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## As the Deer Pants

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# As the Deer Pants

## **Abstract**

"Advent is also a time to prepare us for that day when our thirst is finally, fully and completely, satisfied."

Posting about the Living Water from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/as-the-deer-pants/>

## **Keywords**

In All Things, lectionary, Advent, God, thirst

## **Disciplines**

Christianity

## **Comments**

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

# As the Deer Pants

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 [inallthings.org /as-the-deer-pants/](https://allthings.org/as-the-deer-pants/)

Robert Lancaster

December 13,  
2016

## Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 42](#)

[Ezekiel 47:1-12](#)

[Jude 17-25](#)

*As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. Psalm 42:1-2*

Deer seem like such peaceful creatures. If you watch them drinking from a stream, they generally seem to methodically lap just enough water to satisfy their thirst. Indeed, deer get the vast majority of the water they need from their food — they only use other water sources to supplement. I get what these verses are saying, but whenever I read them, I always get a different picture in my mind.

If I were going to re-write the first part it would read something along the lines of:

*As a dog pants for a bowl of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.*

A dog panting for her water bowl after playing outside is something that you can probably picture. A dog comes in from a run, or from playing in the yard, and it seems that it can barely catch its breath because it is panting so much. It has an overwhelming longing for water.

What would change about how we read this passage if this was the image in our minds? Does our soul pant for God in the same way that a dog that has been playing outside on a hot summer day pants for a bowl of cold water? Do we really long for fellowship with God? Or do we just take a sip as we pass by out of habit, rather than because we are really thirsty?

Deer, and dogs, do not need to be trained to pant—and they do not need to be trained to drink water. Thirst, and a knowledge of how to satisfy that thirst, comes naturally to them. And, I would say, in following St. Augustine, that the thirst of our soul for God comes naturally to us as well. Everyone is searching for a way to have that thirst satisfied. Some seek to satisfy that thirst in healthy ways, others in unhealthy ways. What this season of Advent reminds us of is that there is only one true way to have our thirst for God satisfied.

In Advent, we look back and we look ahead. And as we do, we wait. And as we wait, we thirst. But we do not thirst as a people without hope. In hope, our souls thirst for the living God. But, maybe for some of us, our souls are parched...dry...yearning for even a drop of water. And that is, at least in part, what Advent is about.

We look back and we look ahead. And as we do, we wait. We look back to the first Advent. And we look ahead to the Second Advent. And as we look ahead, we remember the future. We remember that what is promised will happen. Advent is not just a time to prepare us for Christmas, though it is indeed that. Advent is also a time to prepare us for that day when our thirst is finally, fully and completely, satisfied.

So, this Advent, let us look back and look ahead. And let us answer the call of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink” (John 7:37). Let us come and find our thirsts relieved as we drink from the well

that will never leave us thirsty again.