

**December: Because Love Came Down at Christmas,  
We Can Walk in Love**      Cresta McGowan



**Verse:**

“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.”      John 3:16

**Upward Gaze:**

Dearly Heavenly Father,  
Help me to see with fresh eyes a verse I’ve most likely know since childhood. Allow me to be open to a  
new message of your gift, Jesus Christ.  
Amen

**Development of theme:**

I would not be surprised if this is a verse you’ve read more times than you can count. It’s the very  
essence of our faith. We proudly share this gift from God as our full understanding of Jesus Christ. And  
we are not wrong. This verse encompasses everything we know about God: his love for us, his gift of a  
child, and the sacrifice of that child so that we may have an everlasting life in God’s heavenly kingdom.

If you’re anything like me, this verse rolls right off the tongue without a lot of thought.

That’s a sobering sentence.

We take this one for granted at times because we’ve known it for so long. So, let’s take a moment to  
look deeper at God’s gift and what it really means as we celebrate “the most wonderful time of the  
year.”

Christmas is a time when we think a lot about gifts - what should we buy our family and friends? And I  
am recently reminded by my Pastor, Dr. Steve Louder, in his weekly newsletter, that in this modern  
commercialized concept of Christmas often begins with a very important question: “Do I have my  
Christmas shopping done?” Christmas has become synonymous with gift giving, but do we give from  
the same place as God? Are we walking with him in our purchases as we dash into Black Friday sales?

Christmas, though, isn’t about treasures here on earth. We are told in Matthew 6:19-21: “Do not store  
up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and  
steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and  
where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **For  
where your treasure is, your heart will be also.**

God’s treasure was two-fold: his creation of us and his perfect son. He gives this gift willingly to us, in  
order to save us. It is a heavenly gift of which no human “treasure” can match.

To quote Dr. Louder again, “It does not take a great theologian to understand that God’s gift of his son  
teaches us to base our lives on God and eternity. The gifts we seek and He bestows will not wear out or  
break. He offers hope, love, joy, and peace. The wonderful thing is, every gift is custom made...suitable  
for all tastes and attitudes.”

As we walk into this festive time of year with love on our hearts and gift giving on our minds, let us remember the greatest gift of love: “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.”

John 3:16

**Inward Glimpse (Reflection):**

Read Isaiah 9:6 This scripture reminds us all that Jesus’s descent to earth will fulfill - the greatness that is our Savior.

- How am I allowing God’s gift to guide my spirit this season?
- Am I reflecting on all that Christ is to my faith as I practice walking in love not only during the holiday season, but throughout the year?

**Outward Glance (Discussion):**

- Consider ways your prayer group could start a mission to demonstrate God’s love at Christmas. Or if your church is already actively participating in missions of season, how can you be more actively involved with this celebration of love?

**One more peek:**

“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

1 John 4:9-10