching For

## HOLY

God is holy in that He is unique, special, and different from His creation. The Biblical word for *holy* means to set apart for special service. It is the idea of a person or a thing that is chosen by God for a special purpose. As His children, we are set apart to fulfill our purpose, and we are to be holy.

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|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 – Jude 1:20              | 16 – 1 Thessalonians 4:7 |
| 2 – 2 Peter 1:3-4          | 17 – Ephesians 1:4       |
| 3 – Revelation 22:11       | 18 – Matthew 5:14-16     |
| 4 – 1 Corinthians 3:16     | 19 – Romans 12:1-2       |
| 5 – Isaiah 57:15           | 20 – Ezekiel 36:26       |
| 6 – Psalm 18:30            | 21 – Leviticus 19:2      |
| 7 – Ephesians 2:19-22      | 22 – Hebrews 12:14       |
| 8 – Exodus 3:5             | 23 – 2 Corinthians 7:1   |
| 9 – Matthew 22:37          | 24 – 1 Peter 1:15-16     |
| 10 – Isaiah 6:3            | 25 – 1 Samuel 2:2        |
| 11 – Ephesians 4:29        | 26 – Leviticus 20:26     |
| 12 – Ephesians 4:22-24     | 27 – 2 Timothy 1:9       |
| 13 – 1 Peter 2:9           | 28 – Leviticus 20:7      |
| 14 – Proverbs 4:23         | 29 – Psalm 119:1-3       |
| 15 – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 | 30 – 2 Timothy 2:21      |
|                            | 31 – Psalm 96:9          |

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# SEPTEMBER

Scripture Scratching For

## MERCY

The Biblical idea of *mercy* is the picture of one showing compassion and helping someone when they do not deserve it. Because He is a God of love and compassion, God gives us Himself and performs gracious acts of mercy in not giving us what we deserve.

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 – Psalm 91:11-12       | 16 – Psalm 34:19     |
| 2 – Psalm 42:5           | 17 – Titus 3:5       |
| 3 – Isaiah 41:13         | 18 – 1 John 1:9      |
| 4 – Luke 6:36-37         | 19 – Psalm 62:8      |
| 5 – Psalm 37:23-24       | 20 – Colossians 3:13 |
| 6 – Lamentations 3:24-26 | 21 – Psalm 34:4-6    |
| 7 – Jeremiah 29:13-14    | 22 – Romans 10:13    |
| 8 – Philippians 4:19     | 23 – Psalm 25:6-7    |
| 9 – Psalm 23:2-3         | 24 – Romans 8:32     |
| 10 – Psalm 61:2-4        | 25 – Ephesians 2:8-9 |
| 11 – James 2:13          | 26 – 1 Peter 5:7     |
| 12 – Psalm 23:6          | 27 – Hebrews 4:16    |
| 13 – Romans 8:1-2        | 28 – 1 Peter 1:3-4   |
| 14 – John 10:10          | 29 – Psalm 145:8-9   |
| 15 – John 8:12           | 30 – Proverbs 28:13  |

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# OCTOBER

Scripture Scratching For

## FAITH

The Biblical idea of *faith* is to depend on something or someone outside one's self. Faith is a choice. It is an action, not just a feeling. Faith is not understanding. It is trusting God and clinging to His truth and love even though we do not understand.

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|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 – Psalm 143:8           | 16 – Isaiah 41:10         |
| 2 – Psalm 138:7-10        | 17 – Romans 8:28          |
| 3 – 2 Corinthians 5:7     | 18 – Psalm 145:3-6        |
| 4 – Matthew 11:28-30      | 19 – Joshua 1:5           |
| 5 – Psalm 52:8            | 20 – Psalm 37:23-24       |
| 6 – Psalm 73:23-24        | 21 – Proverbs 3:4         |
| 7 – Psalm 112:4-7         | 22 – Hebrews 11:1         |
| 8 – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 | 23 – Isaiah 49:15-16      |
| 9 – Ephesians 3:16-19     | 24 – Psalm 48:14          |
| 10 – 1 Corinthians 10:13  | 25 – Matthew 28:20        |
| 11 – 1 Peter 1:8-9        | 26 – Psalm 139:13-16      |
| 12 – Matthew 7:7          | 27 – Hebrews 10:23        |
| 13 – Psalm 9:10           | 28 – Matthew 6:33         |
| 14 – Luke 16:10-12        | 29 – Deuteronomy 31:8     |
| 15 – 1 John 1:9           | 30 – Psalm 36:5           |
|                           | 31 – Lamentations 3:22-23 |

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# NOVEMBER

Scripture Scratching For

## GRATITUDE

The Biblical idea of *gratitude* is our acknowledgment of God as the source of all our blessings and the expression of our sincerest appreciation not only in our words to Him but in our actions. A grateful heart will be a humble heart filled with joy, peace, and love for God and others.

