

A 9-DAY HOLIDAY SERIES



The Unbreakable Spirit of Christmas

How to experience the resilient power of Jesus during the holidays and beyond.

The Spirit of Wonder



How do I keep my sense of awe as I navigate the challenges of life?

Wonder is defined in the Collins dictionary as a “feeling of great surprise and pleasure that you have, for example, when you see something that is very beautiful, or when something happens that you thought was impossible.”

The spirit of wonder is the heartbeat of our walk with God. It’s one of the things that made David such an extraordinary man in the history of God’s people. His relationship with God was infused with feelings of great pleasure, admiration for the beauty of God’s creation, and faith in the impossible. David’s wonder led him to walk in step with God, as described in Acts 13:

“I’ve searched the land and found this David, son of Jesse. He’s a man whose heart beats to my heart, a man who will do what I tell him.”

– ACTS 13:20-22 MSG

Wonder is not merely a fleeting emotion but a deep and transformative awe that reshapes how we see God, ourselves, and the world around us. When we live in wonder, our faith becomes transcendent, resulting in an insuppressible hope, an overflowing gratitude, and a mountain-moving faith that changes our lives and the lives of all with whom we have contact.

When all the people saw Jesus, they were filled with wonder. And they ran to greet him.

– MARK 9:15 NIRV

The defining experience of encountering Jesus is wonder. When the crowds around Jesus saw

him, they didn’t hesitate—they ran toward him, overwhelmed by awe. This is the response that Jesus inspires. His presence is transformative, his power is unmatched, and his love is immeasurable. Yet how often do we lose sight of this wonder as we navigate the routines and challenges of life? How often does our vibrant faith slip into mere religious ritual, leaving wonder to fade into weariness and burnout?

The unbreakable spirit of wonder

As Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote in [God in Search of Man](#):

“As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder.”

The loss of wonder is a spiritual tragedy. When we take Jesus for granted, our relationship with him risks becoming ritualistic and routine, causing us to lose sight of the extraordinary nature of his presence in our lives. Matthew 6 captures this danger with striking clarity:

“Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed

in greed and distrust, your body is a dank cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!”

– MATTHEW 6:22-23 MSG

When we lose our wonder, we lose our light. But God calls us to open our eyes wide in belief and awe, allowing his light to fill every part of our lives.

If we want to restore our wonder, we can do it in one of two ways:

1. TREASURING GOD’S KINGDOM

God’s kingdom is discussed throughout the New Testament. It is not a location or organization (John 18:36); it’s a spiritual vision of a world changed for the better by the power and love of God. Matthew 13 shows us the urgency and joy of reclaiming this treasure:

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!”

– MATTHEW 13:44-46 NLT

We experience God’s kingdom on earth by having our hearts transformed by God (Luke 17:21, Matthew 6:33), and by unifying with others who share this experience and want to live out God’s purposes. When we treasure God’s kingdom as the ultimate gift, the spirit of wonder will be rediscovered in our lives. Though it would take more than just a few sentences to capture the essence of God’s kingdom and how we can treasure it, we do have an excellent example of this heart in the first disciples in Acts:

They were continually and faithfully devoting themselves to the instruction of the apostles, and to fellowship, to eating meals together and to prayers. **A sense of awe was felt by everyone, and many wonders and signs (attesting miracles) were taking place through the apostles.** And all those who had believed [in Jesus as Savior] were together and had all things in common [considering their possessions to belong to the group as a whole]. And they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing the proceeds with all [the other believers], as anyone had need. Day after day they met in the temple [area] continuing with one mind, and breaking bread in various private homes. They were eating their meals together with joy and generous hearts, praising God continually, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord kept adding to their number daily those who were being saved.

– ACTS 2:42-47 AMP

The spirit of wonder was clearly strong amongst the New Testament disciples. They treasured their relationship with God through his Word and prayer, their spiritual friendships through spending time together, and their shared purpose through giving to those in need. Treasuring God’s kingdom led to a sense of awe in both the disciples and those who saw them.

2. GROWING THROUGH GRATITUDE

The more our gratitude grows in every facet of our lives, the more wonder will naturally grow too. Psalm 103 invites us to reflect on God’s goodness:

O my soul, come, praise the Eternal with all that is in me—body, emotions, mind, and will—every part of who I am—praise His holy name. O my soul, come, praise the Eternal; sing a song from a grateful heart; sing and never forget all the good He has done. Despite all your many offenses, He forgives and releases you. More than any doctor, He heals your diseases. He

reaches deep into the pit to deliver you from death. He crowns you with unfailing love and compassion like a king. When your soul is famished and withering, He fills you with good and beautiful things, satisfying you as long as you live. He makes you strong like an eagle, restoring your youth.

– PSALM 103:1-5 VOICE

Gratitude opens our eyes to the countless ways God moves in our lives. He guides our steps toward a beautiful life and restores our strength to keep pursuing our God-given destiny. When we give God our full attention, we begin to see his wonderful artistry in our lives and rediscover the wonder that has always been there.

