

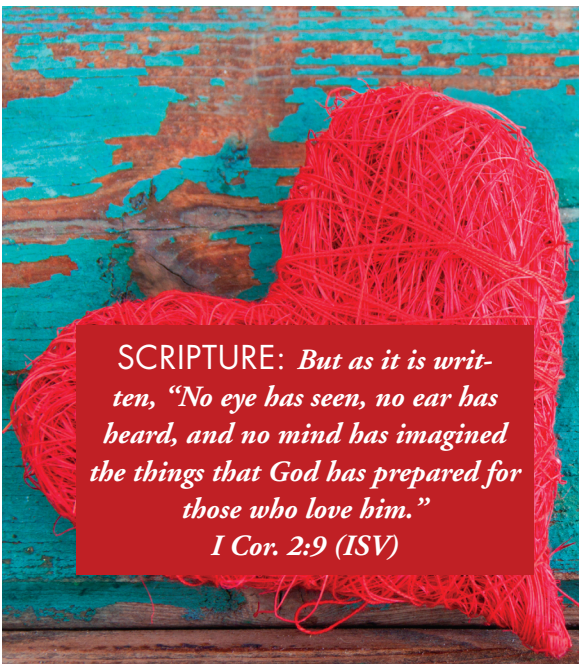
SCRIPTURE: *He has also put eternity in their hearts, but man cannot discover the work God has done from beginning to end.*
Eccl. 3:11 (Holman)

DECEMBER 1ST, 2014

THOUGHT: The first of December, the world may say the (rat) race is on, but we're choosing to pass on the madness. Go, us! As we set out hearts to seek Jesus more fully this advent season, let's remind ourselves that God is the One who put this eternity shaped desire in our hearts in the first place and be encouraged! The very admission we're making—that the way we worshipped Jesus last year and the year before isn't enough for us any longer—this is setting us up to experience His Presence more intimately than ever before.

ACTION: Let's tell someone today, be it family member or friend, that we're looking to keep Jesus at the center of our Christmas preparations and activities this year, and then let's have the courage to ask them to check in on us from time to time for a progress report!

TWEETABLE: The very admission that what you're experiencing of God is not enough is setting you up for more. #HeartWideOpen



SCRIPTURE: *But as it is written, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him.”*
I Cor. 2:9 (ISV)


DECEMBER 2ND, 2014

THOUGHT: Yesterday, I was momentarily overwhelmed thinking about squeezing Christmas shopping into my already crazy schedule and keeping it from busting the bank! However, rather than entertaining that familiar anxiety, I chose to think about how God broke the bank (so to speak) to give eternal life to the whole broken mess of us. In Jesus, we have God's all. That's one idea of what keeping my eyes on Jesus means to me; purposefully turning anxiety into Truth. It may mean something entirely different to you, but I'm convinced this advent season holds more eternal value for each of us than we can even begin to imagine if we'll keep our eyes on Jesus, The Greatest Gift!

ACTION: Ask the Lord to help alert you when you're having Christmas "anxiety" and when He does, choose to exchange it for a praise-worthy thought about Jesus.

TWEETABLE: God always desires to conceive in us a bigger vision than the one we're imagining!

#HeartWideOpen




SCRIPTURE: *Do not worry then, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear for clothing?” For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:31-33*

DECEMBER 3RD, 2014

THOUGHT: Talk about a timely Scripture passage! Does this mean Jesus doesn't want us thinking about what to bring to the office party, where we can find a cup of coffee when our shopping mojo flags, and whether or not Mama would wear that cute top on the store mannequin? Of course not, but we are being given God's prescription not only for our Christmas chaos but for all the other stresses of life: When we relinquish our worries by setting our minds on Jesus we get provision and peace.

ACTION: Write down the first thing you think of when you hear the phrase “seek His kingdom and His righteousness.” (No wrong answer!)

TWEETABLE: When we yield our wills to God's, the question “What's in it for me?” is answered with a resounding, “Everything!” #HeartWideOpen



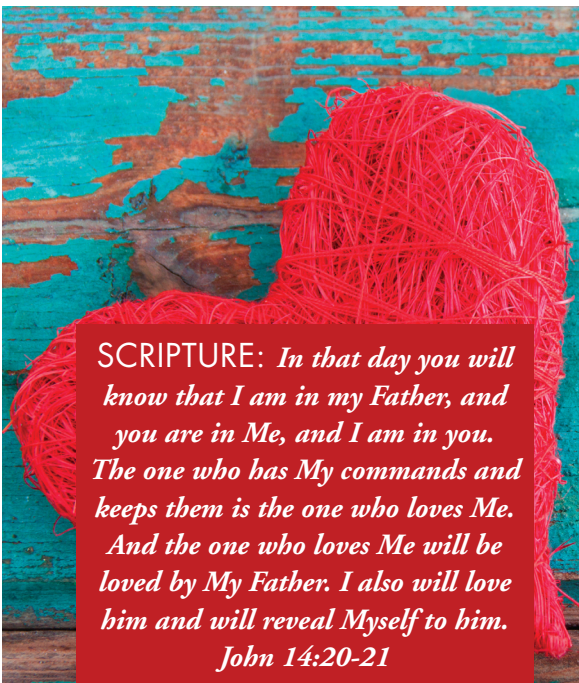
SCRIPTURE: *...and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35*

DECEMBER 4TH, 2014

THOUGHT: While it's possible that some super wealthy soul has joined us on this Advent journey, I think it's more likely that most of us here have a limited amount we can spend on Christmas. So, with all of us trying to stretch that shopping dollar, whatever are we to do with all of those donation drives? How do we choose from the plethora of worthy charities? Here's an idea. Let's give first! This year, before we ever buy, let's give. Let's drop our ingrained thinking about what we can do with what we have and give Jesus room to be more than we need.

ACTION: Make a list of people or non-profits you know need resources and ask God to show you where and how much to give. Give before the budget gets any more strained and watch God move.

TWEETABLE: We want Him to conform to our limited ideas of who He is because we're scared of letting Him be I AM. #HeartWideOpen



SCRIPTURE: *In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you. The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal Myself to him.*
John 14:20-21

DECEMBER 5TH, 2014

THOUGHT: If only we could share a cup of coffee in real time on this first Friday of Advent! I'd love that. Granted, I'd probably need to apologize for my super intense eye contact. I get that way sometimes. It's only because I realize that five days in, you may be second-guessing this Christmas invitation of mine and I want so badly for you to stay with me. Perhaps you're thinking it'd be easier to hang on and get through Christmas before getting all serious about this Jesus thing. Can I please remind you there will always be another something, that life will keep on coming? **If we let Jesus reveal Himself to us today, we can walk with Him into our unknown tomorrows.** I pray that's all the motivation you need.

ACTION: Rewrite the bold sentence from today's thought into a personal declaration using the pronouns "I", "me", and "my".

TWEETABLE: When our "Just enough Jesus" turns into "I can't get enough Jesus," we find Him to be a gracious plenty. #HeartWideOpen