



The WONDER OF ADVENT

DELIGHTING IN THE HOPE, JOY,
PEACE, AND LOVE OF CHRISTMAS

LIFEWAY WOMEN



Audio Bible Study Experience
SUPPLEMENTAL PDF

The WONDER OF ADVENT

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PEACE, AND LOVE OF CHRISTMAS



LIFEWAY WOMEN

With Music by ADRIENNE CAMP

week one

Hope





HOW TO MAKE GINGERBREAD MEN COOKIES

by Chelsea Waack

When shops are bustling and our Christmas to-do lists seem never ending, we must be intentional about taking time to slow down and dwell in the hope of the Advent season. Baking is always a great way to push pause. These gingerbread men cookies are a sweet reminder that God sent His Son for all people. Bake up a batch to share with others in anticipation of Jesus's birth.

SUPPLIES

- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 6 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup molasses
- 1 cup shortening, melted and cooled slightly
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup water

DIRECTIONS

1. Sift together the dry ingredients: baking powder, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, and flour.
2. In another bowl, mix the brown sugar, egg, molasses, shortening, vanilla, and water. Stir in the dry ingredients, until they are absorbed. Take the dough and divide it into 3 pieces, patting each piece down to 1 1/2 inches thick. Then wrap each piece in plastic wrap before refrigerating them for 3 hours.
3. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees fahrenheit. Lightly flour your workspace, then roll the dough out to 1/4 inch thickness. Use your favorite cookie cutters, and place cut cookies onto an ungreased cookie sheet one inch apart.
4. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes. When the cookies are baked, they will be soft to the touch. Allow the cookies to cool on wire racks. Once cool, you can decorate your cookies however you like!⁷



SONGS OF HOPE

by Brooke Hill

The Old Testament is filled with a lot of “one days.” One day, Abraham and Sarah would have a baby (Gen. 15). One day, God’s people would be free of slavery and Egypt (Ex. 3). One day, a child would be born, and through Him, God would save the world (Isa. 9).

Sometimes, God’s timing doesn’t feel very convenient to us. Especially in our instant gratification, order-everything-in-minutes and talk-to-anyone-in-seconds technology-based society, we are not used to having to wait for things. Patience is hard, and there’s certainly a reason that it’s a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Yet, Peter tells us, “With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you” (2 Pet. 3:8-9). We have hope readily available to us because we know that the Lord does not delay His promise, even when our feelings don’t align with that truth.

The Psalms are filled with songs of people proclaiming praises because of the hope they have found in God. Psalm 27 declares, “I am certain that I will see the LORD’s goodness . . . Wait for the LORD” (vv. 13-14). What is the “one day” that you’ve been praying for your teen? Whether it’s for them to start caring about their grades, to use kinder words, to break free of that bad habit, or for them to come to know the Lord, it can be so hard to trust that God’s timing is

infinitely better than ours if we’re not actively reminding ourselves of the hope God has promised through Jesus.

ACTIVITY

Music has a way of helping us express laments and praises we otherwise can’t find words for.

Make a joint playlist with your teen and add songs that bring you hope. Find some songs that make your heart excited for what’s to come and help you trust God’s promises.

Talk with your teen about why the songs you chose give you hope and ask them to share why the songs they chose give them hope.

If you and your teen are feeling extra creative, write your own psalm of praise to sing or pray to the Lord when you’re in need of hope. When either one of you is having a hard time trusting in God’s promises, come back to this playlist and listen to songs of hope.



A THREAD RUNNING THROUGH IT

by Bekah Stoneking

The Bible is a huge book. It's full of many true stories that fit together to tell the one big story of God and His people.

There is a thread that runs through all of these stories. Not an actual piece of thread or string, but a common, consistent theme that connects the stories—Jesus.

The stories in the Old Testament books tell about God's holiness, people's sinfulness, and God's plan to send a Messiah to rescue us. The New Testament tells us about Jesus the Messiah. In the person of Jesus, God became a human like you and me. But Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life, died on the cross as a sacrifice for sin, and rose again on the third day.

But the story doesn't end there. The New Testament also tells us that one day, Jesus will return and make all things new!

The arrival of Jesus the Messiah is evidence of God's faithfulness. And because we know God always keeps His promises, we can confidently hope in Jesus and look forward with excitement to His return.

SUPPLIES

Gather some cardboard tubes—like from an empty roll of paper towels or wrapping paper—some glue or tape, different colors of yarn, and a pair of scissors.

