



## **“Overtaken By God’s Kindness and Mercy” Advent 2021**

December 5, 2021

**Fun Question:** Would you rather have telekinesis (the ability to move things with your mind) or telepathy (the ability to read minds)?

1. Dane Ortlund writes, “The message of this book is that we tend to project our natural expectations about who God is onto him instead of fighting to let the Bible surprise us into what God himself says. ... The Christian life, from one angle, is the long journey of letting our natural assumption about who God is, over many decades, fall away, being slowly replaced with God’s own insistence on who he is. This is hard work. It takes a lot of sermons and a lot of suffering to believe that God’s deepest heart is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger.” (*Gentle and Lowly*)

What were some of your early and inaccurate assumptions about God? What led to those assumptions? Have those assumptions changed throughout your Christian journey? If so, what has that journey been like? If not, why do you think those assumptions have not changed?

2. One aspect of a mature, well-ordered heart is to have control over our emotions rather than being controlled by them. But another expression of a mature, well-ordered heart is to also to feel deeply for the right things. It’s easy to point out the immaturity of those who are emotionally chaotic messes. But some of us also have an emotionally stunted heart that cannot feel what we *ought* to feel in certain circumstances. Jesus didn’t have this problem.

Which camp do you fall in? Are you one that tends to be controlled by your own emotions or are you the type of person that is “emotionally stunted”, someone who cannot feel as they ought during certain circumstances? What are some ways you think you can grow towards a well-ordered heart that feels deeply for the appropriate things?

3. As we consider God’s compassion, kindness, and mercy towards us, maybe the deeper question we need to ask is: *Do we even want His love?* Because the full story is not only of a God who loves the world, but also of a world that has rejected his love. We are blind to the love that God offers us, instead looking to anyone *but* God to find our sense of identity, security, and worth.

What causes you to be blind to a point where you even come reject His love for you? During this Advent season, what will it take for your heart to be rekindled with a fresh understanding of God’s love for you and his desire to carry our burdens and care for us?

4. Please share any burdens that may be on your heart and pray for one another other that there would be a deeper knowing of His true heart for you, one that is full of kindness and mercy.

**Deeper Study:**

5. Take time to read, meditate, and study Exodus 34:6-7. How would you explain God's heart to someone who can only see Him as a god of wrath and judgement?