

Message: Great Expectations

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Psalm 8:3-4; 37:7; 33:6, 13-21; 40:1; 97:5-6; 121:2-5 | Isaiah 9:6-7; 7:14  
Jeremiah 29:12-13 | John 3:15-16 | Colossians 1:15-20

What are you looking for... expecting?

Faithfulness requires some waiting.

What do you do while you wait?

- Look Up.
- See that God is mindful of me.

The answer to what I am waiting for (expecting) is personal.

Welcome to Advent Conspiracy!

**[Worship Fully]** It starts with Jesus. It ends with Jesus. This is the holistic approach God had in mind for Christmas. It's a season where we are called to put down our burdens and lift a song up to our God. It's a season where love wins, peace reigns, and a king is celebrated with each breath. It's the party of the year. Entering the story of advent means entering this season with an overwhelming passion to worship Jesus to the fullest.

**[Spend Less]** Before you think we're getting all Scrooge on you, let us explain what we mean. We like gifts. Our kids really like gifts. But consider this: America spends an average of \$450 billion a year every Christmas. How often have you spent money on Christmas presents for no other reason than obligation? How many times have you received a gift out of that same obligation? Thanks, but no thanks, right? We're asking people to consider buying ONE LESS GIFT this Christmas. Just one. Sounds insignificant, yet many who have taken this small sacrifice have experienced something nothing less than a miracle: They have been more available to celebrate Christ during the advent season.

**[Give More]** God's gift to us was a relationship built on love. So, it's no wonder why we're drawn to the idea that Christmas should be a time to love our friends and family in the most memorable ways possible. Time is the real gift Christmas offers us, and no matter how hard we look, it can't be found at the mall. Time to make a gift that turns into the next family heirloom. Time to write mom a letter. Time to take the kids sledding. Time to bake really good cookies and sing really bad Christmas carols. Time to make love visible through relational giving.

**[Love All]** When Jesus loved, He loved in ways never imagined. Though rich, He became poor to love the poor, the forgotten, the overlooked and the sick. He played to the margins. By spending less at Christmas, we have the opportunity to join Him in giving resources to those who need help the most. As we as a community of faith continue to take hold of these simple steps in Advent Conspiracy we have been able to feed and help and support many individuals and families in our community. One less gift, unbelievable presence in the name of Christ.

***This week look for ways to join the Advent Conspiracy by making it a part of your life.***

**Worship Fully** by recognizing the wonder of God around you and in you.

**Spend Less.** Look for ways to give relationally to friends and family. There is a list of suggestions on the web site [www.seekreallife.com](http://www.seekreallife.com)

**Give More.** Consider putting together a food box for a family this season. There is a suggested food list in the foyer or online.

**Love All.** Give the gift of invitation. Invite someone to join you in worship this season. Invite someone to share a cup of cocoa with you. Invite someone to your home to watch a Christmas movie with you (Elf, It's a Wonderful Life, A Christmas Story, How the Grinch Stole Christmas-*animated version*, A Charlie Brown Christmas) the key is to express love and care to others by giving of yourself.

### **Real Life Prayer for 2021**

As we journey together in 2021, let us continue to pray for a deeper, intimate, personal, and dependent relationship with the Lord – walking step by step with Jesus as He leads us through all that is to come this year.

In following Jesus as He builds on all He has done in and through us, let us step boldly! To that end, our word for Real Life church in 2021 is **impact**.

*Lord, have impact in my inner self.*

*Lord, have impact in my trust in you and obey your leading.*

*Lord, have impact in the words of life and hope you give me.*

*Lord, have impact in my family.*

*Lord, have impact in our community.*

*In the name of Jesus we pray,*

*Amen.*

### **Notes:**

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