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut the cardboard tube into 1-2" thick slices, then make one cut through each slice to create a cuff bracelet.
2. Use some glue or tape to secure the end of a long piece of yarn along the edge of your cardboard bracelet. Wrap the yarn around and around your bracelet until it is covered. Secure the end of the yarn with more glue or tape.
3. Next, wrap a piece of tape around the end of a differently-colored piece of yarn. Weave the taped end of that yarn through the yarn on your bracelet to make a pattern or design.

As you weave and thread the yarn, recall the thread running through Scripture. Can you remember who the thread is? Show or give your bracelet to a loved one. Explain the thread and tell them about the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

week two

Joy





HOW TO MAKE AN EVERGREEN TABLESCAPE

by Chelsea Waack

With a variety of fresh cut evergreens and a few candles, you can transform a dining table into an inviting, aromatic space to come together with friends and family. As you work with your hands to create a beautiful tablescape, ask the Lord to fill your heart with joy for what is and what is yet to come.

SUPPLIES

- Assortment of evergreen clippings (Balsam Fir, Scotch Pine, and Leyland Cypress are a few good ones)
- Silver Dollar Eucalyptus
- Seeded Eucalyptus
- Pinecones
- Festive table runner
- 5 white pillar candles
- 8 small votive candles in glass jars
- Matches

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the table runner down the center of the table. This will help protect your table from any sap residue.
2. Arrange the evergreen clippings down the center of the table.
3. Build out the greenery, interweaving sections of eucalyptus as you go down the left and right side to create fullness.
4. Place pinecones in open spots within the greenery.
5. Alternate pillar candles on the left and right sides of the table runner. The candles should be able to sit on the runner.
6. Fill in votive candles in clusters beside the pillar candles.
7. Light candles.
8. Enjoy!



COMPLETE JOY

by Brooke Hill

Read John 15:11 together: “I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”

Jesus doesn’t just want us to have joy; He wants it to be complete. Complete means “to have all the parts.” It’s easy to experience joy in some of our circumstances, but it’s much much more difficult to pick out the joy in the harder situations. Mary likely wasn’t thrilled about giving birth far from home, but she chose to overlook that because the joy of giving birth to the Child of God greatly outweighed the less-than-perfect circumstances.

When we don’t have any joy left ourselves, God has plenty: “The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart celebrates, and I give thanks to him with my song” (Ps. 28:7). What a blessing it is to rest in the strength of the Lord and the joy that is ours through Jesus.

The holiday season is filled with opportunities to make memories and reminisce about favorite times spent together. We tend to take lots of pictures to commemorate things, but we rarely print them thanks to social media’s ability to preserve them instead.

This week, have your teen pick out some of his or her favorite photos from the year that’s about to come to an end and print them out. Make a scrapbook or photo album full of photos that brought you joy this year. You could do your own scrapbook or just help your teen with theirs.

Include photos of times where you didn’t feel the most joyful, too. Remember, Jesus desires for us to have joy in all the seasons of life. When looking back on some not-so-fun times throughout the year, discuss how you saw God’s strength fill you, and what joy you could take away from the situation.

While decorating the pages, spend some time together discussing what made each of the memories so special:

- Why did they bring you joy?
- How can you be intentional about creating that joy again?
- How can you be intentional about sharing that joy with others?

This is a great, tangible way to be reminded of God’s faithfulness throughout the year.



LITTLE BLESSINGS

by Bekah Stoneking

Form teams and gather a baby doll for each team. If you don't have dolls, you can play this game with stuffed animals, instead.

Challenge each team to race through your home on a scavenger hunt, searching for creative items to use to “dress” your babies. Each baby needs something for a diaper, an outfit, a cozy hat, a bottle, and a toy. The team that gathers all five items and dresses their baby first, wins.

After the game, take a few minutes to talk through these questions:

Who was the most creative?

Which baby item was the funniest?

How did you feel during the game?

You might have felt excited and nervous during the scavenger hunt. The people in the Christmas story probably felt similar emotions as they anticipated Jesus's arrival. But they also felt another emotion—joy!

The Bible tells us that Elizabeth, Mary, the shepherds, and the wise men were all full of joy because of Jesus's birth. Seeing God keep His promise to send the Messiah filled them with joy, wonder, and awe.

Jesus continued to bring people joy throughout His time on the earth. During His ministry Jesus met needs, healed people, and performed miracles. People were joyful in His presence.

You can learn to live like Jesus and experience joy in Jesus's presence, too, when you help meet people's needs. One way to do this is by helping families welcome their new babies home.