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 | 16 - Colossians 3:15-17    |
| 2 - Colossians 4:2          | 17 - Hebrews 12:28         |
| 3 - Colossians 2:6-7        | 18 - Psalm 28:7            |
| 4 - Psalm 50:14             | 19 - 1 Chronicles 16:34    |
| 5 - Psalm 95:1-2            | 20 - 1 Corinthians 15:57   |
| 6 - Ephesians 5:20          | 21 - Romans 1:21           |
| 7 - Philippians 4:6         | 22 - 2 Corinthians 9:11-12 |
| 8 - Hebrews 13:15           | 23 - Psalm 136:1-3         |
| 9 - Psalm 100:1-5           | 24 - Psalm 50:23           |
| 10 - Psalm 107:21-22        | 25 - 1 Timothy 2:1         |
| 11 - Psalm 118:1            | 26 - Daniel 2:23           |
| 12 - Psalm 116:17           | 27 - Ephesians 5:4         |
| 13 - 2 Corinthians 9:15     | 28 - 1 Chronicles 23:30    |
| 14 - Psalm 107:1            | 29 - Psalm 106:1           |
| 15 - Psalm 118:28-29        | 30 - 2 Corinthians 4:15    |

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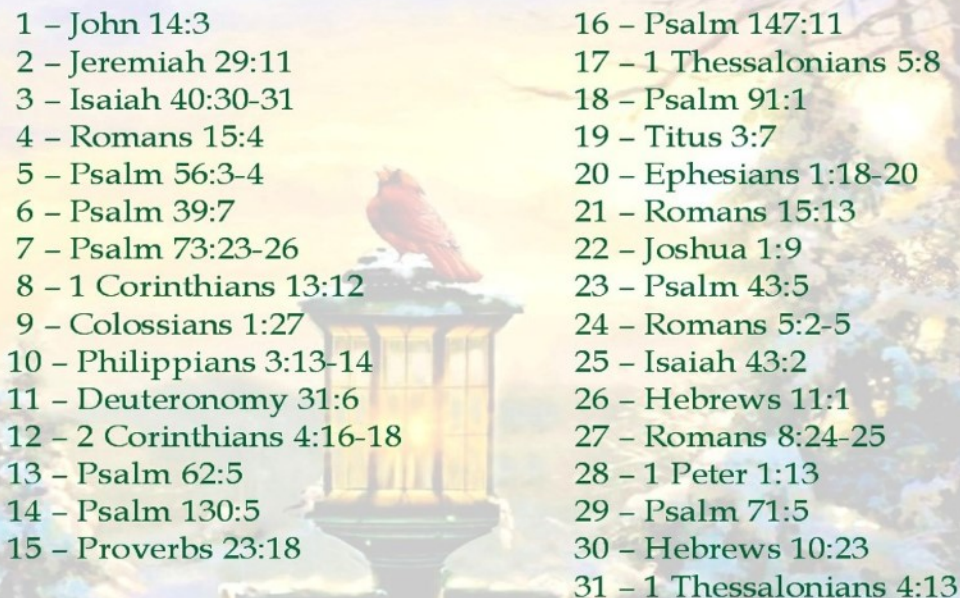


# DECEMBER

Scripture Scratching For

## HOPE

The Biblical idea of *hope* is an assurance that God will always be true to His promises. It is much more than wishful thinking. Hope is our secure foundation. Christ's coming at Christmas brings us the confidence that God is with us and that we will be eternally with Him.

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- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 - John 14:3              | 16 - Psalm 147:11         |
| 2 - Jeremiah 29:11         | 17 - 1 Thessalonians 5:8  |
| 3 - Isaiah 40:30-31        | 18 - Psalm 91:1           |
| 4 - Romans 15:4            | 19 - Titus 3:7            |
| 5 - Psalm 56:3-4           | 20 - Ephesians 1:18-20    |
| 6 - Psalm 39:7             | 21 - Romans 15:13         |
| 7 - Psalm 73:23-26         | 22 - Joshua 1:9           |
| 8 - 1 Corinthians 13:12    | 23 - Psalm 43:5           |
| 9 - Colossians 1:27        | 24 - Romans 5:2-5         |
| 10 - Philippians 3:13-14   | 25 - Isaiah 43:2          |
| 11 - Deuteronomy 31:6      | 26 - Hebrews 11:1         |
| 12 - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 | 27 - Romans 8:24-25       |
| 13 - Psalm 62:5            | 28 - 1 Peter 1:13         |
| 14 - Psalm 130:5           | 29 - Psalm 71:5           |
| 15 - Proverbs 23:18        | 30 - Hebrews 10:23        |
|                            | 31 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13 |

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