



Open BEFORE Christmas

by David Mead



Daily Ways to Open Your Heart
from Advent through Epiphany



Have you heard the phrase “Do Not Open Until Christmas”? Perhaps you have seen a note with those words written on a Christmas present. They are a reminder that we should not ruin the surprise before the start of the Christmas celebration. But the phrase on this book reads, “Open *Before* Christmas.” There’s no need to wait, for we know that the greatest gift of Christmas, God’s gift of Jesus, has already been given.

How can we open ourselves to receive this gift? What special surprises are in store for us when we do? The daily devotions in this booklet welcome you to open up! Open up your eyes, open up your ears, open up your hearts and open up your mouths for the greatest Christmas surprise of all: the baby Jesus!



December 1

Open Your Eyes

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Genesis 1:3

It's only the first day of December, but let's open our eyes and take a peek at some of the gifts we've already been given.

What was the very first present God gave to the world? Open up your eyes and see! It was the gift of light! Without that wonderful gift, we could not see and enjoy all of the other great gifts God made for us when he created the world. Without the gift of light, nothing else would work. Plants wouldn't grow; animals would have no food. You and I couldn't be.

Thank God for the gift of light. The gift that helps us to enjoy every other gift God has given us.

Dear God, as the season of Advent begins, open my eyes to see the wonder of the world you made for me. Amen.

December 2

Open Your Eyes

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold,

it was very good. *Genesis 1:31*

Open your eyes and look out your window at God's creation. Make a quick list of all these wonderful "Christmas presents" you are getting a peek at. Thank God for the gift of creation: a very good gift indeed.

December 3

Open Your Eyes

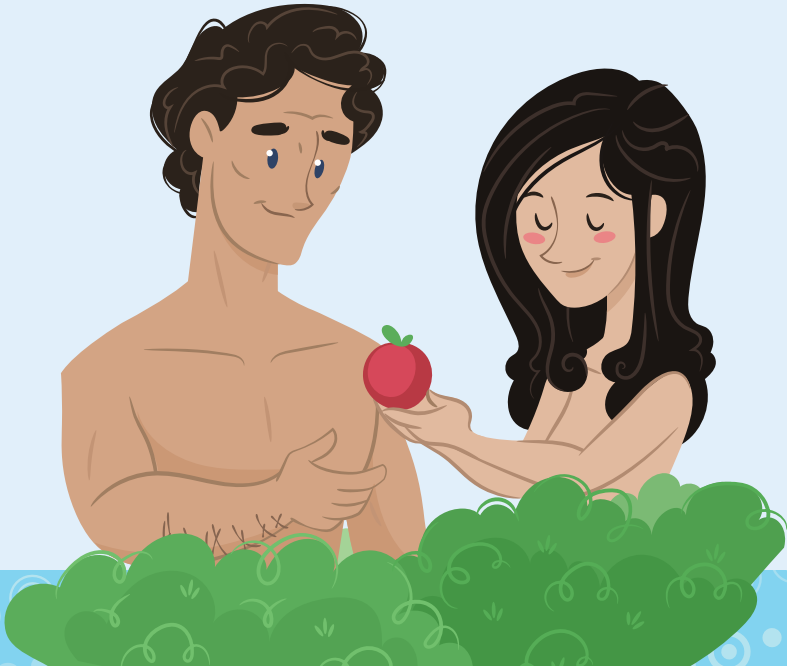
She took the fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened.

Genesis 3:6b-7a

What might happen if you open a present marked “Do Not Open Before Christmas” too early? You may learn what’s inside, but the surprise is spoiled. Adam and Eve were given just one rule in the Garden of Eden. “Do not touch this tree,” God told them. But they could not resist the temptation. They both took fruit from the tree and ate it. Their eyes were opened, the Bible tells us. They learned the difference between good and evil. But as a result, God’s perfect gift of creation was spoiled.

Even then, God planned to fix his broken gift. Let’s keep our eyes open to see what surprise God has in store.

Dear God, you desire the best for me and for all of your creation. Help me to always follow you. I am eager to see what you have in store. Amen.





December 4

Open Your Eyes

The LORD saw that wickedness of man was great in the earth ... But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Genesis 6:5a, 8

God's perfect gift of creation was spoiled. Sin and wickedness had spread everywhere. God planned to take the gift back—to wipe out the earth in a flood. But our heavenly Father looked at Noah and changed that plan. Through God's eyes, Noah was seen as good enough. God saw him as someone worth saving.

And that's how God sees you too!

Dear God, through the loving sacrifice of your Son, Jesus, you forgive me. Thank you for seeing me as someone worth saving. Amen.



December 5

Open Your Eyes

I set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. *Genesis 9:13*

Open the ark, Noah! Open your eyes! What do you see?

God has kept his promise! The dark flood is over. You and your family are saved. Surprise! Noah and his family received the precious gift of new life that day. God even wrapped that gift with a bright, shiny bow.

In the same way that Noah waited in darkness for God to keep his promise, we wait this Advent season for God's promised Savior. And when the Savior arrives, we, too, will receive the precious gift of new life. Open your eyes, and keep watch for that great gift.

Heavenly Father, I trust your promise to save. I will watch and wait for you this season. Amen.





December 6

Open Your Eyes

**The people that walked in darkness
have seen a great light.** *Isaiah 9:2*

Like many of the prophets of the Old Testament, Isaiah certainly had his eyes open. He knew that God's promised Savior was coming, and he helped others know what to look for. "Arise, shine; for your light has come," Isaiah wrote (60:1). Are you lighting candles on an Advent wreath this season? As each week passes, the light of those candles grows brighter. And we, like Isaiah, keep our eyes open for the Savior—the new gift of "light" that comes from God.

Dear God, help me to open up my eyes to see your light and open my heart to be your light to others. Amen.



December 7

Open Your Eyes

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them ... *Luke 2:9*

I'm certain that the Bethlehem shepherds' eyes were wide open. The dark sky was now alight, and an angel was flying above them. "Open your eyes," the angel told them. "And look for a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." The angel pointed those wide-eyed shepherds right toward God's promised Savior. Keep your eyes open, shepherds. The Light of the World is here.

Look around your house. Which Christmas decorations help to show the way to God's great gift?

Dear Jesus, when others look at me, I want them to see the love I have for you. Amen.



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