Work with your family to make a list of things babies need. Which item on the list do you think is most important? Go shopping for that item or for various supplies needed for feeding, bathing, diapering, or dressing babies, then deliver the items to your church or to another ministry in your area that supports pregnant women.

PRAY

Pray for parents and for their babies. Thank God for creating these children and for the blessing of their lives.

week three

Peace





HOW TO MAKE CHRISTMAS SPICE TEA

by Chelsea Waack

Stay warm and cozy by the fire with a cup of Christmas Spice Tea. Treasure the good news of Jesus's birth in your heart as you take the first sip. Let this be a small representation of peace on earth—beginning with peace in your home.

SUPPLIES

- 26 oz pineapple juice
- 1 can frozen concentrate orange juice
- 6 oz fresh lemon juice
- 2 cups of sugar
- 4 1/2 quarts of water
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tablespoon of cloves
- 6 Constant Comment® tea bags
- Mini candy canes

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat pineapple juice, orange juice concentrate, lemon juice, sugar, and 4 quarts of water in a large pan until sugar is dissolved.
2. In a separate pan, add 2 cups of water, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and tea bags. Bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Combine both pans of ingredients. Serve hot in a small mug with a candy cane.

TIP

To keep the tea warm for the entire evening, pour into an electric hot beverage dispenser.



PEACE AND QUIET

by Brooke Hill

Read Philippians 4:7 together: “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” For me, this verse is one of the ways that I just know, deep in my soul, that God is real.

One of the most peaceful things I enjoy is a nice warm bubble bath. I don’t treat myself to the extra fun bath bombs and body care treats often, so when I do, it’s extra special. Here are some instructions for making a Peppermint Bath Bomb to make with your teen. It’s a nice, Christmas-scented, relaxing treat that you can make for yourselves or plan to gift to sisters, aunts, grandmothers, or friends.

SUPPLIES

- 1 cup baking soda
- 1/2 cup epsom salts
- 1/2 cup citric acid
- 3 teaspoons apricot oil
- 2 teaspoons peppermint essential oil
- water in a spray bottle
- Mold of your choice
(snowflake, Christmas tree,
a circle, whatever you choose)

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix all dry ingredients in a bowl.
2. Mix the apricot oil and the peppermint essential oil in a container you can easily pour from.
3. Slowly add the oils to the dry ingredients. Mix thoroughly.
4. Spray water slowly in the dry ingredients, mixing well after every spray. (Adding the water too quickly will make it fizz prematurely.)
5. The mixture should feel kind of like damp sand, and it should be able to hold its shape. Next, press the mixture into your mold and let dry at least overnight, and possibly for up to 24 hours depending on the size.
6. Store in an airtight container.¹¹



JESUS BRINGS PEACE

by Bekah Stoneking

Two things are opposites when they are completely different from each other. When Jesus lived on the earth, there was conflict, sadness, and fear everywhere. King Herod's reign was cruel and chaotic. People were breaking their promises to each other. Even the disciples felt worry and confusion. But Jesus offered something completely different. Jesus offered the opposite. Jesus offered peace.

Isaiah 9 named the Messiah the Prince of Peace and all throughout the New Testament, Jesus told His followers to not fear but to be at peace instead.

Sin, conflict, sadness, and fear still exist in our world today. But because of Jesus, we can have peace and we can be reconciled to God.

GAME

Play a game of opposites with your family members. Work as individuals or on teams to see who can name the most pairs of opposites in three minutes. We've listed a few in the next column to get you started.

- What is the opposite of up?
- What is the opposite of hot?
- What is the opposite of loud?
- What is the opposite of dry?
- What is the opposite of empty?
- What is the opposite of dark?
- What is the opposite of sad?
- What is the opposite of friend?
- What is the opposite of hate?

The next time you get stressed out, scared, or upset, take some time to sit quietly in front of your Christmas tree. Take some deep breaths while you look at the lights, and imagine Jesus making everything new in heaven.

PRAY

Pray and ask Jesus to help you trust and hope in Him. Give thanks to Jesus for bringing peace.

week four

Love





HOW TO MAKE A CHRISTMAS HOST TRAY

by Chelsea Waack

On the fourth week of Advent, you can almost reach out and touch Christmas. While you've been preparing your heart for weeks, it's now time to prepare gifts for loved ones. Combine useful, everyday items with festive ribbon and evergreen clippings to create a gift that will make any host feel loved.