REDISCOVER WONDER

Living a life of wonder means running to Jesus with the same urgency and awe as the crowd mentioned earlier in Mark 9:15. It means choosing to see his presence in every moment and allowing his power to work its wonderful magic in our lives. Psalm 103 continues to remind us of God’s compassion and justice:

When people are crushed, wronged, enslaved, raped, murdered, the Eternal is just; He makes the wrongs right. He showed Moses His ways; He allowed His people Israel to see His wonders and acts of power. The Eternal is compassionate and merciful. When we cross all the lines, He is patient with us. When we struggle against Him, He lovingly stays with us—changing, convicting, prodding; He will not constantly criticize, nor will He hold a grudge forever.

– PSALM 103:6-9 VOICE

This Christmas, let us commit to rediscovering the spirit of wonder. Let us treasure God’s Kingdom above all else, embracing it with urgency and joy. May we open our eyes wide to his light, live in awe of his presence, and reflect his wonder to a world that so desperately needs it.



The spirit of wonder in *The Man Who Invented Christmas*

The Man Who Invented Christmas is based on the true story of Charles Dickens writing the classic novella *A Christmas Carol*. The movie portrays Dickens at a critical juncture in his life. We can learn many lessons about how he rediscovered wonder in his life and the impact on the world that came as a result.

1. THE LOSS OF WONDER: DICKENS AT A CROSSROADS

Once celebrated for his profound storytelling, Dickens now faces writer’s block, financial strain, and the haunting pain of his past. His struggles mirror the spiritual tragedy of losing wonder—when life’s pressures and past failures cloud our ability to see the extraordinary. His creativity has dimmed, and the spark that once fueled his work has faded, leaving him disconnected and weary.

2. THE REDISCOVERY OF WONDER: THE TREASURE IN THE FIELD

The journey of Charles Dickens to rediscover his creativity in the movie parallels the parable in

Matthew 13:44-46, where a man sells all he owns to claim a hidden treasure. For Dickens, the treasure is the ability to see life with renewed imagination and hope. To reclaim this, he must take risks—facing the ghosts of his past, forgiving those who hurt him, and daring to see the world differently. His rediscovery of wonder is not a passive experience; it requires him to embrace creativity, confront pain, and reimagine humanity.

3. THE OPPORTUNITY OF WONDER: TURNING PAIN INTO PURPOSE

One of the most poignant elements of this movie is how Dickens's pain becomes a wellspring of empathy and inspiration. He comes to understand that the hardships of his life—working in factories as a child and seeing his father imprisoned for debt—deepen his understanding of human suffering. By confronting this pain, Dickens transforms it into a source of strength, creating a story—A Christmas Carol—that speaks to the universal needs of hope, generosity, and redemption.

4. THE SPIRIT OF WONDER: RISK AND TRANSFORMATION

The transformation of Charles Dickens in this movie reflects the core message of the spirit of wonder. Just as gratitude allows us to see God's artistry in our lives, Dickens's journey of forgiveness, imagination, and creativity allow him to see his own struggles through a new lens. Wonder often requires taking risks—letting go of bitterness, embracing hope, and daring to imagine a better world. For Dickens, this risk led to the creation of a story that redefined Christmas as a celebration of love and wonder.

5. THE LEGACY OF WONDER: A WORLD NEVER THE SAME

The result of Dickens's rediscovery of wonder was nothing short of transformative—not only

for himself, but also for the world. A Christmas Carol had a great influence on how we celebrate Christmas today, turning it into a global holiday of hope, generosity, and joy.

His story reminds us that wonder isn't just about experiencing joy in the moment; it's about allowing that joy to transform us. Through the spirit of wonder, we can see our pain as a foundation for something greater, enabling us to reflect God's presence and power in our lives.

How can we apply this today?

Reclaiming wonder requires gratitude, courage, and a willingness to see life anew. It turns routine into awe, pain into purpose, and inspires hope that lights the way for others. It is worth fighting and struggling for, and can lead us to a legacy and impact beyond anything we can imagine.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What would I say is the defining quality of my walk with Jesus? If it's not wonder, what needs to change?
- What has made me lose my wonder?
- How can I rediscover my wonder with God today?

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- **Embrace gratitude daily.** Start each day by reflecting on the blessings in your life. Write down specific moments where you've seen God's hand at work. Gratitude opens our eyes to his artistry and helps us rediscover the wonder that's already present.

- **Take risks to renew your perspective.** Like Charles Dickens in *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, confront areas of pain or stagnation in your life. Forgive where needed, draw close rather than growing distant in relationships, and challenge yourself to imagine a brighter future. Wonder often requires stepping out of our comfort zone to see life through fresh eyes.
- **Treasure God's kingdom as the ultimate gift.** Revisit Scripture with an open heart, looking for the beauty and depth in God's Word. Treat your relationship with God as a treasure, making it a priority over routine or distraction. Learn more about [God's kingdom](#) and how you can experience and share its power. Let your faith transform how you approach your challenges and relationships.
- **Share wonder with others.** Take what inspires you and share it—whether through acts of generosity, words of encouragement, or creative expressions that give vision to those without it. Our wonder will grow when we share it, inspiring hope and joy in those around us.

