





DAY I

## Prepare the Way

What John the Baptist did for Israel, Advent can do for us. Don't let Christmas find you unprepared. I mean *spiritually* unprepared. Its joy and impact will be so much greater if you are ready!

So, that you might be *prepared* . . .

First, meditate on the fact that we need a *Savior*. Christmas is an indictment before it becomes a delight. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a *Savior*, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). If you don't need a Savior, you don't need Christmas. Christmas will not have its intended effect until we feel desperately the need for a Savior. Let these short Advent meditations help awaken in you a bittersweet sense of need for the Savior.

Second, engage in sober self-examination. Advent is to Christmas what Lent is to Easter. "Search me, O God, and know my heart! / Try me and know my thoughts! / And

see if there be any grievous way in me, / and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Psalm 139:23–24). Let every heart *prepare him room . . .* by cleaning house.

Third, build God-centered anticipation and expectancy and excitement into your home—especially for the children. If you are excited about Christ, they will be too. If you can make Christmas exciting only with material things, how will the children get a thirst for God? Bend the efforts of your imagination to make the wonder of the King’s arrival visible for the children.

Fourth, be much in the Scriptures, and memorize the great passages! “Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD?” (Jeremiah 23:29)! Gather ’round that fire this Advent season. It is warm. It is sparkling with colors of grace. It is healing for a thousand hurts. It is light for dark nights.