SUPPLIES

- Wooden tray
- Christmas tea towel
- Wooden spoon
- Ribbon or twine
- Pine clippings
- Thank you card with an envelope
- Pen
- Clear tape

DIRECTIONS

1. Write a short thank you note for your host, seal it in an envelope with their name on it, and set aside.
2. Assemble the contents of your tray. Place a tea towel on the tray. Secure the card to the center of the tea towel with a loop of clear tape. Then, place the wooden spoon on top.
3. Wrap ribbon around the entire contents of the tray. Before you tighten the ribbon, add in pine clippings on either side of the spoon. Finish by tying a bow around the spoon's handle.
4. Bring to your Christmas gathering to surprise and delight your host.

TIP

This gift is completely customizable. The wooden tray could be substituted for a basket or cutting board. Other fun options would be to include a rolling pin, tapered candles, or a bag of coffee.



13 **ALL OF US** have been called to be prophets. We are called to be prophets in our homes, in our workplaces, in our schools, in our churches, and in our communities. We are called to be prophets in every place where we live and work. We are called to be prophets in every place where we have an influence. We are called to be prophets in every place where we can make a difference. We are called to be prophets in every place where we can bring glory to God. We are called to be prophets in every place where we can bring hope to others. We are called to be prophets in every place where we can bring love to the world.

PROPHETCY: A SUPERHERO CALL

14 Pursue love and desire to be a prophet. For the person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the truth. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of God. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the message of the Gospel. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of life. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of hope. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of love. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of peace. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of justice. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of truth. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of God. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the message of the Gospel. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of life. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of hope. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of love. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of peace. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of justice. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of truth. The person who is a prophet is a person who is called to speak the word of God.

FOLLOWING IN FAITH

by Brooke Hill

One of the first songs most kids learn in Sunday School is “Jesus Loves Me.” “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” We know this, yet we tend to forget what it means. Love is such an overused word in our society—you love your parents, but you also love pizza and TV. Obviously, those forms of love are different!

Read 1 Corinthians 13:13 together. Jesus being born as a man and dying on the cross is the purest love we’ll ever know. As believers, we strive to love others the way Jesus loves us, as we were commanded in John 15:12. But as we all know, since we’re only human, we’ll come up short at times. The love Jesus showed to us was a perfect love.

Do some reflective journaling alongside your teen. Think about three important people in your life. Journal intentional ways you can love them better this week.

“I can love _____

better this week by _____

_____.”

Now, pray that Jesus would place three people on your heart whom you wouldn’t have initially thought of. Pray that He would reveal the names of people who are silently hurting and could use some extra love. Write down how you could love these people well, too.

“I can love _____

better this week by _____

_____.”

Sometimes we get so wrapped up in knowing that we love someone that we forget to remind them or take action to show them.



'TIS SO SWEET

by Bekah Stoneking

Throughout the books of the Law, Moses wrote about God's faithful love. The psalms are full of verses about God's faithful love. The prophets told about God's faithful love. "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever" (Ps. 118:1).

The greatest demonstration of God's love came to us through Jesus. John 3:16 tells us, "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

Eternal life—knowing and worshipping God forever and experiencing His perfect, never-ending love. What could be sweeter?

As you talk about the sweetness of God's everlasting love with your family, work together to make sweet, heart-shaped cinnamon rolls.

GATHER

- 1 can store-bought cinnamon rolls
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Markers
- Ribbon
- Yarn
- Hole puncher

ACTIVITY

Using a can of store-bought cinnamon rolls, unwind each roll into a long strip of dough. Pinch the dough in the middle of the strip to make a point. Then, coil each end of the dough strip toward the center point, forming a heart shape. Follow the instructions on the packaging to bake your cinnamon roll hearts.

While your cinnamon rolls bake, use the supplies you gathered to make heart shapes from the construction paper and punch a hole on both edges of each heart. Use the markers to write about God's love on each heart. How has He shown His love to you and your family? How does His love make you feel?

When you're finished, thread the ribbon or yarn through the holes on the heart shapes to make a string of garland to hang on your Christmas tree.

PRAY

Pray as a family and give thanks to God for His love that endures forever. Then eat those yummy cinnamon rolls!



THE ADVENT WREATH

Few seasons in life come with as many traditions as Christmas. From the trees to the stockings, to the feasting, music, and Christmas movies on repeat, this time of year is marked by things that bring us joy and fill us with memories. We can all agree, though, that the traditions that mean the most are the ones that point us back to Jesus.

