

# Advent Devotional

by Jim Garner

## Just Look at the Awesome Gifts

*“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” – Hebrews 11:3 NIV*

*“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place...” –Psalm 8:3 NIV*

The home screen on my "smart" phone is a picture of the Milky Way. I also have a t-shirt with the entire Milky Way galaxy displayed and an arrow pointing at one little star with the label “You Are Here.”

There are somewhere between 100 to 400 billion stars that make up the Milky Way galaxy and each star is a Sun with many having their own rotating planets. Current scientific research indicates that Universe may contain around 125 billion other galaxies.



I grew up in a small town in Southeast Kansas. I was blessed to be raised in a place with little light pollution. On any clear night I could stand in

my back yard, gaze up, and take in the beautiful, bejeweled spine of the Milky Way. I miss that view (hence my phone screen).

Gazing at the stars of the Milky Way can provoke very distinct and opposite feelings at the same time. It makes me realize how small and insignificant I am compared to the expanse of the universe. But it also leaves me in awe of how special I am to be able to even exist on this small little rock circling one average star in our galaxy. It really is amazing.

**Prayer:** God, thank you for your splendid and awesome creation. During this season that can often become too focused on material gifts, help me to not forget to appreciate and be grateful for all the gifts you have already provided through your creation—the sky, the earth, mountains, plains, rivers, wooded forests, and, yes, the stars of our little home galaxy. Amen.