



DECEMBER 11TH, 2014

**SCRIPTURE:** *To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27 (NASB)*

**THOUGHT:** It's cranked up now, isn't it? Christmas, Christmas everywhere! Everywhere we turn someone is hawking that something special and they're all doing their best to convince us that we need it in the worst way. And if we don't need it, our kids or grandkids need it because this is "the most wonderful time of the year" and who wants to miss the magical moment of the big reveal? If only the big reveal was more than an empty promise, right? Oh, but it is! Christ in us, living through us, these are the miraculous moments we most need to see. With God's help we can ignore the empty promises and share the real One.

**ACTION:** Through our words and in actions, let's be Jesus to the flesh and blood people around us today.

**TWEETABLE:** We pine for miracles when God made a way for us to become a miracle through Christ in us, the hope of glory. #HeartWideOpen



DECEMBER 12TH, 2014

**SCRIPTURE:** *...for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Hebrews 11:6b*

**THOUGHT:** Are some of the “actions” in these Advent devotionals harder for you to complete than others? Well, they are for me and I wrote them! What’s more, I knew which ones would be more challenging when I was composing them, but friends, our goal here is worthy. It’s why I asked the Lord over and over to help me resist the tendency to do the minimum requirement. We’re after nothing less than the reward of living in His Presence. Join me in asking Him to alert us if or when we start going through the motions.

**ACTION:** After scanning the previous actions, let’s write down a prayer about the one we’ve found the most difficult so far, and listen for the Lord’s counsel concerning it.

**TWEETABLE:** Aiming for the minimum requirement handicaps anyone who wants to experience an authentic, abundant life in Christ. #HeartWideOpen



DECEMBER 13TH, 2014

**SCRIPTURE:** *If you seek Him, He will be found by you. I Chronicles 28:9 (NKJV)*

**THOUGHT:** I realize women are said to be born to shop. I'm pretty much missing that gene. The only consistent exception for me is bookstores. My family will no longer accompany me to a bookstore, for fear they'll die of starvation. (Drama kings and queens, that's what they are.) That said, I've learned to avoid the aimless wandering by deciding what I need to buy for whom before I leave the house. In much the same way, I'm convinced we'll find more of Jesus in our lives this Advent by determining to look for Him than we ever will by letting Christmas steamroll us. Let's be intentional!

**ACTION:** Take a picture today of a moment when you see Jesus. (Example: I might would take a picture of my dog Dixie because she speaks to me of His unconditional love.)

**TWEETABLE:** Something amazing happens when we become intentional and determined about looking for God.

#HeartWideOpen



DECEMBER 14TH, 2014

**SCRIPTURE:** *For I long to see you that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. Romans 1:11-12*

**THOUGHT:** Those words come from the great Apostle Paul. It'd be hard to attend church very long without hearing about Paul, and for good reason. His life exuded a contagious passion for Jesus. Indeed, there's plenty about Paul's life that's worth emulating, but for me, the way he treated other believers belongs high on the list. Paul appreciated those who shared His faith in Jesus. He greatly valued those who he referred to as "laboring with him in the gospel." We should, too! Talk to other Christians. Share the journey. Email me! Your experiences with God urge me to keep seeking Him.

**ACTION:** Schedule a lunch or coffee break with another believer this week and keep it.

**TWEETABLE:** We are each other's opportunity to trace His hands & feet in this world. Let's draw together and see more of His glory. #HeartWideOpen

DECEMBER 15TH, 2014



**SCRIPTURE:** *Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live. Isaiah 55:2-3*

**THOUGHT:** It doesn't matter how I've adorned my house for Christmas. Store displays can still make me want to gussy it up a little bit more! Gussy is an old word. The matriarchs in my southern family have always used it to describe someone or something that's all decked out and then some. I see God's fingerprints all over this perpetual longing for more that's common to man and what we do with it can bring life or death. Incessantly reaching for more of what this world offers leads to death. But when we refuse to settle for our status quo religion we find Life Himself. Jesus is the more we're reaching for.

**ACTION:** Let's resist the pull to wrap the prettiest gifts ever, do our wallets a favor, and keep the emphasis on Jesus by buying yards of cheesecloth and string at the craft store and "swaddling" them.

**TWEETABLE:** Our restless hearts won't stop longing precisely because there really is more and God wired our hearts to pursue it. #HeartWideOpen