

# *Receiving the Gift*

## *Week One Advent Devotional*

*It's too much*



### ***Sunday: God's great love. His lavish, extravagant love (John 3:16-17)***

*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 (John 3:16–17).*

Whether you've heard it a million times or you're hearing it for the first time, read John 3:16 to yourself today. But don't stop there. Read verse 17 too. Then stop and think about it. Really think about it. Try writing or reading it as a prayer of praise for this wonderful Gift.

### ***Monday: God's love shown in creation (Genesis 1)***

Read Genesis 1 and think about what moments of creation you've recently experienced that have been good. Brilliant autumn leaves shining in the sun. Giant flakes of snow falling gently to earth. A sunrise over the water. God's world is beautiful. His goodness and loving care for what he made runs through the creation account in Genesis chapter 1. Take a moment to simply rest in the truth that the same God who made the world and everything in it made you. And loves you.

### ***Tuesday: God's love shown in seeking to bless (Genesis 12:1-4)***

Read Genesis 12 and consider the providential care God displays here. A creator wouldn't have to take an interest in his handiwork. He could make it, wind it up, so to speak, and set it on its way. But God doesn't just want us to be alive. He wants us to live. Or in the words of John 10:10, have life "to the full." And so God reached out to one man, and through him, all of humankind.

***Wednesday: God's love shown in caring for those who are alone, poor, and defenseless (Ruth 1–4)***

Set aside some time to read the whole book of Ruth. This story of a young widow who went from foreigner to the family tree of Jesus is remarkable. God cares about those the world might overlook or even mistreat. Do you ever feel alone, scared, invisible? We are never out of God's view. We are never out of his love.

***Thursday: God's love shown to those who don't deserve it—and those who don't care about those who don't deserve it (Jonah 1–4)***

Jonah is the story of love. Unconditional love. Love no matter what. It sounds wonderful, but also impossible. How could God love those godless Ninevites? Because they belonged to him, every bit as much as Jonah. Jonah didn't understand that until God made it abundantly clear to him. He loved Jonah too, you see. Just like he loves us even when we don't extend his love to others.

***Friday: God's love shown to those who think all hope is lost Isaiah (Isaiah 11)***

Read Isaiah 11 and reflect on the ways our loving God gives people hope in the midst of hopeless situations. Disobedience. Captivity. The people of Israel were far from home—geographically and spiritually. But they weren't forgotten. And God's love and promises would not fail. True, the nation had failed, like a tree that had fallen and been hauled away. But look closer at the stump. It's not dead. God's love will bring life where you never expect it.

***Saturday: God's love and faithfulness shown through his word, from the beginning to this present day and beyond (Psalm 119)***

Psalm 119 is an acrostic Psalm that celebrates and meditates on living a life directed by God's word. We can know about God's love through his word, the Bible. And we can experience the depth of God's love through the Word made flesh, the Gift we await during Advent.