One popular tradition in many Christian homes and churches is the Advent wreath. Advent wreaths vary, especially around the world, but most common is a wreath made of evergreen garland (which symbolizes eternal life) that holds five candles: three purple, one pink, and one white. The purple candles symbolize hope, love, and peace; the pink candle symbolizes joy; and the white candle symbolizes Christ. Each candle is lit on one of the Sundays of Advent, with the Christ candle being lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Whether an Advent wreath is a new concept for you or a longstanding tradition in your family, we invite you to join us on this journey this Advent. You can use the Scripture passages and prayers below to guide you through the weeks as you make this tradition your own. (And by all means, use whatever color candles you have!)

ADVENT WREATH SCHEDULE

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Theme: Hope

Candle: Purple

Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-7

Prayer: Prayerfully consider the hope God brings to the world through Jesus, and the hope we have in His promised return.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Theme: Joy

Candle: Pink

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Prayer: Prayerfully consider the incomparable joy that we can know in God alone.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Theme: Peace

Candle: Purple

Scripture: Luke 2:25-38

Prayer: Prayerfully consider God's peace coming into our hearts and minds and the peace Jesus brings between us and God. Pray also for the peace our world desperately needs, peace only possible through belief in Jesus and the reconciliation He brings.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Theme: Love

Candle: Purple

Scripture: John 1:1-14

Prayer: Prayerfully consider God's unconditional love for us and our call to reflect the love of Christ to others.

CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY

Theme: Jesus

Candle: White

Scripture: John 8:12

Prayer: Prayerfully consider the light Jesus brought into a dark and desperate world at His incarnation, and the light He continues to shine in our world today. Pray for the courage and faith to be a light in the world shining for Him (Matt. 5:14).

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Matthew 1:18–2:12

Galatians 4:4-7

Philippians 2:5-11



BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.”

Maybe you’ve stumbled across new information in this study. Or maybe you’ve attended church all your life, but something you read here struck you differently than it ever has before. If you have never accepted Christ but would like to, read on to discover how you can become a Christian.

Your heart tends to run from God and rebel against Him. The Bible calls this sin. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Yet God loves you and wants to save you from sin, to offer you a new life of hope. John 10:10b says, “I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.”

To give you this gift of salvation, God made a way through His Son, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:8 says, “But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

You receive this gift by faith alone. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works, so that no one can boast.”

Faith is a decision of your heart demonstrated by the actions of your life. Romans 10:9 says, “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

If you trust that Jesus died for your sins and want to receive new life through Him, pray a prayer similar to the following to express your repentance and faith in Him:

Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died to forgive me of my sins. I accept Your offer of eternal life. Thank You for forgiving me of all my sins. Thank You for my new life. From this day forward, I will choose to follow You.

If you have trusted Jesus for salvation, please share your decision with your group leader or another Christian friend. If you are not already attending church, find one in which you can worship and grow in your faith. Following Christ’s example, ask to be baptized as a public expression of your faith.



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Tina Boesch serves as manager of the Lifeway Women Bible Studies team. She earned a Master of Arts in Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. For fourteen years, she and her husband and their three kids called Istanbul, Turkey, home. Now they've settled north of Nashville, but she still misses steaming cups of Turkish tea. Tina is the author of *Given: The Forgotten Meaning and Practice of Blessing*.



Y BONESTEELE

Y Bonesteele has traveled the world on mission and has a heart for the global church. She has a Master of Divinity with an emphasis in evangelism and discipleship from Talbot School of Theology at Biola University and is the content and production editor for The Gospel Project. She lives in Middle Tennessee with her husband and four children.



ADRIENNE CAMP

Adrienne Camp grew up in South Africa and moved to America to pursue music at age nineteen. She is married to fellow musician Jeremy Camp whom she met on tour in 2002. They have been married since 2003 and have two daughters, Bella and Arie, and one son, Egan. She is passionate about her family and about sharing God's love all over the world. Her greatest desire is "to know Him and make Him known."



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Leigh Ann Dans has been a graphic designer for Lifeway Women for the past ten years, and has worked for Lifeway more than twenty-five years. She has a daughter, Christina, and son-in-law, Jodey, and two grandchildren, Kayden and Macayla, she's crazy about who live in Louisiana. Her favorite pastime is traveling and going on adventures.



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Kim Massey is the Chief Marketing Officer at Lifeway. Prior to joining Lifeway, she became an international sales trader on Wall Street following college, then made a career switch to marketing. Kim grew up in Nashville, and Lifeway has always been a household name for her family. She considers it a privilege to work in an environment that allows her to combine her skill set with kingdom work every day.



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