

THE CHRIST OF OUR CHRISTMAS

POINTS TO PONDER

1) Do you keep an Advent calendar? What are traditions in your family that have been meaningful to you?

WORDS TO WRANGLE

1) The word "advent" means "coming." What does the first coming of Christ at Christmas time mean to you?

CONCLUSIONS TO CONSIDER

1) How does God's gracious gift affect the gifts you give this Christmas?
2) Can your group decide a way you can give to your church ... to your community?

VERSE TO MEMORIZE THIS LESSON SERIES:

"For to us a child is born; to us a Son is given" (Isaiah 9:6 NIV).

Advent is the season of the liturgical year that focuses on the celebration of the coming of Christ at Christmas and looks forward to His return at the Second Coming. The word "advent" comes from a Latin word for "coming." Typically, the Advent season either begins four Sundays before Christmas or on the first of December. Across the world, churches and Christians will light candles around Advent wreaths of evergreen to recognize the shining light that Jesus is for the world and to reflect upon the eternal nature of our God.

Traditions for celebrating Advent vary from denomination to denomination, and according to different areas of the world. The celebrations often include calendars, wreaths and candles, reading of Scripture, and the preparation and eating of foods.

Advent allows us to touch the hem of the garment of Jesus every day as we think and meditate on Him in the days leading to Christmas. The thoughts each day prepare our hearts for His coming – celebrated as a moment in history, but transforming as a monument in our lives.

In the hymnal we used when I was growing up, hymn number 282 did little to distinguish itself from among other songs. So commonplace was this hymn, it was known equally by two different names. It was the only hymn in the book by its composer, Robert Claire Loveless. More is known of the father, Wendell, than of the son, Robert.

Wendell Loveless was born on February 2, 1892 in Wheaton, Illinois. He died over ninety years later on October 3, 1987 in Honolulu, Hawaii. He served as a Marine Corps officer in World War I and became a Christian as a result of reading the Bible at home. Following the war, he toured America with an entertainment group before returning to Illinois. He became the director of the radio department and station WMBI at Moody Bible Institute. He later pastored churches in Wheaton, Boca Raton, Florida, and Honolulu. He authored nearly a dozen devotionals and song books for Eerdmans Publishing and Moody Press.

The words of his hymn pop up in my mind on occasion and they are more than fitting for the theme of our advent lessons this year – Jesus Every Day. The hymn was included in twelve different hymnals, some using the name *Every Day with Jesus* and others calling it *Sweeter than the Day Before*.

Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before.

Every day with Jesus I love him more and more.

Jesus saves and keeps me and He's the one I'm waiting for

Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before.

Let's make Jesus Every Day the focus of our Advent.